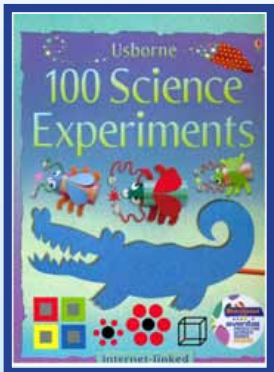
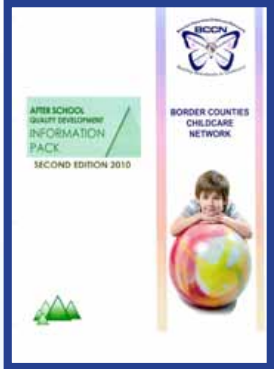




# Newsletter Autumn 2011

Issue 26

## Leitrim County Childcare Committee



### ATTENTION!!

## School Age Childcare Conference

**When:** Saturday 1st October  
**Where:** The Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon  
**Time:** 9:30 am to 1:00 pm

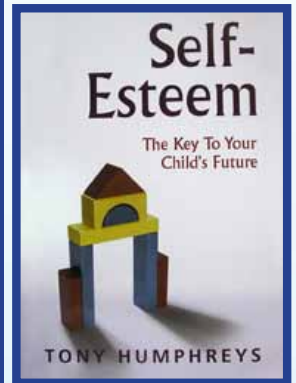
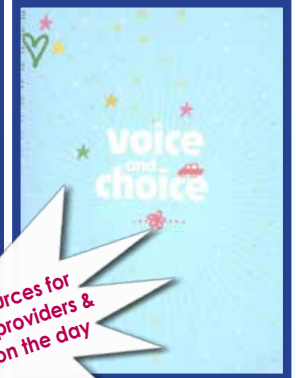
**Speakers on the day**  
**Ann Higgins - Co-Author of Voice & Choice**  
**and**  
**Mary Hough - Director Sligo Education Centre**

Ideas on how to communicate and increase self esteem in your children

This Conference is aimed at Parents, Childcare Providers, both home based and facility based working with primary school age children 4 – 12 year olds and Primary School Teachers.

For booking please contact the office on 071 96 40870 before September 23<sup>rd</sup>

Free resources for childcare providers & parents on the day



## National Play Awareness Week

Border Counties Childcare Network (BCCN) promoted Play week from the 20th – 25th of June. The Play Song was especially commissioned, CD's of the song distributed and participation in a Flash Mob was proposed. As part of this, Leitrim County Childcare Committee organised 2 Parents Networks to highlight the importance of play with parents and children. The networks were held in Manorhamilton and Mohill and both parents and children were invited to attend.



Parents and children in Manorhamilton participating in some play activities

The workshops gave parents practical and cheap ideas of games and activities that they can play with their children. Children and parents got to make musical instruments, play with foam, water, sand and use different art materials.



Childminder's and the children in their care enjoying a teddy bears picnic during Play Week

Childminders and children from services who participate in the Fenagh network attended a Teddy Bears Picnic in the Canon Donohoe Hall, Mohill on Wednesday 22nd June, where Zona Foley guided children and childminders alike through stories, rhymes, music and movement. When the Flash Mob was introduced and the Play Song rang out all the children stopped what they were doing and sang out the words loud and proud, well done you guys you were brilliant!!!!

## National Guidelines for Childminders: Voluntary Notification

As a childminder if you are minding 3 or less children you now have the opportunity to voluntarily notify that a service is being provided and can do so by contacting your Childminding Advisory Worker at Leitrim County Childcare Committee.

The process of Voluntary Notification is one of Self Evaluation based on the National Guidelines for childminders.

Voluntary Notification benefits childminders by opening up access to a range of supports including information, networking, training and grant aid.

It also benefits childminder's who wish to; operate to high standards, have their work valued and recognised, avail of €15,000 Childminder Tax Exemption, remove feelings of isolation, contact parents seeking home-based childcare and one to one advice and support from your Childminding Advisory Worker. Certificate of Voluntary Notification issued indicating compliance with National Guidelines for Childminders.

## Benefits of a Pre-School Service.

Early childhood is a key stage in your child's life. During this period, between the ages of birth and six years, they develop many skills that will be essential throughout their lives. Parents are the most important source of support for your child's development and learning at this time. However research from all around the world has shown that participation in a high quality early childhood care and education setting, often referred to as pre-school, from the age of three years can provide them with additional opportunities and experiences that will help them to reach their fullest potential now and into the future. In early childhood, children are ready and eager to learn and will develop a wide range of skills and abilities in a short space of time. A high quality pre-school setting can make sure that this stage of development is appropriately supported.

Some of the key areas of learning and development that will be addressed are:

- Social skills such as taking turns, sharing, develop friendships, mixing and interacting with adults and children their own age, self help and independence skills (for example putting on their own coat).
- Emotional development such as building self-confidence, independence, security with other adults, dealing with conflict.
- Exploring and thinking skills such as problem solving, questioning and understanding the world around them, developing an understanding of mathematical concepts (for example big/small).
- Physical development including balance and coordination, gross and fine motor skills such as running, skipping, jumping, cutting, drawing.
- Communication skills for example oral language development, non-verbal communication skills, being able to express or represent themselves, additional languages such as Irish and early literacy skills such as symbol recognition.
- Creativity such as music, play, dancing, art, singing and role play.

Most importantly children's natural curiosity, enthusiasm and creativity should be supported and reinforced to ensure that they come to associate learning with fun and enjoyment. For that reason, it is important that play is at the heart of all learning and development activities in the preschool as this is how young children learn best especially when supported by skilled and qualified adults.

## Trip to Connaught Creative Resource Centre

The annual trip to the Connaught Creative Resource Centre took place in May, 13 childcare providers and childminders joined us this year. As usual the centre provided a wide array of odds and ends that would provide stimulation to curious little minds!

Those present share ideas and suggestions as to how you could make the most of the resources present. Nobody left disappointed or empty handed and we look forward to our trip again next year, why not keep an eye out for the date and get your arts and crafts supplies for FREE next year!!!

## Road Safety Authority (RSA) Training - "Simon and Friends"

This is a wonderfully simple child friendly programme, that has been specifically designed for Pre-school children focusing on road safety. Training is currently being delivered by your Childminding Advisory Worker and Development Workers on a one to one and in service basis. Those who participate in the training will receive a resource pack which includes 4 books and a CD also a separate Teachers



Guide called "Hand-in-hand". Childminders and Providers who have completed this training and the children in their care will be able to participate in Beep Beep Day in-conjunction with National Safety Week in October!

## Keeping Safe Training for Childminders/Child Protection Training

This training has been specifically designed for Childminders and as you work alone it is essential that you avail of this important training! The training will be delivered in September/October. Date, time and venue to be confirmed. Training costs €35 per person

## Cupla Focal

Interested in introducing some basic Irish into your practice? Or gaining confidence in using the basic Irish that you already have?

In collaboration with the Irish Language pre-school organisation, Forbairt Naionraí Teoranta and Childminding Ireland would like to help organise basic Irish courses for Childminders, at local venues.

If you are interested and can gather a small number of Childminders, (parents can join in too), who would like to attend such a course then simply contact; Fionnuala by e-mail at [fionnuala@childmindingireland.ie](mailto:fionnuala@childmindingireland.ie) Or by phone on; 01 2878466

## Certificate Presentation

A presentation night was held for services that reached the Maintenance Stage of the Early Years Health Promotion Project. This means that the services have reached a very high standard of health promotion in their service. 5 services have reached this stage on the project. They are Dowra Childcare, Breffni Childcare, Carrick on Shannon, Tiny Toppers Childcare, Manorhamilton, Kinlough Playgroup and Tullaghan Playgroup. Childcare services received a certificate on the night. I would like to congratulate staff from all these services on their achievement.



Staff from Dowra Childcare, Breffni Childcare and Tiny Toppers Playgroup along with the Early Years Health Promotion Worker and the Manager of Leitrim County Childcare Committee

# Early Years Health Promotion Project Update

## Gardening workshops

Outdoor play is important for children of all ages and one way of incorporating this into a childcare service is through gardening. 4 childcare services participated in gardening



Children from Cara Iosa Childcare with their new garden!

projects organised by the Early Years Health Promotion Project Worker. They were Cloone Playgroup, Gortletteragh Playgroup, Cara Iosa Childcare, Drumsna and Drumkeerin Playgroup. Steffi Otto facilitated the workshops. Children got to screw the timber frames together for their herb box or square metre gardens. They all then filled their garden with soil and planted herbs, vegetables, flowers and plants. They then carefully watered their new garden. Children had a great time participating in the workshop and spent 3 hours outside developing their new garden.



Children from Drumkeerin Playgroup with their new herb box!

## Childminder Coffee Morning/ Networks

The Coffee mornings continue on a 6 weekly basis in Fenagh Visitor's Centre and Soft Play Area, Fenagh and Happy Days Children's Adventure Centre, Sligo. Cost €2 per head, including lunch. Provides Childminders and children alike with the opportunity to network, share ideas and offers peer support. See upcoming events for further details.

## Tutor List

Leitrim County Childcare Committee is compiling a database of tutors which will be used when planning events/workshops/information sessions for parents, childcare providers, parent and toddler groups and children. We are inviting anyone with tutoring skills or who has experience facilitating workshops or sessions to submit their information. Tutors may have skills in a variety of areas such as FETAC childcare courses, dance/music workshops, arts and crafts, physical activity, cookery or other areas of interest for adults and children. Please forward your CV detailing your qualifications and experience to our office.

## Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Scheme

The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) scheme is available to community not-for-profit childcare services only and offers parents access to reduced childcare costs. In order to qualify for Band A one parent must in receipt of one of the following social welfare payments; One Parent Family Payment, Widows/Widowers Pension, Pre-retirement Allowance, Farm Assist, State Pension, Blind Pension, Guardian's Payment, Illness/Injury Benefit, Disability Allowance, Carer's Benefit/Allowance, Back to Work/Education Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance, Community Employment, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Family Income Support (FIS), HSE Referrals, Job Seekers Benefit/Assistance (parents in receipt of job seekers benefit/assistance will qualify for subvented childcare on a half day payment only i.e. not more than five hours (half day) of childcare per day or 2 x 1/2 days per week).

If you are a parent who currently holds a medical or GP visit card you are entitled to Band B subvention rate.



## Siolta The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

Two Siolta Networks have taken place so far this year. We started with Standard 6: Play on the 8th of March and this was followed by a Network on the 17th of May which focused on Standard 3: Parents and Families. There are a further two Siolta Network meetings planned for the Autumn; on the 13th of September the network will focus on Standard 11: Professional Practice and will be facilitated by Maureen McDermott from the Border Counties Childcare Network. This will be followed by a network on the 8th of November exploring Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation, this session will be facilitated by Linda Lafferty also from the BCCN. Venue for both these Networks has yet to be confirmed. Please remember that you must book in with the Border Counties Childcare Network (04772469) for each Siolta Network. It is important that you book your place or notify them if you will not be attending. In addition each service must get a copy of the relevant Siolta manual. There are three different manuals; sessional services user manual, full and part-time day care user manual and childminding user manual. These can be got by contacting the Government Publications office on 016476834.

## Childcare Employment & Training Support Scheme (CETS)

This scheme is designed to support the childcare needs of participants in training and educational courses operated by FÁS and the VEC. Childcare services accepted onto the scheme by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) will keep a number of childcare places open for parents who may require a CETS place. This scheme is available to parents whose children have not yet completed primary school.

Parents participating on an eligible FÁS/VEC course are entitled to free childcare for the duration of the course. VEC students will generally qualify for a CETS childcare place for courses of at least 10 weeks. Community Employment (CE), Job Initiative (JI) Supported Employment, apprenticeship, night courses, FÁS e-college, job clubs and the work placement programmes are not eligible.

## Child Protection - Children First/Keeping Safe Training

The revised 'Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children' due to be launched in the near future are intended to assist people in identifying and reporting child abuse and to improve professional practice in both statutory and voluntary agencies and organisations that provide services for children and families. The guidelines offer a comprehensive framework to assist professionals and other persons who have contact with children and wish to deal with any concerns they may have in relation to their safety and well being. The guidelines embody the principles contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which was ratified by Ireland in 1992. The objectives of the National Guidelines are to improve the identification, reporting, assessment, treatment and management of child abuse, clarify the responsibilities of various professionals individuals within organizations and enhance communication and co-ordination of information between disciplines and organizations.

Children First/Keeping Safe Training provided by Leitrim County Childcare Committee and facilitated by the Health Service Executive aims to outline the principles of good practice and encourage all childcare practitioners to work towards acknowledging the rights of children, recognizing that the welfare of children is paramount, developing appropriate child protection policies and adopting the safest possible practices to protect themselves and children within childcare settings. Leitrim County Childcare Committee recommends that all child practitioners undergo the Children First/Keeping Safe Training and that all childcare facilities have up to date child protection policies. It is very important that all staff within the childcare setting are aware of the policies and procedures outlined in the child protection policy and that policies are reviewed regularly. If anyone in your service has not yet participated in the relevant training please contact the office to book a place on training courses that will be ran in the future.



## Upcoming Events September to December 2011

**Síolta Network Standard 11: Professional Practice** – 13th September 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm (**venue to be confirmed**)

**Workshop on Professional Practice-continuing professional development in early childhood care & education.** - To be facilitated by Maureen McDermott on the 18th of October (evening workshop), **time and venue to be confirmed.**

**Síolta Network Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation** – 8th November 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm (**provisional date, venue to be confirmed**)

**Childminders Coffee Morning – Fenagh Visitor's Centre and soft play area:** Wednesday 7th September, 5th October, 9th November and 7th December 11 am to 1:30 pm Cost €2 per head.

**Childminders Coffee Morning – Happy Days Children's Adventure Centre, Sligo:** Wednesday 14th September, further dates to be confirmed. 11:00 am to 1pm Cost €2 per head.

**Childminding Quality Awareness Training Programme:** Saturday 24th September & 8th October, will take place in the Food Hub, Drumshanbo, 10 am – 4:00 pm, Cost €35 per person. *This course looks at the Role of Childminders; record keeping; communication; child development and play; managing behaviour; health, safety and nutrition; legislation; child protection and much, much more!*

**School Age Childcare Conference** – 1st October in the Bush Hotel Carrick on Shannon

**Children First Keeping Safe Programme (Child Protection Training)** – October (**dates to be confirmed**)

**Children First Keeping Safe Programme (Child Protection Training for Childminders)** – October (**dates to be confirmed**)

**"Simon & Friends" Road Safety Education as Pre-School Level** – this training will be held on-site with all preschool services and Childminding services. If you have not yet received the training please contact the office to set a date.

## ECCE (Free Pre-School Year) Scheme

The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme is a new scheme designed to give children access to one free pre-school year before they start primary school. It was introduced in January 2010 and will be available in September 2011 for children who were born between 2nd February 2007 and the 30th of June 2008.

If your child is eligible for the scheme then you are entitled to a free pre-school session of 3 hours per day, 5 days per week, 38 weeks per year (in a full year), for which you will not be charged.

Some full and part time services will provide your child with their free pre-school session of 2 hours 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week across 50 weeks per year, for which you will not be charged. However if your pre-school child stays in the service for the additional full or part time service, you will be charged for these additional care hours. Where this is the case, your full or part time fee will be reduced by €48.50 per week.

A small number of pre-school services will be allowed to participate in the scheme by offering 3 hours and 45 minutes per day, 4 days per week, 41 weeks per year, for which you will not be charged anything. You will have to talk to your chosen childcare provider to see what service they can offer.

## Summer Scheme Activity Day

An activity day was held for summer scheme and after-school workers on the 14th of May in Aras Padraig, Drumshanbo. Jonathon Jones facilitated the workshop where participants got to make rush dolls, dream catchers and mini beast gardens out of natural materials. Participants got some ideas of activities that they could use with children as part of their summer scheme or after school at a very low cost.



Some of the items made by participants



Participants at Summer scheme activity day

Funded by the Irish Government under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2007 - 2013

