

Information Briefing



Issue No 8 - April 2008

Welcome to the latest edition of the Early Years Information Briefing for the early childhood sector. This is one in a series of briefing papers which will be issued to Early Years staff and members.

MINISTER SEEKS VIEWS ON HEALTH REFORM PROPOSALS

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey has launched a full public consultation on his proposals to reform health and social care in Northern Ireland.

The consultation will close on 12 May 2008 and the key elements of the Minister's proposals are:

- A new Regional Health and Social Care Board that will focus on financial management, performance management and commissioning.
- A new multi-professional Regional Public Health Agency to create better inter-sectoral working to tackle health promotion and inequalities and help realise the shared goal of a better and healthier future for all.
- The establishment of five Local Commissioning Groups to cover the same geographical area of the five Health and Social Care Trusts.
- A smaller, more sharply focussed Department.
- A common services organisation that will provide a range of support function for the health and social care service.
- Reinforcing and strengthening the role of Health and Social Services Councils.
- Increased democratisation through local government representation on key bodies and improved partnership working.

For more information visit www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

GILDERNEW WELCOMES CHILDCARE REPORT

Rural Development Minister Michelle Gildernew MP, MLA has been presented with the Report of the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group during a visit to Ardboe SureStart. Praising the work of the SureStart Centre the Minister said: *"This project is an excellent example of a rural childcare facility that meets the needs of families in the local community. This project has the potential to bring about great improvements in the lives of local women and children, support families and contribute to the economic and social development of the area."*

In June 2007 the minister took the first step towards more accessible childcare for rural families by commissioning a Rural Childcare Stakeholders' Group to take a fresh look at the question of childcare in rural areas. The stakeholder group was chaired by Siobhan Fitzpatrick of Early Years – the organisation for Young Children. She said: *"I would like to congratulate the minister for showing such commitment to the issue of rural child care and adopting such an innovative approach to developing solutions to an issue which has been of great importance to rural communities across Northern Ireland."*

The report identifies the main factors that affect access to childcare in rural areas and makes recommendations on how current and future provision can be improved. The minister continued: *"I intend to work with my colleagues across the Executive to ensure good quality, accessible and affordable childcare is available in every part of the country. As a starting point, at least 5% of funding of the Quality of Life measure of the new Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is targeted towards children and young people. In addition I plan to establish a Rural Childcare Programme as part of my department's anti-poverty and social inclusion framework and I expect it to be operational by autumn 2008."*

For more information visit www.early-years.org/news

EARLY YEARS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 2008

Our Early Years International Conference and AGM 2008 takes place on the 12th and 13th June 2008 at the Derry City Hotel. The theme will be "Eager and Able Learners". You can expect to receive your booking form shortly.

Each year Branches are invited to nominate Directors of the Association and the Branch Representative to the Early Years Council. The Branch may also propose any matters they wish the Association to discuss at the AGM in the form of resolutions.

Procedures for Nominations and Resolutions

1. Any two members may propose and second a nomination or resolution for the Early Years AGM. Resolutions must also be endorsed by
 - The Member's Branch
 - The Board of Directors
2. Endorsed resolutions should be submitted to the May Early Years Council Meeting
3. The Early Years Council reserves the right to endorse or not endorse the resolution and shall have the discretion to request amendments to the resolution.

Each Branch should encourage members to attend the Early Years Annual General Meeting. The AGM provides the opportunity for members to influence Early Years policy and strategy and also receive feedback on what the organisation has achieved on behalf of the membership over the preceding year.

For more information visit www.early-years.org/agm2008 or telephone the AGM Enquiries line on +44 (0) 28 9038 7911.

NJC SALARY SCALES

The NJC salary scales for 2008/09 are not yet available. Local Government Employers have offered an increase of 2.2% while unions are claiming 6% or 50p an hour, whichever is the greater. New salary scales will not be available until these negotiations are complete.

NORTHERN IRELAND POPULATION INCREASES TO 1.8 MILLION BY 2011

The Northern Ireland population is projected to increase by 70,000 people, or 4%, over the next five years. The population is projected to grow from 1.742 million in 2006 to 1.812 million in 2011, according to figures released by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

For more information visit www.nisra.gov.uk

INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

“Children have the right to be as healthy as possible, live and play in a safe healthy unpolluted environment and benefit from preventive health care and education”.

Article 24 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child

Early Years – the organisation for young children encourages pre-school settings to implement an Infection Control Policy. Your policy should affirm your commitment to creating an environment where children and adults are free from infection, by having in place procedures relating to

- Hand Washing
- Cleaning of Toilet Area
- Cleaning of Toys, Equipment and Furnishings
- Staff
- Food Hygiene
- Accidental Soiling / Nappy Changing
- Cleaning Materials
- Exclusion of Sick Children
- Animals

For further information on the Infection Control Policy visit the membership section of the Early Years website at www.early-years.org/membership or contact your local Early Years Specialist or Advisor.

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

ZOO DAY 2008

The Early Years Annual Zoo day will take place on Wednesday 14th May. All members are invited to come along to Belfast Zoo from 10am for our annual members' event. Booking forms should by now have been returned to us; for information please contact Jennie on 028 9038 7904.

CROSS BORDER CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT

The Management Committee of the Cross Border Training Programme and the Cross Border Respecting Difference Programme will be hosting a Celebration of Achievement on Thursday 22nd May 2008 from 1pm to 5pm in the Armagh City Hotel. For details please contact Patricia Curran on 028 9038 7925.