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E-NEWSLETTER



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THIS ISSUE:

- RRDp MAKES £100K I.T INVESTMENT
- SETTINGS IN FOCUS:
 - BUTTON MOON
 - DERVOCK
 - LA PETITE ECOLE

Early Years, in partnership with the National Childhood Network, implement the **Rural Respecting Difference Programme (RRDP)**, which is based on the **Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) Respecting Difference Programme**.

RRDP is specifically aimed at rural pre-school, daycare and after-school settings across Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland targeting children 2-12 years old, their parents, teachers and leaders to increase awareness of diversity and develop respect for difference.

This project is supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).



RRDP MAKES £100k I.T INVESTMENT

With all the challenges that Covid 19 has brought about this past year, being able to continue with the delivery of the Rural Respecting Difference Programme was one we were delighted to overcome with the provision of I.T equipment to our programme settings, allowing virtual engagement between Early Years staff, practitioners, and children to continue.

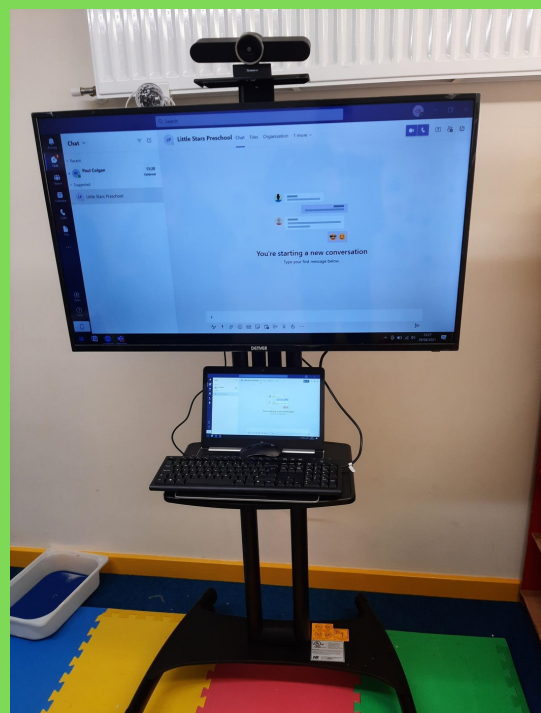
We are delighted that settings have the opportunity to continue building relationships and hope that the provision of this equipment will allow opportunities for creative engagement in the future.



One setting, who up until this point, had no I.T equipment or broadband, is Glenarm Community Preschool. Joining the programme in September 2020, they received a 43-inch plasma television, laptop and broadband provision. This allowed the children and staff to connect with other settings for Good Relations activities and facilitated virtual meetings for the project during this year when face-to-face contact hasn't been possible. The preschool Leader, Mrs Lynn Rodgers, said that she, her staff, Management Committee and the children's parents are absolutely delighted with the IT equipment.



Settings received a variety of equipment including laptops, data projectors, trolley-mounted TVs and mobile broadband units



Button Moon Pre-School, Tandragee OUR VISIT TO THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY

As we arrived to work one day, we noticed some new visitors in our area! Upon further investigations we found out it was a new family from the travelling community. Adela, our Pre School Manager, visited their home to welcome them to our community and ask their permission to bring a number of our children to meet them to learn more about the lifestyle of a traveller. We have been covering this particular media initiative topic and had introduced Kathleen at the beginning of that week. The family we met were really approachable and welcomed us with open arms. The lady whom we mainly spoke with was called Lily, she introduced us to the rest of the family.



Our children asked the family some questions which Lily and her family were very happy to answer, “Where do you go on holiday?” “What is the best place to visit?” “Have you any children?” “Do you get cold in your caravan?” In return, they asked us a few questions, “What age are you?” “Have you ever been in a caravan before?” “Would you like to live in a caravan?”

When we were leaving, they gave us a bag with buns, a cake and some biscuits which was extremely kind and we really appreciated their gesture. This was a lovely experience for both staff and children and we could tell the family really appreciated our visit.

Dervock Community Playgroup SHARED SESSION ARTWORK



In preparation for their Shared Activity, Dervock Community Playgroup decided that their focus would be around the disability message and felt that this could be explored through setting up a role play Optician's office in their room.

The children enjoyed this immensely; they tried on different glasses, looked at their own eye colour, had their eyes tested, and made appointments for return visits. They found glasses that they felt suited each of the persona dolls and went on to design their own frames at the art table.

One child, having completed the jigsaw puzzle, drew a picture of a boy playing with a bat and ball with “ a tiny little arm” while another child created a picture of a girl in a wheelchair and remarked that “Her wee legs don't work.” The children's work was then used to create a wonderful wall display.

La Petite Ecole Montessori, Sligo



La Petite Ecole Montessori, a pre-school setting in Co. Sligo, has recently implemented the Rural Respecting Difference Programme into its practice. The Leader, Stephanie Mc Garry-Poirier, is delighted at the success of the programme and is impressed at how easily the children have welcomed the persona dolls and each of the media messages that they address. Stephanie remarks that the RRDP both compliments and enriches the Montessori Culture curriculum (in particular the Geography and Art strands) which she delivers, and that the persona dolls – Kim and Bakola – are an asset to the children’s exploration of the countries of the world and multi- cultural experiences.

Some of the children from La Petite Ecole Montessori transition into the local primary school which also has a percentage of children from the Traveller community in attendance. Stephanie mentioned that having Kathleen, the persona doll representing the Traveller tradition, has been a huge benefit for her when addressing cultural difference in a sensitive and positive manner with the children.

Double Celebration for Button Moon Preschool

Congratulations to Adela Beggs, manager and leader of Button Moon Pre-School, who has been awarded a BEM (British Empire Medal) for services to education and young people. The award comes as the setting celebrates its 30th anniversary - a very special year for everyone in the school community.



“It was a bit of a shock but it’s an honour, not just for myself, but for all the people who have helped over the years....I couldn’t have done what I have done all these years without the help of others.”

Our Project Partner - The National Childhood Network

National Childhood Network (NCN) (ROI) works together with Early Years, The Organisation for Young Children, to help build peace and reconciliation across the Island of Ireland. One of the cross border projects we are currently involved with is the Rural Respecting Difference Programme.

NCN aims to provide a forum for a range of stakeholders to work together in a collaborative and inclusive way to advance the achievement of national quality standards in Early Childhood and School Age Childcare services.



Other aims and objectives of NCN include:

- The advancement of children's rights and promotion of their health, well-being, learning and development in all childhood services.
- The empowerment and enrichment of the Early Childhood and After School Workforce.
- Interagency/cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership work leading to more effective integrated support to service providers that will secure best outcomes for children and families
- The development and delivery of high-quality training for all involved in the development, delivery and support of services
- Support for parents in the care and education of their children
- Integrated, strategic, needs led planning and evaluation
- On-going research at all levels to inform the development of services

Further information on NCN is available at: <https://www.ncn.ie>

Project delivery support - Rural Action

Rural Action supports Early Years in delivering the Good Relations elements of the RRDP. Rural Action is a not-for-profit social purpose company established in 2019 to meet an identified need for a regional rural body with a focus on project and programme design, development and implementation.



Rural Action seeks to inspire action and make a positive contribution to the everyday lives of rural people. They believe passionately about engaging people to build a better future. They work to support living, working, sustainable and shared communities. More specifically, they:

- Seek to shape ideas into practical actions working within the team and with communities, partners and stakeholders to identify needs leading to the design and development of projects and programmes
- Want to spark creative ideas and answers to local issues through piloting and testing solutions and through the sharing and exchange of information

Rural Action has an experienced staff team involved in rural development, project design, management and delivery of programmes including good relations training and mentoring.