

early years

This Month

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Membership facts and figures

Highscope update



Siobhan Fitzpatrick with Dominic Bradley MLA, Mervyn Storey MLA and John McCallister MLA at the launch of the Early Years Strategic Plan in Stormont

LAUNCH OF EARLY YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN

THE UN CONVENTION IS STILL AS RELEVANT TO CHILDREN TODAY AS WHEN IT WAS FIRST RATIFIED 20 YEARS AGO. THAT WAS THE MESSAGE FROM EARLY YEARS – THE ORGANISATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, AS WE LAUNCHED OUR STRATEGIC PLAN AT AN EVENT IN STORMONT’S LONG GALLERY.

The launch of Early Year’s Strategic Plan coincided with a range of events that marked the 20th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the rights of the child which took place on 20 November 2008. The Long Gallery event which was attended by Members of the Assembly Education Committee, drew the attention of policy makers to the rights of all children across Northern Ireland and urged them to ensure they are respected and developed.

Early Years, Chief Executive Siobhan Fitzpatrick explained: “In 1989 when the convention was first

signed we did not know what we now know about child development, neuroscience, emotional intelligence and well being. We did not fully realise the economic and social importance of investing early in the lives of children. The rights of children enshrined in the convention have shaped the formation of policy, and today are at the very heart of our Strategic Plan for the future.

Our Ministers and MLAs have an immediate opportunity to act in the best interests of our youngest citizens. We are still waiting for the 0-6 strategy, we are three years into the Ten Year Strategy for Children and earlier this year we saw the Play and Leisure Policy for Children being published in Northern Ireland. There is a real opportunity for politicians and policy makers to fully embrace implementation of these critically important policies.”

Early Years was involved in many celebration events for the 20th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which took place across Northern Ireland, and calling on

politicians and policy makers to ensure that the rights of all children across Northern Ireland are central in developing policy. Some of the events are highlighted in this issue of the newsletter.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, often referred to as CRC or UNCRC, is an international convention setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention and opened it for signature on 20 November. It came into force on 2 September 1990, after it was ratified by the required number of nations. As of December 2008, 193 countries have ratified it, including every member of the United Nations except the United States and Somalia.

Two optional protocols were adopted on 25 May 2000. The first restricts the involvement of children in military conflicts, and the second prohibits the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Both protocols have been ratified by more than 120 states.

DEAR READERS...



WELCOME TO THE WINTER EDITION OF THE EARLY YEARS NEWSLETTER. THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN ANOTHER BUSY BUT PRODUCTIVE PERIOD FOR THE ORGANISATION. I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK ALL MEMBERS AND STAFF WHO HAVE SUPPORTED OUR INITIATIVES TO CELEBRATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. OUR AIM FOR THESE EVENTS WAS TO MAKE YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR NEEDS AND RIGHTS VISIBLE ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND. OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WE PLAN TO JOIN WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO ORGANISE A NUMBER OF OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL KEEP YOUNG CHILDREN'S RIGHTS UPPERMOST IN THE MINDS OF POLITICIANS AND POLICY MAKERS. PHOTOS FROM YOUR LOCAL EVENTS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER.

In November we also launched the Early Years and High Scope Ireland Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2012. We were delighted with the support we received from the MLA's in the Education and Employment and Learning Committees at Stormont at this event and their promise to help us achieve many of the goals and objectives we have set ourselves over the next period. One of the immediate issues for us is the release of the 0-6 Strategy for final consultation and implementation and we have been given all party support to ensure that this does happen early in 2010.

We are also coming to the end of the first phase of the Atlantic Philanthropies funded initiatives. By the end of December we will have the final results of the research on the Media Initiative and the pilot findings for the Eager and Able to Learn Programme. We are very excited by the initial headline findings and look forward to planning to take the programmes to scale across the organisation and beyond. I would like to thank the hard work and commitment of all the staff, parents, and management committees who have been involved in this project over the past three years.

Finally I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and successful 2010. I look forward to working with you all over the next year and hope our combined efforts result in improved life chances for young children in Northern Ireland.

CELEBRATION OF UNCRC



Junior Ministers Gerry Kelly and Robin Newton celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child with Siobhan Fitzpatrick and children from Rascals Daycare in Belfast

THE 20TH NOVEMBER 2009 MARKED THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. THIS HISTORIC DOCUMENT, TO WHICH ALL BUT ONE OF THE UNITED NATIONS MEMBERS (THE USA) HAVE SIGNED UP TO, ENSHRINES IN LAW THE RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN.

Children in Northern Ireland today have many new opportunities. Technology has given them access to a world their parents could not have begun to imagine. Children are also aware of the fragility of the natural environment and the risks to this environment for the future. This generation of children and young people in Northern Ireland are the first to grow up in relative peace.

Social and family values have changes considerably; more mothers go out to work, more fathers stay at home, more children are being born or adopted or fostered into families that 20 years ago would not have been considered traditional families. There

are more blended families where there are step-parents, half-siblings and grandparents living together. More families have come to Northern Ireland from other countries to make here their home.

Northern Ireland is a very different place than it was 20 years ago but we are still not a place that has the confidence to fully embrace a rights based approach to the lives of children and young people. Too many children are living in poverty, do not have safe places to play, do not have a full voice in everything that affects them, can still be subject to physical punishment and are not seen as active, visible citizens.

This twentieth anniversary of the signing of this important Convention gives all of us, parents, politicians, policy makers, local councils, voluntary and community organisations and citizens an opportunity to reflect on and recommit to what we agreed 20 years ago. Over the next weeks, months and years let us ensure our legislation, our policies and our practice puts children's rights at the heart of all our agendas. Let us also ensure we provide parents in particular with the types of financial and practical support to make this happen.

MEDIA INITIATIVE FOR CHILDREN - RESPECTING DIFFERENCE TRAINING IN THE NORTH WEST



EARLY YEARS HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED FUNDING FOR RESPECTING TRAINING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION PEACE 111 NW CLUSTER IN OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL, DERRY CITY COUNCIL AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREAS FROM JULY 2009 TO JULY 2010.

With the funding from the Peace 111 NW Cluster, Early Years has successfully run three Respecting Difference introductory courses in the above areas for thirty settings with over 60 participants. As well as the training groups will access follow up support site visits and parent workshops as well as receiving the Media Initiative resource box that contains six puppets and the full curriculum kit.

The Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) was developed by Early Years and the Peace Initiatives in the USA. It combines a series of cartoon media messages with the preschool and Foundation Stage curricula. Together they aim to build a better understanding among children of physical, racial and cultural differences. Bullying behaviours and the inclusion of Traveller children are also addressed.

The training of early years' practitioners to implement the programme is a vital component of this initiative and much work has gone into the development of this. The training gives practitioners an opportunity to reflect on their own values, attitudes and prejudices as well as a chance to look in depth at the programme and is relevant to the whole staff team. Settings are given a follow up site visit to support them with implementing the programme.

Mary O'Reilly, Area Manager in the area said, "We were very pleased to receive this funding and with the number of groups in the area who were interested in attending the training. We hope all of the participants found the training useful and relevant and will go on to use the equipment in their settings. Early Years would also like to thank the EU Peace 111 funding for supporting this work."

MEMBERSHIP FACTS AND FIGURES

SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS WHO COMPLETED A MEMBERSHIP SURVEY THIS YEAR. WE USE ALL OF THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY BOTH IN OUR LOBBYING WORK AND TO MAKE SURE WE ARE DOING A GOOD JOB AS YOUR UMBRELLA BODY. THIS YEARS ANNUAL DRAW FOR A YEARS FREE MEMBERSHIP SAW THREE WINNERS; EGLINTON COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE, MACOSQUIN PRIMARY SCHOOL DAYCARE AND GARVAGH PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP. SOME OF THE KEY RESULTS ARE SUMMARISED BELOW.

Member Groups: at the end of this year we had 948 paid members, 166 members returned a survey.

Offices: most members contact our Belfast office for assistance, with telephone being the most popular way of contacting Early Years. The majority of these calls are about our EYS service and our training programme.

Helpfulness: of those who responded to our survey 85% felt staff were friendly and helpful.

Mailings: 96% of members say our mailings are useful and relevant, and there was a 6% improvement in members stating that they got funding information in a timely fashion.

Membership: 93% of respondents find it useful to be a member, members find the following the biggest benefits of membership.

- Advice from EYS / Advisor / Early Years
- Training
- Developments / information / legislation

Members would like to see us provide more information on funding and have suggested some improvements to our training including more courses, more courses in the evening and a review of pricing; we will be working over the coming year to address these issues.

Value for money: 82% of respondents said membership was value for money. 60% of members avail of our discounted insurance with Lockton-Allianz and 42% avail of our discount with NES Arnold. We would like to remind members that we also have discounts with

Chambers Coach Hire and the Northern Bank. We will be working over the course of this year to identify other areas for member benefits.

EYS Service: improvements suggested included longer visits and changes to cluster training. Our area managers are looking at the EYS service as it exists and identifying areas where it could be improved. 85% of those who responded said their EYS/Advisor is knowledgeable and helpful

Training: 75% of those who had responded had participated in training, 70% said training staff were knowledgeable and helpful.

Information: 48% of members say that this newsletter is 'very good' which is a 6% increase from last year; 97% of respondents said the content is useful and relevant.

Website: 44% of members who responded had used our website, which was an 8% increase from last year. We are pleased to see more members using the website and would encourage any of you who have not logged on to the members section to do so! We hope to have an online booking system for training operational soon and our online bookstore will be up and running by the end of the year.

As part of our annual review of membership we looked at the rates charged by other organisations doing similar work. a summary of this review is on the back page of this newsletter (all prices are for ten months), as you will see Early Years is very competitive in relation to other similar organisations. We will continue to work hard to make sure any prices rises we have to make are minimal.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE WORLD FORUM

EARLY YEARS STAFF HAVE REFLECTED ON WORKSHOP SESSIONS DELIVERED AT THE WORLD FORUM ON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION, HELD IN JUNE 2009. IN THIS AND FORTHCOMING ISSUES WE WILL HIGHLIGHT SOME KEY LEARNING POINTS FROM THESE SESSIONS.

BRINGING NATURE INTO INDOOR CLASSROOMS

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Toni Christie, New Zealand, **Robin Christie**, New Zealand, **Swati Popat**, India **Claire Warden**, Scotland
Moderator: **Sebastian Chuwa**, Tanzania
Coordinated by the Nature Action Collaborative for Children Leadership Team

SYNOPSIS

It is well accepted that children require opportunities to connect with nature, the focus of this session was to demonstrate opportunities to help children connect with nature when indoors. The workshop highlighted that bringing nature inside is an option to facilitate this and there are other solutions for helping children make connections with nature when access to outside space is limited.

The presenters shared images of environments where they had worked to bring nature inside their settings. The Christie's highlighted that displays of natural materials should be designed to be touched as all young children learn through their senses and movement. This is also more effective if the objects, e.g. shells, stones, feathers, wood etc. stimulate a variety of learning experiences.

Claire Warden suggested that open ended, multi sensory and 3D objects can be brought in and placed in baskets/containers or hung at low levels to be accessible to all. Swati Popat illustrated how to use the five senses linked to the four elements – fire, water, earth and air and to bring these indoors.

KEY LEARNING POINTS TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR SETTING:

- Use lengths of bamboo canes instead of plastic guttering in the water trays and for slopes. Smaller pieces can be used to blow through to make sounds
- Displays using natural materials should be designed to be touched and be at child height
- Deconstruct roses or use leaves, stones, shells etc. for sorting and classifying
- Use colour from plants for shades e.g. green or yellow etc.
- Use natural materials from local renewable resources e.g. pine mezzanines (raised platforms) which as well as creating changes in floor height mean the enclosed space underneath will give differences in light intensity and colour. A handrail at the top could double up as a plant box – using herbs, flowers or grasses etc.
- Use lanterns with tea lights as fire indoors.

SUSTAINING GROWTH AND MANAGING RESOURCES IN CHALLENGING ECONOMIC TIMES

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Bob Siegel, United States, **Julie Wassom**, United States, **Sonya Aylemore**, Australia

SYNOPSIS

Although this session had no local presenter the impact of the recession has been global and childcare providers everywhere have faced the same issues. The moderator Bob Siegel introduced the session highlighting the problems settings face in difficult financial climates. For instance, when parents may be facing unemployment they may look for cheaper alternatives for childcare solutions; parents may look to families for support or to unregistered providers. Bob identified good financial management systems as key for planning and maintaining adequate cash flow levels.

Julie Wassom identified that for many organisations the first steps taken in a challenging economic environment are to cut costs and make savings by switching suppliers or buying less but Julie suggested that this is the very time to concentrate on marketing, securing new customers and maintaining current customers.

Sonya Aylemore highlighted the importance of high quality childcare and education in maintaining a successful business and continuing to attract parents to the setting. Parents continue to select quality settings for their children.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Ensure you manage your finances and develop budgets.
- Invoice promptly, don't allow payments to fall into arrears, keep your cash flow up to date
- Continue to develop the quality of your setting through your staff and continue to invest in staff development and training
- When you have enquiries about your setting ensure they are developed into visits and enrolment.

EARLY YEARS STAFF HAVE REFLECTED ON THE WORKSHOPS HELD THROUGHOUT THE WEEK AND SELECT HIGHLIGHTS AND POSSIBLE ACTION AREAS FOR MEMBERS.

Name of Workshop: Transformations in Outdoor Spaces: Adding the wonders of nature to outdoor settings where children learn and play

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Vicente Paolillo Filho – Mackenzie Presbyterian University School of Architecture and Planning, Brazil, **Raed Abu Hayannaeh** – Save the Children, Jordan, **Irma Allen** – Swaziland Environmental Authority, Swaziland, **Valerie Cuppens** – Dimensions Foundation, United States, **Gillian McAuliffe** – Principal of Bold Park Community School in Perth Western, Australia
Moderator- **Bishnu Bhatta**, Partnership for Sustainable Development, Nepal

SYNOPSIS

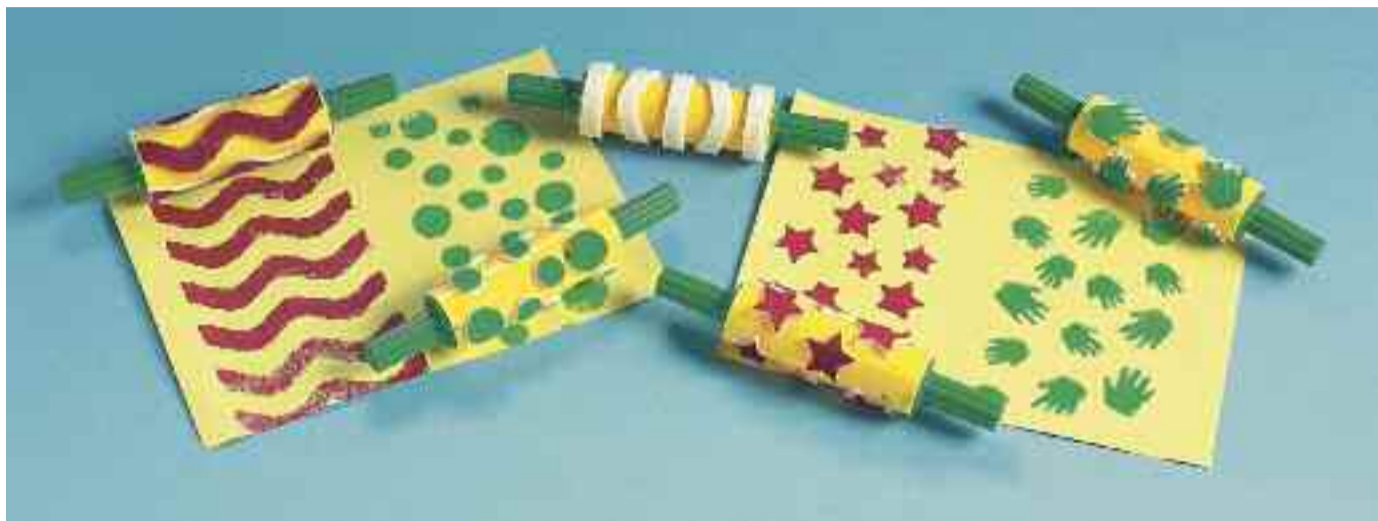
This session aimed to share ideas and photos from Nature Action Collaborative for Children members from around the world, providing creative suggestions on incorporating nature into children's play and learning.

The presentations offered a variety of scenarios ranging from a new purpose built outdoor play area in Brazil, as outlined by Vicente Paolillo Filho, to an 'accidental' outdoor play experience in the form of a fallen tree in Perth, explained by Gillian McAuliffe. A recurring theme of the workshop was the notion that the outdoor space can be used to facilitate learning for children of all ages from young babies through to teens. Many photographs showcasing the outdoor learning area as a stimulating environment for introducing concepts around growth, the senses, nutrition, care, gentleness, co-operation, patience and many, many more were shared. Other topics discussed during the session included the healing power of nature and creating safe spaces for children.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- **Children of all ages:**
The case of the fallen tree was a brilliant example of how children of different ages could use an outdoor space at the same time. The children wanted to cut off the branches and use the wood to build 'cubby houses'. The children were provided with real saws to cut the branches. The three-year old child sought the help of an adult, the five-year old child sought the help a peer while the 11 year old was able to saw the wood independently.
- **Outdoor Risks:**
There are many hazards outdoors that children need to be cautious of. Encourage children to take part in a risk assessment of the outdoor area before play. Take into consideration insect stings, allergies, splinters, climbing areas, sharp tools, etc.
- **Recycling and the Environment:**
Involve children in caring and being responsible for their outdoor environment. Introduce systems to recycle materials, conserve water and make compost.
- **Dividing the outdoor space:**
The plans of the purpose built outdoor play area in Brazil outlined how the environment had been divided into four distinct areas reflecting the seasons and the elements; spring – earth, summer – fire, autumn – air, winter – water. Another setting divided the outdoor space as so; messy area, building area, climbing area, crawling area, interest area, gathering area, music area, etc.
- **Practical Ideas:**
Some interesting ideas for the outdoor learning environment included:
'A Labyrinth of Sound' – a maze of colour-coded plastic pipes were constructed for children to whisper 'secrets' to each other. E.g. "Go to the end of the yellow pipe and I'll whisper a secret to you."
'Tree Cookies' – Slices of tree trunks are varnished and children can use dry wipe markers to write messages, make pictures and draw pictures on.
'Rope Tree' – a 'tree' constructed from ropes provides children with opportunities to climb, swing and the general development of gross motor skills.

EARLY YEARS CHRISTMAS COMPETITION



THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER SO TO HELP YOU TICK ONE MORE THING OFF YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST; OUR PARTNERS AT NES ARE GIVING OUR READERS THE CHANCE TO WIN 1 OF 10 SETS OF ROLLING PIN PAINTERS WORTH OVER £10.

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN THIS PRIZE ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SEND YOUR ESTABLISHMENT NAME AND ADDRESS DETAILS ALONG WITH YOUR NAME, EMAIL ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER IN AN ENVELOPE TO:

Sarah Maddox
NES
Gregory Street
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 4SG



To find out more about NES and their early years range first2learn, visit them online at www.nesarnold.co.uk or alternatively call 0845 120 4525 for a FREE copy of the NES and first2learn catalogues.



Staff from Rathfriland Pre-School Afternoon Session who received their Early Years Accreditation at the AGM in June 2009.

RECENT RESEARCH ROUND-UP

CHILDREN AND TELEVISION

The more television children watch, the more aggressive they become. This is the results of recent research from an American study that looked at the amount of television children were watching. Two-thirds of the mothers interviewed said their three-year-old watched more than two hours of television each day, but even having the television on in the background was linked to aggressive behaviour, the research found.

There are a number of ways that excessive viewing could contribute to a child's degree of aggressive behaviour, the researchers said. Children may see violence on television and then mimic this behaviour, and time spent watching the box may mean less time for activities that help kids develop positively, such as reading or playing.

BABY EINSTEIN

The Walt Disney Company is now offering refunds for all those "Baby Einstein" videos that did not make children into geniuses. According the New York Times, these videos "... may have been great electronic baby sitters, but the unusual refunds appear to be a tacit admission that they did not increase infant intellect."

"We see it as an acknowledgment by the leading baby video company that baby videos are not educational, and we hope other baby media companies will follow suit by offering refunds," said Susan Linn, director of Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, which has been pushing the issue for years. The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends no screen time at all for children under two.

TOUGH LOVE

The think-tank Demos has recently published research that tracked the lives of 9000 families. They found that 13% used a 'tough love' approach that combined warmth and discipline. Regardless of economic status, those who used this approach brought up children that were more able to control their emotions and bounce back from disappointment, and more capable of concentrating and completing tasks. Increasingly these 'character capabilities' are being seen as important. Skills such as empathy, self-regulation and application were 33 times more important in determining income for those who turned 30 in 2000 than for those 12 years older, the report said.



HILLSBOROUGH PLAYGROUP CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY

HILLSBOROUGH PLAYGROUP RECENTLY CELEBRATED THEIR 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GROUP BEING OPEN.

They held a family event for all of the children and families who had been involved with the group, also in attendance were local celebrity John Daly, and MLA Ian Paisley Jr, whose children had attended the group. Hillsborough also used the night to recognise the work of Suzanne and Gloria, who had both been working at the group for 25 years.

SPERRIN BRANCH MEETING

THE RECENT SPERRIN BRANCH MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY 15 PLAYGROUP STAFF AND TWO PARENT AND TODDLER COMMITTEE MEMBERS. AT THE MEETING THE EARLY YEARS BRANCH CONSTITUTION WAS ADOPTED CATHERINE FARIMOND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER FROM LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITATED A WORKSHOP ON FUNDING.

The workshop outlined key tips for members to use when filling in funding application forms and Catherine shared recent findings about common problems that funders were finding in applications they received. Those attending had the opportunity to ask questions and share successes and issues they had in the past in accessing funding.

The meeting gave groups opportunities for networking and there was very positive feedback about the evening.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE STAFF AND COMMITTEE OF MACOSQUIN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP IN MACOSQUIN VILLAGE, NEAR COLERAINE, ON THEIR "OUTSTANDING" ACHIEVEMENT! FOLLOWING THEIR RECENT ETI INSPECTION, THE PLAYGROUP RECEIVED A FIRST CLASS REPORT FROM THE EDUCATION INSPECTORS.

A number of particular strengths include: "the arrangements for pastoral care", "very positive working relationships" and "the excellent behaviour of the children." The report states that "the parents regard the pre-school centre highly" and it is "well thought of in the community".

"The staff are committed to the care and well-being of the children' and 'very good' comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children."

The centre's attention to promoting a healthy lifestyle was highlighted; inspectors were complimentary about the broad range of physical play in the outdoor area, of which the staff and committee are particularly proud. This play area has been developed with help from parents and committee members over recent years to provide creative play, role play and impressive gardening opportunities, as well as energetic physical play in all weathers.

The curriculum offered indoors was praised – "the staff work hard to create a very attractive and stimulating learning environment within the playroom" and "there are very good opportunities for learning in all areas."

The children's involvement in play and all-round development were highlighted: "The children enjoy their play; and language skills are well developed. They display high levels of confidence, independence and creativity."

"The quality of education provided is outstanding." **Well done and keep up the good work.**

MACOSQUIN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP



DUNGIVEN PLAYGROUP HOST WORLD FORUM VISITORS

THE 16TH JUNE WAS AN EXCITING DAY FOR THE TEAM AT DUNGIVEN COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP WHO HOSTED A STUDY VISIT AS PART OF THE WORLD FORUM EVENT WHICH WAS HELD IN BELFAST. DELEGATES FROM AROUND THE WORLD WITH AN INTEREST IN EARLY YEARS TOOK PART IN THIS EVENT, AND AS PART OF THE CONFERENCE A GROUP OF DELEGATES TRAVELLED FROM BELFAST TO DUNGIVEN TO VISIT THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ATTENDING DUNGIVEN PLAYGROUP.

At the time of the visit, the Playgroup which uses the HighScope approach had just achieved, for the third time, the HighScope Ireland Accreditation Award, which reflects the very high standard of education and care in the setting. The play group has now held this award for nine years, having been one of the first High/Scope groups in Ireland to achieve it.

The dedicated team - Marjorie Kealey (Leader) and Paula Burke (Assistant Leader) and committee members facilitated a programme on the day which enabled the study group to join with the children and staff in the playgroup and observe the HighScope routine in action. The World Forum delegates also had an opportunity to meet with the staff team, members of the committee and the HighScope Ireland support team to discuss the HighScope approach further.

After the visit Marjorie said, "Initially we had reservations about the large number of visitors to our playgroup in one day. This proved to be unfounded as the visitors blended into the session and interacted with the children for the duration of the morning. We were delighted to share our experiences and practice with the wide range of delegates. Hopefully they enjoyed our hospitality and too a few ideas home with them."

During the visit two local schools St Canice's Primary School and Drumrane Primary School also provided entertainment for the delegates against the backdrop of the scenic Sperrin landscape. The team were also honoured to welcome the President of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation Larry Schweinhart, who accompanied the delegates on the visit and spent time with the children, staff team and committee in the group.

HIGHSCOPE STAFF



IMELDA MADIGAN: IS AN ENDORSED HIGHSCOPE CURRICULUM TRAINER WITH HIGH/SCOPE IRELAND. SHE FACILITATES HIGHSCOPE TRAINING PROGRAMMES MOSTLY IN CORK AND KERRY.

As a trainer and development worker Imelda works with centres to improve quality through supporting staff to improve their learning environments, routines, assessment procedures and interactions. Child development is central to the HighScope approach and Imelda believes all children have the right to develop to their full potential through supportive interaction strategies and active learning experiences.

Imelda places much emphasis on how we engage, extend and expand the child's learning. She believes we are in a privileged position when we work with children and knowing the appropriate interaction strategies that will help each child develop, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially is of vital importance.

Imelda is also an endorsed Education through Movement trainer providing effective strategies to improve children's movement and music experiences as well as other curriculum areas. Imelda believes that play is central to children's learning and development and as adults who support young children we must value play and be playful.



AIRA OATES HIGHSCOPE ENDORSED TRAINER AND DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Aira is based in the Southern Board Area and supports both PEAG and Non-PEAG settings which implement the HighScope Curriculum. She conducts site-visits and runs cluster training sessions that offer on-going support in developing the HighScope Curriculum within settings which also includes the delivery of HighScope Pre-School Implementation and Conflict Resolution courses.

Aira is currently running the HighScope Pre-School Implementation Course in Armagh, funded by Southern Health and Social Care Trust, and part of her work involves supporting groups in the HighScope Ireland Accreditation process to achieve the HighScope Ireland Accreditation Award.

Along with the rest of the team Aira attends Endorsed Trainer Days in Dublin run by the HighScope Ireland Consultant. She has also had the opportunity to take part in two HighScope UK conferences and workshops delivered by Betsy Evans, as well as playing an active role in HighScope Ireland conferences.



MOBILE PHONE POLICIES

RECENT INCIDENTS IN THE NEWS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE FOR SETTING OWNERS, MANAGERS AND COMMITTEES TO HAVE A POLICY RELATING TO THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES WHILE ON THE PREMISES.

These policies should be included in the staff handbook, the parent's information booklet and made clear to all staff /new staff, parents and visitors. This policy is linked to a setting's general policy on permission for taking photos of children. Some guidelines for developing a policy are set out below, if you need further advice please contact your Early

Years Specialist or Advisor.

- Ensure your policy covers mobile phone calls, texting and picture taking / video messaging.
- Decide what you will allow: eg phones can only be used in the staff room during break and lunch time, or a blanket ban – strictly no personal mobile phones on the premises at any time.
- Emergency considerations: if you decide not to let staff have their mobile phones on the premises, what arrangements can you make for them to be contacted in an emergency?
- What are the consequences for a breach of the policy?
- What if someone asks to have their phone on for a

specific reason? Each request should be considered and judged on its merits.

- What is the situation regarding a company provided mobile phone, eg one held by managers?
- What is the situation regarding outings – do you allow staff to bring their own phones with them for emergencies or does the setting provide a mobile for this?
- If staff are permitted to store their phones in a staff room, in the managers desk or in a locker (for example) who is liable if they are stolen or go missing?
- If you provide a landline for staff to use do they have to pay to make calls?

NES – EARLY YEARS PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES

NES have enjoyed a successful relationship with Early Years, and have been a key supporter of the Early Years AGM since 2004. We are delighted to continue working alongside such a renowned organisation into 2010. As a market leader in both early years and primary sectors, NES offers an innovative, curriculum-focused product range with many of our products having been recommended by early years and teaching professionals.

2010 – THE MOST EXCITING YEAR YET

As teaching and the curriculum evolves, NES are working hard to ensure we are bringing you exciting, innovative resources, which meet your early year's needs. This is why for 2010 we can bring you 1,000s of new and exclusive resources developed by NES. Also new for 2010 is our NES Service Assurance – we're so confident about our service that if it doesn't meet our high standards and we fail to rectify the matter to your satisfaction, we will give you £100 off your next NES order, meaning you can shop with NES in complete confidence.

EXCLUSIVE EARLY YEARS MEMBER OFFER

We are also dedicated to bringing you these fantastic resources at great value, so we have been working to improve our efficiency and have reduced the price of 1,000s of products for 2010. To help stretch your budget even further, Early Years members are entitled to an exclusive 10% off all NES and first2learn orders all year round. Simply quote NA1087 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 NA1086. Please note discounts can not be used in conjunction with any other offers.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR BRAND NEW 2010 CATALOGUES ARRIVING SOON OR REQUEST A CATALOGUE BY PHONING 0845 120 4525 OR VISIT WWW.NESARNOLD.CO.UK TODAY.



EARLY YEARS – LOCKTON CHRISTMAS COMPETITION



As part of the ongoing partnership between insurance broker Lockton and Early Years, we have a fantastic prize for one lucky winner. Lockton are offering four tickets for Grand Opera House, Belfast for the Panto – Aladdin, on any date up until Saturday 16th January 2010. Also included is one family room in the Radison Blu, 3 Cromac Place, Ormeau Road, BT7 2JB, Belfast for two adults and two children.

Question: What is the name of the insurance broker Early Years is partner with?

Please send your answers marked “Early Years Competition” to:

Debra Doherty
Early Years
6c Wildflower Way
Belfast
BT12 6TA

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 20TH DECEMBER 2008. GOOD LUCK!

COMPARISON OF MEMBERSHIP PRICES

	Early Years 2009/10*	Scottish PPA	Welsh PPA	Pre-School Learning Alliance	Irish PPA
Parent & Toddler	£21.00	£44.00	£26.00	£29.00	£47.50
Playgroup	£53.00	£64.00	£41.50	£37.50 low income £75.00 high income	£112.50
Creche	£53.00	£60.00 – up to 4hrs £189.00 – 4hrs plus	Not available	£37.50 low income £75.00 high income	£112.50
Out of School Club	£53.00	£60.00	Not available	£37.50 low income £75.00 high income	£90.00
Full Daycare	£75.00	£92.00	£74.00	£75.00	£135.00
Nursery School/Unit/Class	£35.00	Not indicated	Not available	School membership £35.00	Not indicated
Foundation Stage (Year 1 or 2)	£35.00	Not indicated	Not available	School membership £35.00	Not indicated
Individual	£22.00	£25.00	£21.00	£33.00	£47.50
Student	FREE	Not indicated	Not available	£15.00	£32.00