

early years

This Month

More Men Needed in Childcare

The Boulder Journey School

High/Scope Update



Roger Neugebauer (Chief Executive of the World Forum Foundation) and Siobhan Fitzpatrick (Chief Executive of Early Years) gather around the table with Molly Rose Hamill, Clodagh McMurry and Harry Magee at Sparkles Day Care, Stewartstown Road, Belfast.

WORLD FORUM 2009 TO BRING 800 DELEGATES TO BELFAST

The preparations for the World Forum in Belfast are gathering pace. With over 50% of the places already booked it looks set to be one of the most successful early childhood events ever held in the country. Over 600 delegates, representing 80 countries are due to arrive in Belfast in June to share their stories, learn new ways of working and explore Northern Ireland.

The week's events kick off with the Study Tours, where Early Years members from across Northern Ireland will welcome international guests to their settings to show them best practice in Northern Ireland. Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive of Early Years, "We were honoured to be asked to host the event, we hope that it will achieve two things; it will connect the early childhood sector with Northern Ireland and give us an opportunity to share best practice with others. In particular we want to show how our work in peacebuilding with young children can be shared with countries around the world."

Roger Neugebauer from the World Forum Foundation explained how this event differs from most conferences, "Our goal is not to bring people into a room and let them give a talk while people take notes. What we want to do is really connect people so they can share and learn from each other and establish on-

going dialogues. Everyone is an equal at the conference whether they are presenting a workshop, or attending to learn. In fact, everyone who comes is there to learn."

Work is still ongoing to finalise the programme but some of the speakers confirmed so far include Prof Stuart Shanker from Magill University, Canada who is a specialist in children's emotional and mental health development; Sharon and Craig Ramey who over the past 30 years, have conducted research involving 14,000 children and families and who's professional interests include the study of the development of intelligence and children's competency, early experience and early intervention, the changing American family, and the transition to school.

Also speaking at the event will be Glenda McNaughton from Melbourne, speaking about social justice and equity issues in early childhood, and curriculum development and innovation in early childhood.

Bonnie Neugebauer from the World Forum Foundation said, "We have such a variety of people coming to the event and we try to make sure that we don't shy away from real issues, or gloss over what goes wrong in our work with young children. We talk about issues like HIV and Aids and how that affects young children, and deprivation and how we need more help for teachers. Everyone who comes to the World Forum has an amazing story to tell."

DEAR READERS ...



I hope you all had a well earned break over Christmas and are ready for the challenges of a new year. 2009 will be an important year for the Early Years sector in Northern Ireland. The new 0-6 Strategy will be out for consultation in Spring and hopefully ready for implementation in the Autumn. Early Years will be organising a number of local consultation events as soon as the draft strategy is released and we hope as many members as possible will become involved in these. Information on these will be issued as soon as the document is released.

Another very important event will take place in June 2009. Early Years will host the World Forum on Early Care and Education. This event will attract delegates from 80 countries around the world, who are coming to Belfast and Northern Ireland to not only share best practice but to see and hear about best practice in early childhood settings here.

The Conference will begin with a series of study visits to settings across Northern Ireland, and will be followed then by a series of keynote, lectures and workshops over three days between June 16th and 19th. On the evening of Thursday 18th we will host our own Annual General Meeting. This free element of the Conference will be followed by a buffet supper and will provide an opportunity for members who may not be able to attend the entire Conference to meet our international colleagues.

We realise that the Conference will be an expensive event for most members and in this and subsequent editions of Early Years we will provide tips on how the event could become affordable. We do want as many members as possible to experience and be part of this once in a life time opportunity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your contributions to our Gaza Appeal. We have been overwhelmed by your generosity and know that our partner organisations in Gaza will be touched by your support. We will keep you updated on the progress of your donations.

Siobhan Fitzpatrick
Chief Executive Early Years

ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY CONFERENCE



In December 2008 Early Years attended the Ulster Unionist Party Conference, and for the first time we sponsored the crèche that was being run for delegate's children. This conference was also different, as for the first time it was to be addressed by David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party, who announced a formal link between the two parties.

Early Years attends all of the main party conferences held in Northern Ireland, we see it as a key way to influence debate and the Assembly, encourage our MLAs to support our Manifesto for Children and meet grassroots party members and inform them about our work.



Early Years Communications Manager Elizabeth Hendron with David Cameron MP

ACCESS NI UPDATE

Early Years has been lobbying local politicians to use their influence to improve the service of Access NI. Members had been reporting difficulties with the return of enhanced disclosure forms, including lengthy delays in processing forms.

Access NI have recently informed us that they are now meeting 90%+ of their target times for disclosures. This equates to 10-14 days for enhanced disclosures. Early Years are keen to hear our member's experiences of this, please let us know if your experience matches that put forward by Access NI by emailing us at elizabethh@early-years.org

PARENTS DEMAND MORE MALE CHILDCARE WORKERS

Parents in England are calling for more males to work in early years settings - and single mothers are leading the charge to ensure their children have contact with men in caring roles. According to research conducted by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), 55% of parents say they want a male childcare worker for their nursery-aged children, with two thirds (66%) of lone parent mothers saying they would like a man involved in the care and development of their young children.

Early years settings can provide children with access to a male role model. Currently 17% of children from lone parent female families have fewer than two hours a week contact time with a man, while 36% have under six hours. Male early years workers can perform a vital role in ensuring many of these young children have quality contact time with men.

Offering someone for the boys to look up to was seen as important for 37% of parents, who say that it sets boys a good example,

while a quarter say they believe boys will behave better with a man. But it's not just boys who stand to benefit. Fifty-seven per cent of parents recognised the fact that men and women have different skills to offer young children, while 52% simply said that a nursery setting should better reflect the real gender mix of the world.

Yet despite the high demand for male workers, there are very few men currently working in this field. More than half of

parents (59%) say their childcare provision doesn't currently have a male worker. To try and tackle this dramatic gender imbalance, CWDC is calling on more men to consider working in early years. Thom Crabbe, National Development Manager for Early Years at the Children's Workforce Development Council, said, "Parents are right to want to see more men working in early years. It is important that during the crucial first five years of a child's life they have quality contact with both male and female role models.

"And working with under 5s is definitely a job for the boys. It's one that requires someone who is patient, creative and bright and one which gives back major rewards. Male workers will get to work in a challenging, stimulating environment with like-minded professionals dedicated to the development of children with positive benefits to babies, toddlers and young children to families and communities."

IRVINESTOWN PLAYGROUP IS TOP OF THE CLASS

Irvinestown Playgroup has being rated as outstanding in a recent Inspection report from the Department of Education. In the report they stated, 'The provision here is outstanding in all areas.'

Irvinestown Playgroup has being running for approximately 30 years and operates in a renovated old school in a rural part of Co. Fermanagh and offers excellent indoor and outdoor facilities. The group has strong links with the three local primary schools and Cherish Sure Start.

In their report the Department stated that the quality of pre-school education in the playgroup was "outstanding". The hard work of the staff, the management committee and parents and the support of the local community was also commended.

The inspection team praised the effective and consistent implementation of appropriate policies and procedures and commended the very high quality pastoral care provision that was in place.

The report highlighted the caring and supportive atmosphere in the group, the excellent relationships between staff and children and the very strong emphasis which was placed on the children's Personal and Social Emotional development. The inspection team went on to commend the high quality provision which provided opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum particularly in mathematical awareness, language development and physical development.

Staff were described as "highly committed, working productively to develop a planned programme to meet specific needs of children and

to provide an effective link between planned programmes and the assessment of children's needs and interests". They were also commended for their sensitive interaction in supporting children in developing good concentrated play.

The playgroup leader and her deputy were praised for their clear vision in providing a high quality pre-school education and for being highly skilled in the work with the children. Staff were described as a close working team, both hard working and supportive. The inspection team further noted the group's work on Self Evaluation, sustained self improvement and methods for future development planning.

The children's excellent behaviour and the evident enjoyment that they get from being at the group was also highlighted as was the effective use of the outdoor area.

On reflection Angela Dickson Playgroup Leader said she was delighted with the report and she was particularly pleased the inspection team recognised the work of the voluntary management committee, parents and the support from the local community, "I would like also to pay tribute to my staff and our Early Years Specialist Joan Jackman for their continued and valued support. I am delighted with the inspector's report and I hope the playgroup can continue to provide a high level of pre-school education for many years to come. Not a group to sit still, we are now going forward for Early Years Accreditation which will hopefully be awarded at the World Forum in June 2009."

Joan Jackman, Early Years Specialist for Irvinestown Playgroup, congratulated the group on their tremendous achievements and their commitment to excellence. Irvinestown Playgroup, alongside their colleagues in Early Years Fermanagh Branch are dedicated to providing the highest quality care and education to the children and their families in Co. Fermanagh.

WORLD FORUM ON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Early Years is delighted and honoured that the World Forum is coming to Belfast. The conference will take place in the Hastings Europa Hotel, Belfast from June 16 - 19, 2009. The World Forum will replace the traditional Early Years International Conference, and our Annual General Meeting will take place on 18th June during the World Forum.

Over 600 early childhood administrators, trainers, caregivers, public officials, and advocates from 70+ countries will gather in Belfast for the 2009 World Forum to exchange ideas about the quality of services for young children in diverse settings. The 2009 World Forum will mark the 10th Anniversary of World Forum Foundation. In these 10 years, over 5,000 early childhood professionals from 90 nations have participated in World Forum gatherings in Singapore, Greece, Malaysia, New Zealand, Canada, United States, Northern Ireland, Italy, Hungary, and Colombia.

With over 120 presenters from 60 nations, delegates at the 2009 World Forum will be able to participate in:

- An Historical/Cultural Tour of Northern Ireland
- Four Plenaries addressing major issues in our field
- Over 50 workshops on policy, leadership, and curriculum issues
- The 10th Anniversary International Dance
- Five Networking receptions
- Gala Welcoming Receptions and Farewell Luncheons
- International Children's Art Exhibit



WORLD FORUM ON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

World Forum Schedule

The following is a preliminary schedule of World Forum activities. This schedule may be modified somewhat in coming weeks. All events, with the exception of Tuesday's Northern Ireland Study Tour, take place at the Hastings Europa Hotel.

Monday, June 15

Registration at Hastings Europa Hotel 8:30 am - 6:00 pm

Tuesday, June 16

Registration at Hastings Europa Hotel 5:30 am - 7:30 am
Historical/Cultural Tour of Northern Ireland 7:30 am - 3 pm
Registration at Hastings Europa Hotel 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Opening Plenary 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Welcome Reception 8:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Wednesday, June 17

Morning Plenary 8:30 am - 10:00 am
Three Workshop Sessions 10:30 am - 5:30 pm
10th Anniversary International Dance 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm

Thursday, June 18

Morning Plenary 8:30 am - 10:00 am
Three Workshop Sessions 10:30 am - 5:30 pm
Early Years AGM 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Friday, June 19

Two Workshop Sessions 8:30 am - 12:15 pm
Closing Ceremonies and Farewell Luncheon 12:30 pm - 3:15 pm

Registration

You can register on the World Forum webpage at www.worldforumfoundation.org, or by fax or mail by downloading a printable registration form from the website.

Regular registration fee (through April 30, 2009) \$US 750,
late registration fee: \$US 850

The registration fee includes:

- Centre Tours and Northern Ireland Experience
- Conference program and two new World Forum books
- Opening reception
- Closing luncheon
- Five refreshment breaks (NB this does not include lunch)

Eleanor Mearns, an Early Years Specialist who attended the World Forum in Montreal and Kuala-Lumpur says, "Attending the World Forum really provides you with an unique opportunity to make learning happen! You also have a chance to deepen your understanding of early years issues that interest you and learn new ways of thinking. It is a once in a lifetime change to hear keynote speakers from around the world and attend workshops where the participants span the globe and have wonderful stories to share about their experiences."

Ena Shaw from Early Years, "It was a great opportunity to meet with other professionals who had so much knowledge and experience to share from their own work with young children. It was a great learning curve in both gathering new information but also reiterating the excellent work that I was already involved in within my own working environment and organisation. The site visits were very good for the hands on experience of seeing practice in place."

EARLY YEARS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY 18TH JUNE 2009

Early Years Annual General Meeting will take place as part of the World Forum on June 18 from 6pm to 8pm at the Europa Hotel, Belfast. We hope that all our members will join us in providing a welcome to the World Forum delegates to Northern Ireland.

The AGM is a free event and provides the best opportunity for members to shape the direction of Early Years and influence our work. Before the AGM papers are sent to all members to encourage them to put forward resolutions or new ideas for the work we undertake. Your local Branch Representative will be collating ideas and helping the Branches put forward resolutions and nominations for the AGM.

The AGM will be followed by a wine reception, fork buffet and entertainment. Early Years will be sending out formal notification of the AGM in the next few weeks, and we encourage all our members to attend.



THE BOULDER JOURNEY SCHOOL

In December staff from Early Years, accompanied by Joan Henderson from the ETI, went on a study visit to Boulder Journey School in Colorado. Whilst the Boulder Journey School is quite a distance from Ireland, the main purpose of the visit was about bringing message from Reggio Emilia in Italy closer to home.

Boulder Journey School is a full-day, year-round school that welcomes 250 children aged from 6-weeks to 6-years and their families. Beginning in 1995, the educators at Boulder Journey School have been engaged in a study of the world-renowned schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy. This study has resulted in ongoing collaboration with educators in Reggio Emilia and with educators throughout the world who are inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education.

The school community is committed to creating and maintaining a culture that acknowledges, reflects and communicates their values. Boulder Journey School's fundamental values are based on an image of children as curious, competent, and capable of co-constructing knowledge. From the moment of birth, children are engaged in a search for the meaning of life, seeking to understand the world that surrounds them and the relationships that they form and develop with others in their world.

At Boulder Journey School educators observe, document and interpret children's thinking and learning in order to understand, support and extend the children's meaning-making experiences.

A belief and commitment to children, family and community are visually declared at the entrance area to the school. The schools intentions are also clearly visible on the walls at this entry point. They involve initiating long term investigations around:

- Children's interests
- Children's desires
- Families hopes
- Teacher's professional goals
- Classroom goals
- School goals
- Current events

These powerful words about beliefs, commitments and intentions are clearly visible right throughout the school. As we moved around the school visiting classrooms and meeting adults and children, we were very conscious of the feeling of respect for children and adults that was present absolutely everywhere. There was clearly a respect for children and children's rights in the way the environment has been so thoughtfully considered and arranged. The attention given to the choice of materials is significant. Respect and an understanding of human development underpin the quality of interaction between adults and adults and children. Careful consideration is given to:

- Child Development
- Individual and group learning
- Research
- The role of families
- The importance of materials
- Choices
- A 'community school' - where investigations are expanded to offer possibilities for interaction among the different age groups
- Professional Development
- History - how investigations may connect with previous experiences
- Connecting with the community of Boulder

Boulder Journey School has, over a 13 year period, successfully studied, synthesized and implemented outstanding practice that has been inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education.

Early Years has been aspiring to Reggio Inspired Practice since 2000. The organisation has taken part in study visits to Reggio and has engaged in a number of small projects around aspects of the approach. Boulder Journey School provides a new opportunity for Early Years to develop this work further and to consider the whole organisation's values, beliefs and commitments to early year's education. The focus of the Boulder Journey School is timely in light of the pending 0-6 strategy for Northern Ireland.



HIGH/SCOPE

Welcome to the new High/Scope page in your Early Years newsletter. In the coming months we will be introducing you to the High/Scope team who will keep you updated on all new developments happening both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Current information on research from the high/Scope Foundation in Ypsilanti, USA will be a regular feature as will information on upcoming events hosted by High/Scope UK. We will also share our training programme and publicity events planned throughout Ireland in the coming year.

We would also like to hear from you on what you want to read about High/Scope. For further information please contact High/Scope Ireland at Early Years.

Mary O'Reilly
Area Manager Western Board with responsibility for High/Scope



HIGH/SCOPE TRAINING

Current High/Scope Training

Implementing the High/Scope Approach	Armagh (two courses), Fermoy Co. Cork
High/Scope Approach to Resolving Conflict with Young Children	Armagh
Tender Care and Early Learning (Children under three)	Derry

Upcoming High/Scope Training

Implementing the High/Scope Approach	Kerry, Finglas/Dublin, Cork City
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HIGH/SCOPE UPDATE

The High/Scope approach is backed by 40 years of research following the initial Perry Pre-school Project in the early 1960s in Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA. The approach has as its central principle Active Participatory Learning. Children learn through direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. Trained adults who understand child development and how to scaffold the important areas of learning in the preschool years offer guidance and support.

The curriculum in the High/Scope approach includes the following content areas:

- Approaches to learning
- Language, literacy and communication
- Social and emotional development
- Physical development, health and well-being
- Arts and sciences

Within each content area are 58 key developmental indicators which are observable early childhood milestones and these guide practitioners as they plan learning experiences and interact with children.

As well as describing the curriculum of the approach, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation also publishes books and resources to support the implementation of the approach. Recently, the following

DVDs and book have been produced and are available from the Information Unit at Early Years, Belfast.

The Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environment, DVD

This DVD explains how to set up your indoor and outdoor learning environments using the principle of Active Participatory Learning. It describes the variety of materials needed to enable children to make choices about what and how to use them. You will learn how to arrange interest areas, how to choose and store materials, thus promoting the 'Find-Use-Return' element in the work time part of the daily routine. This is the first time that a High/Scope DVD has included the outdoor play space so it will be of immense help to settings trying to provide for active participatory learning experiences in the outdoors.

Moving Past Praise, DVD - Supporting Children with Encouragement

As early years practitioners we all know the danger of 'empty praise' - the repeated use of phrases such as 'Good boy/girl, Well done', etc. Over time, these phrases become meaningless to children and can produce 'praise-junkies' in a setting. This DVD is very timely and from it you'll learn why encouragement is more effective than praise in improving children's self-worth and self-esteem.

To break the old habit of using 'empty praise' is very difficult but the DVD describes three support strategies you can use to encourage children. The DVD uses real life

examples to show practitioners using these strategies to support preschool children.

Real Science in Preschool, Book

This book is the latest in 'The Teachers' Idea Book Series'. It is written by Polly Neill who is an experienced early childhood trainer, practitioner and writer.

The subtitle for the book 'Here, There and Everywhere' really sums it up. Children are naturally curious and are already experienced in asking questions about what they see and hear, exploring objects, materials and events, making careful observations of objects, materials and events using all their senses, describing, comparing, sorting, classifying and ordering materials, using a variety of simple tools, making predictions, recording their 'results' by drawing, working with others and sharing and discussing ideas. All of these skills/abilities are what makes a scientist so young children are off to a good start. Polly Neill opens our eyes to the science learning that is everywhere in a young child's life and helps us to recognise and support this learning.

This book excites me as an early years professional as it makes what for some people is a difficult subject, into a naturally occurring set of experiences in the lives of young children. Please have a look at this book the next time you are in the Information Unit at Early Years.

Margaret Fullerton
High/Scope Consultant Trainer

NES AND EARLY YEARS - WORKING TOGETHER



many of our products having been recommended by early years and teaching professionals.

New for 2009! - First2learn from NES

As teaching and curriculum evolves, we at NES work to ensure our resources progress and move forward with you and have given our 2009 Early Years range a new look and feel with our new first2learn catalogue. We remain committed to providing resources that encourage learning in young minds. first2learn guarantees you will find everything you need for your Early Years setting.

Exclusive Early Years Member Offer

Early Years members are entitled to an exclusive 10% off all NES orders. Simply quote NA0980 when placing your order by phone, freefax or online at www.nesarnold.co.uk. NEW Early Years members can also benefit from 20% off their first order with NES, by simply quoting NA0981. Please note discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers.

To request your FREE first2learn or Primary catalogue please call 0845 120 4525 or visit www.nesarnold.co.uk. You can also register online for exclusive offers including sales previews and NES news.

Happy New Year from NES!

NES are delighted to be working alongside such a well renowned and successful organisation as Early Years. We have enjoyed a successful relationship since 2004 and we look forward to many more years working with Early Years and its members.

As a market leader with both Early Years and Primary sectors, NES offers an innovative, curriculum based product range with

TREASURE BOOKS!

Playgroups, Nurseries and Daycares across Northern Ireland are invited to gift free Bookstart Treasure Chests to their pre-school children. Throughout the year Bookstart Coordinators in each Library Board area will be contacting groups to make arrangements for the delivery of the packs.

Recently children from Carrick Pre-School had a special morning when they were told stories by the local librarian who then gave out the Bookstart Treasure Chests. Playgroup Leader, Marie McNeaney, said "The children loved the books and we had excellent feedback from parents. We also value the link with the local library." Rosemary from Warrenpoint library said. "Staff were really pleased with the Treasure Chests - they didn't expect them to be so good."

The Treasure Chest has a wooden effect like a pirate's chest and is beautifully illustrated with jewellery, coins and necklaces so that it appeals to both boys and girls. It also has a secret compartment for children to keep their best drawings or favourite books in. Inside each chest are two picture books, stickers, a pad, pencils and guidance material for parents and carers.

Bookstart is the first national book gifting programme in the world and the Northern Ireland library service act as partners in gifting every child with packs of wonderful free books and useful guidance materials for parents. The overall aim is to promote early book sharing and give every child the opportunity to develop a life long love of books.

Bookstart is based on the principle that every child should have the opportunity to enjoy book sharing from as early an age as possible. It is about that quality time cuddling up with a parent / carer to listen to stories, talk about the pictures and learn how to turn the pages. Bookstart is not really about learning to read but about pleasure and enjoyment. The research however does show that this approach has very positive effects on early literacy as it develops positive dispositions to language and learning.

The Bookstart programme is administered and coordinated nationally by the independent charity, Booktrust which aims to bring books and people together and foster a love of reading in people of all ages. Health visitors give out the Bookstart Baby bag during a child's first year and the Treasure Chest is given to three year olds either through nursery, playgroup or the library. Both packs contain carefully selected age appropriate books, activities and guidance for parents on how to share and select children's books. A toddler pack, Bookstart plus is also available through some Sure Start projects.

Bookstart recognises that some children will have additional needs. Bookshine packs are available for deaf children and Booktouch packs for blind and partially sighted children. For those families where English is not their first language titles Dual Language packs are offered. Children's books and guidance material for parents is available in 26 community languages.

If you have any questions or queries, please visit the Bookstart website for more details www.bookstart.co.uk or contact your local Bookstart Coordinator:

BELB	Patricia Jordan	Tel 028 9050 9234	e-mail patricia.jordan@ni-libraries.net
NEELB	Kim Aiken	Tel 028 9048 5079	e-mail kim.aiken@ni-libraries.net
SEELB	Lorraine Dunn	Tel 028 9048 5079	e-mail lorraine.dunn@ni-libraries.net
SELB	Maurice McDonagh	Tel 028 3752 0777	e-mail maurice.mcdonagh@ni-libraries.net
WELB	Mary Jo Curran	Tel 028 8224 4821	e-mail maryjo.curran@ni-libraries.net

For more information, please contact Liz Canning, National Development Manager, Northern Ireland. liz.canning@booktrust.co.uk T: 078 2734 5085

EARLY YEARS SALARY SERVICE

Early Years is re-opening its salary service to members. Currently there are 60 Early Years member groups using the service, new groups will be able to join in April 2009. The service is only available to paid up members and there is an induction session to explain the salary service to treasurers of new groups before they start.

Marlene Shannon, administrator of the service says, "All of the members who use the service say they are very pleased with it. Members have found that it saves them a lot of time and stress in calculating salaries and dealing with student loans, leavers information and other issues. Early Years is now pleased to be in the position to offer the service to more members."

Members that sign up to the service we offer the following:

- Maintain pay and deductions records for your staff.
- Process SSP/SMP/student loans as required.
- Provide monthly payslips for your employees.
- Calculate HMRC liability (P32) and forward payment slip to you each month
- Process leavers and provide P45.
- Process new employees.
- Complete the end of year return to the HMRC. (There will be a small charge levied if you require us to file your end of year returns to HMRC on line.)
- Provide year-end P60 to all employees

This should ensure that all your legal responsibilities in relation to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the payment of salary are adhered to.

FERMANAGH EARLY YEARS CENTRE

December saw the official opening of Fermanagh Early Years Centre at a joint event that also highlighted the achievements of Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership. Previously known as Jolly Tots Playgroup, the building has undergone extensive renovation through Priority 3 of the EU Peace II Extension Programme administered by Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership.

Councillor Thomas O'Reilly, Chairman of Fermanagh District Council welcomed Board and staff representatives from Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership, Early Years Directors and staff together with representatives of two further projects in Fermanagh supported by the Peace II programme.

Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Early Years Chief Executive paid tribute to the achievements of the Local Strategy Partnership and the previous Fermanagh District Partnership since its inception in 1996. During this period £170,000 of grant aid was invested in the childcare sector in Fermanagh in order to upgrade childcare premises.

In 2006 with dwindling numbers of children attending the playgroup at Jolly Tots the difficult decision was made to close. Resources were distributed amongst local playgroups and parent and toddler groups. The creation of the Fermanagh Early Years Centre subsequently evolved through a joint initiative by Jolly Tots Playgroup and Early Years and is the last capital project to be supported by Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership.

Siobhan thanked the members of the Jollytots Playgroup Committee in particular Lyla Henderson, Joan Jackman and Paula Jenkins for their dedication and hard work in overseeing the building project which has given a community building a new life as a learning and development centre for all those involved in the early years sector in Fermanagh. The Centre will support the development of the early years workforce in Fermanagh by providing an interactive training venue capable of acting as a satellite centre for the delivery of degree level programmes. The installation of state of the art video conferencing facilities will enable learning and the exchange of information without having to leave Fermanagh.

The Centre is located three miles from Enniskillen and groups or individuals wishing to make use of the facilities should contact Early Years on 028 66 342696.

Costs for Salary Service 2008/9 - payable in advance

One off Registration Fee	£35.25 (inclusive of VAT)
1 - 3 employees	£267.35 (inclusive of VAT) per annum £22.28 per month
4 - 6 employees	£330.97 (inclusive of VAT) per annum £27.58 per month
7 - 10 employees	£409.76 (inclusive of VAT) per annum £34.15 per month

The extended salary service is available on a first come first served basis to paid up members only. If you would like more information please contact Marlene Shannon at Early Years for an application form. If you currently avail of this service there is no need to take any action.