

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Parents Training

Leitrim County Childcare Committee in conjunction with the HSE West plans to provide training for Parents through Fás le Chéile. The training is aimed at supporting parents/guardians in their role as carers for their children. This programme will take place on Tuesday 15th April in the County Leitrim Partnership Offices Drumshanbo.

### Fathers and Childrens Activity Day

The Fathers and Children's Day is an annual event hosted by the County Childcare Committee. This is a day for Fathers and their children to enjoy a day of activities together. Last year the day took place in Swan Island Animal Farm and Marina. In total 18 fathers and 31 children took part. This year the day will be held on Saturday 17th May in the New Ballagh Centre, Rossinver. Transport provided if required. If you are interested in attending please contact the Leitrim County Childcare Committee Office.

### Children's Day:

This Family event will provide a day for children to spend time involved in a range of creative and interactive activities. This occasion will take place in June of this year in the centre of the County and all are welcome. This event will be advertised locally nearer the time with a confirmed date and venue.

### Childcare Advertisement

Our Annual Childcare Advertisement for Childcare Providers will take place in early June to promote services and summer scheme projects in the county. Application forms must be completed and returned to the office by the 12th May 2008. There will be a small charge involved.

### Childcare Workers Relief Panel

Leitrim County Childcare Committee is currently forming a childcare worker relief panel. The database of successful childcare workers will be made available to all childcare services and the public for their use. If you wish to be placed on the relief panel, please contact the office for an application form. If your name is placed on the childcare worker relief panel you will receive confirmation from the County Childcare Committee.

### Summer Scheme Grants

In conjunction with the Health Service Executive West, all Summer Scheme Projects are invited to apply for a small support grant to assist them throughout the year, application forms are available now from the office. Closing date Wednesday April 30th 2008.

### Resource Library

There is a resource library available in our office for parents, providers, childminders and childcare workers in training to access resources to assist them in several areas of childcare and parenting. If you would like to borrow books from our library you can call into the office between 9 am and 1 pm every Friday morning or ring the office to arrange a suitable time. There are a number of new books just in such as "parenting is child's play" by David Coleman, a number of Irish stories with CDs accompanying them for parents, Childcare & Education and Babies and young children, to name a few. A catalogue is available on request.



Sample of some of the books available in our resource library

### Web Site Information

We have a web page link on the leitrim.ie web site under local organisations. This link has our Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010 and our childcare directory which has a list of all the community and private childcare services, parent & toddler groups and childminders which have made themselves known to the County Childcare Committee. In the near future we will have our newsletter available on this web page.

## Update on Community Childcare Subvention Scheme

In December 2007 the Office of the Minister for Children approved a number of new provisions to the scheme:

- The subvention for Band A parents (those in receipt of social welfare related payments) has been increased from €80 to €100 per week (€5,200 p.a.).
- The subvention in respect of Band B parents (those in receipt of Family Income Supplement (FIS) or certain childcare subsidies e.g. Under FAS/VEC schemes) has been increased from €30 to €70 per week (€3,640 p.a.).
- Services will also be grant aided to provide reduced childcare fees for parents who are above the Family Income Supplement (FIS) threshold. Low-income parents in Band C are expected to benefit by €45 per week (€2,340 p.a.).
- A minimum subvention of €20,000 per year which will be of particular benefit to small providers, especially in rural areas.
- Special provisions will apply in the case of some childcare services (e.g. women's refuges, special services for children of drug misusers).
- As a transitional measure during 2008-2010 services will receive grant aid equal to not less than 90% of their previous grant level during July-December 2008, equal to not less than 85% of that amount in 2009, and equal to not less than 75% of that amount in 2010.

### Transforming Ireland

Funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan, 2007-2013



# Leitrim County Childcare Committee

Coiste Cúram Leanaí Chontae Liatroma

# Newsletter

SPRING 08 ISSUE 17

## Launch of Leitrim County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010

Paschal Mooney, Chairperson of Leitrim County Childcare Committee welcomed Minister Brendan Smith, Minister for State with responsibility for children at the Department of Health and Children as the guest of honour at the launch of the second Strategic Plan for Leitrim County Childcare Committee on the 22nd of February in Laird House, Drumshanbo.



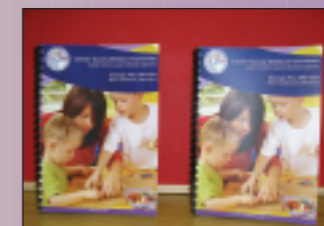
Back row L to R: Cllr Sean Mc Gowan, Cllr Enda Mc Gloin, Senator Terry Leydon, Frank Feighan TD, Eric Plunkett HSE West, Senator John Ellis, Cllr Mary Bohan, Eamon Scanlon TD, Andrew Layden. Front row L to R: Fina Golden, Pobal, Aedamar Keenan, Manager LCCC, Paschal Mooney, Chairperson LCCC, Minister for Children, Brendan Smith, Stephanie Mc Govern Secretary LCCC

Minister Smith complemented the Committee on the Strategy and followed on to say 'In developing the Strategic Plan, the Committee have set out five clear strategic aims for the period 2007 - 2010. These aims seek to improve the level of services provided, while ensuring that they are high quality services, and this can be achieved by working in partnership to ensure that families and providers gain from the significant levels of investment into the sector.'

Minister Smith said that to date over 9.6 million has been allocated in capital and staffing grants to the county, one of the highest amounts per capita in the country. He was 'confident that this Strategy will enable Leitrim County Childcare Committee to continue to develop childcare services within the county.'



A view of the crowd attending the launch of our Strategic Plan



A Sample of our Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010

Paschal also welcomed Eric Plunkett who spoke on behalf of the Health Service Executive West who provide a large amount of funding support to the County Childcare Committee and Stephanie McGovern who is secretary of our Committee and also a childcare provider representative.

Aedamar Keenan, manager gave an outline of the methodology used in

developing the plan, the profile of childcare in the County, the needs which were identified during the consultation process and the future actions set.

Paschal concluded by acknowledging and thanking all those who contributed to the consultation process which was fundamental in the drawing up of this document. The independent research consultant, Karen Mahoney and to the Staff and the Committee members who represent the statutory, voluntary and community sector and are to be recognised for their enthusiasm and commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.



Leitrim County Childcare Committee  
Back row L to R  
Stephanie Mc Govern, Tom Lavin, Deirdre Ni Ghradaigh, Eric Plunkett, Denise Mc Cormilla, Donall O Scolai, Eilish Winters,  
Front row L to R  
Aedamar Keenan, Paschal Mooney, Minister for Children Brendan Smith, Ann Donegan, Trish Martyn, Irene Mc Govern

## Childcare Graduation Ceremony

Leitrim County Childcare Committee in conjunction with Leitrim VEC and County Leitrim Partnership held a Graduation Ceremony on Wednesday 12th March at 3p.m. in the County Leitrim Partnership offices. This Graduation Ceremony was to present certificates to 106 participants who had completed a number of FETAC Childcare courses ranging from FETAC Level 6 Supervision in Childcare, FETAC Level 5 Childcare 0-6 years, four of FETAC Level 5 stand alone modules and An Introduction to Childminding course.



Back row L to R: Tom Lavin, Ann Kavanagh, Josephine Dorrigan, Mary Moran, Majella Higgins, Carmel Canning, Caroline Kearney, Sheila Ryan. Front row L to R: Maureen Boyle, Majella Mitchell, Paschal Mooney, Sheila Dorange, Aedamar Keenan & Donall O Scolai.

Leitrim County Childcare Committee Chairperson Paschal Mooney opened the ceremony by congratulating all the participants in completing the various courses and commending them on their hard work. Paschal presented the FETAC Level 5 Participants with their certificates.

Tom Lavin Manager of County Leitrim Partnership presented the FETAC Level 6 Supervision in Childcare certificates to the participants and congratulated them on being the first Level 6 course held in County Leitrim.

Donall O Scolai from Leitrim VEC presented certificates for the FETAC Level 5 stand alone modules in Irish in a Pre School Setting, Diversity and Equality, Working with Special Needs, Lifestyle Planning and the Introduction to Childminding Course participants, he congratulated everyone on their achievements and mention that even though they have completed the relevant courses that as adults with life long learning opportunities, we should be continuously improving our skills.

Aedamar Keenan, Manager of Leitrim County Childcare Committee concluded the ceremony by thanking the students, tutors and the funders and explained the next step in continuing their studies is the BA in Early Childhood Care and Education which is being offered at Sligo Institute of Technology on a Full and Part- time basis, pending numbers and possibly a course will be delivered on a part-time basis in Boyle from September 2008.



FETAC Level 5 Childcare 0-6 years



FETAC Level 6 Supervision in Childcare

## Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference



Participants at the Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference training

Leitrim County Childcare Committee recently hosted the Media Initiative for Children (MIFC): Respecting Difference. The MIFC was developed by Early Years—the organisation for young children (Northern Ireland) and the Peace Initiatives Institute (Pii, USA). It combines a series of cartoon advertisements with a pre-school curriculum. The aim of the programme is to promote an understanding of and positive attitudes toward those who have similarities and differences, through respect for self and others within the diverse communities of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

This was the second time the training has been run for childcare services in the County and it proved to be a huge success. Overall participants found the training very interesting and useful on a practical basis. They said the training was done in a relaxed and friendly environment and that it was a very valuable and worthy project. As childcare workers they found it to be a great learning curve and

provided an increased awareness of diversity issues.

Each service that participated in the training received a comprehensive pack of equipment, the cost of which was subsidised by Leitrim County Childcare Committee. The pack contains puppets, discussion cards, videos and a selection of games to support early year's workers in implementing the programme in their service. Participants recommended that similar training be developed for those working in Afterschool services as they felt children of this age group would benefit greatly from such a programme. Thanks to all who attended the training and to the tutors from Early Years—the organisation for young children for facilitating the training.

## Siolta - The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

Siolta is the first nationally agreed set of standards for early childhood education in Ireland and represents comprehensive guidance for quality in service delivery and professional practice. The programme is concerned with improving the quality of early childhood experiences for all children aged birth to 6 years of age. It is relevant for a wide range of settings including crèches and nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups, childminders and infant classes in primary schools. Leitrim County Childcare Committee will be running a number of workshops in the coming months for childcare services who wish to participate in the project. Please keep an eye on our monthly mailings for further details.

## Early Years Health Promotion Worker's Update

As part of the Early Years Health Promotion Project '3 week menu planning' and 'Food for Families' training took place in the Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon on the 19th February. The aim of the evening was to provide practical tips to childcare providers on using the '3 week menu planner' and promoting healthy eating to families. Amanda Mc Cloat, Lecturer in Food Studies of St. Angela's College facilitated the evening. Amanda prepared quick nutritious snacks with the help of the participants and everyone got to sample them. There were a variety of snacks prepared including banana muffins, hommus and selection of vegetables, pasta salads and much more. Participants on the night included childminders and parents and all seemed to enjoy the practical advice they received. If you would like a copy of the presentation and recipes from this training evening please contact Sheila in the office.



Some of the people who attended the "Food for Families" event.

## Parents Seminar

The Parents Seminar took place on the 1st of March in the Bush Hotel in Carrick on Shannon. As part of the day parents took part in a variety of workshops which included Baby and Infant Massage, facilitated by Charlotte Matthews "Taking Care of your Baby" facilitated by the Public Health Nurse Toni Moore, "Encouraging Self Esteem" facilitated by Trish Martyn and Anna Mc Tiernan from Leitrim Lifestart and "The Importance of Play" facilitated by Siobhán Mc Guinness, Physical Activity Development Officer from the HSE. A great day was had by all and all participants thoroughly enjoyed the workshops.



Parents and children enjoying the activities organised during our Parents Seminar



Parents and children enjoying the activities organised during our Parents Seminar

## Parents Training Audit

To make sure that we are catering for the needs of parents/ guardians to the best of our ability, the County Childcare Committee asked parents/ guardians to complete a short questionnaire outlining their training preferences. The parents were asked to rank their training preferences based on feedback we received at seminars in the past. Topics included the following: Behavioural Management, Self Esteem Building, Dealing with Teenagers, The effects of Media and Television on Children, Bullying, Internet Safety, Using Educational Toys, Eating Disorders and Obesity- how to encourage a healthy lifestyle, Food and Nutrition, Play and Mental Health Issues. Many parents have returned the completed questionnaires however to get a better idea of the needs in the county we are asking all those who have not yet returned their completed forms to do so as soon as possible.

## Childminding Advisory Worker Update

### Graduation Ceremony

At the Leitrim County Childcare Committee Graduation/Presentation Ceremony. Childminders who had completed the Introduction course received certificates of attendance. 11 Childminders and potential Childminders successfully completed the Introduction to Childminding, this course ran over 6 weeks and provided a comprehensive introduction to running a childminding service in your own home, well done to all those who received their certificates!

### Introduction to Childminding

An "Introduction to Childminding" course is currently running in Kinlough and I am planning to run this course again in September in south Leitrim please let me know what part of the county you would like to have this course run in.



Introduction to Childminding  
Back row left to right: Tom Lavin Manager County Leitrim Partnership, Orla Mc Keon Childminding Advisory Worker, Yvonne Riordan, Donall O Scolai Leitrim VEC, Front row left to right: Annette Colreavy, Paschal Mooney Chairperson LCCC, Aedamar Keenan Manager LCCC.

### Child Protection Training

Children First Child Protection training was ran in March and again in April these courses were well attended if you have not had the opportunity to attend this vital training please contact me to have your name added to the waiting list!

### Trip to Connaught Creative Resource Centre

On Saturday 23rd February we made our way again to Castlebar on the first of what has now become our twice yearly trip to Connaught Creative Resource trip where we stocked up on endless supplies for Mother's Day, St Patrick's Day and Easter. We plan to make another trip later in the year in time for Halloween.

### National Childminding Week

Commenced with Childminding Ireland Annual Conference and AGM on Saturday 5th April During the week the following events took place;

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Monday 7th:    | Storytelling & colouring in Dromahair Library.   |
| Tuesday 8th:   | Storytelling & colouring in Carrick on Shannon Library.  |
| Wednesday 9th: | Coffee morning with games & activities in Fenagh Visitors Centre, Business side of Childminding workshop, in Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon. |
| Thursday 10th: | Coffee morning with games & activities in The Depot, Dromahair.  |
| Friday 11th:   | Trip to Carrick Cineplex Cinema.   |

### Occupational First Aid

Our Occupational First Aid course and two refresher courses were all fully booked. Please check your certificate and ensure that you book your place on our waiting list for our next refresher as demand is high!

### National Guidelines for Childminders: Voluntary Notification

A Childminder is a self-employed person who minds other people's children in the Childminder's home. If a Childminder minds more than 3 children (i.e. not yet attending national school) than he/she is obliged to notify the HSE of his/her childminding service. 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 Childminders 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 the Childminding Advisory Worker.

For further information or if I can be of any help to you please don't hesitate to contact me:  
Orla McKeon your Childminding Advisory Worker at the number below.