

# CDI Newsletter



Meeting needs, making changes, improving outcomes

March 2011, Volume 5, Issue 2

## Inside this Issue:

Introduction	1
Volleyball Tournament	1
ECCE Evaluation	2
DD and MT Evaluations	2
Healthy Schools Evaluation	3
Service/ Process Evaluation	5
Community Survey	5
Documenting Experience	5
EAC	6
Archiving Project	6
SLT Carnival	7
Food & Growing Children	7
Date for your Diary	8
Lunchtime Seminar	9
Best Practice Seminar	9

## Lunchtime Seminar

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 12pm-2pm  
RUA RED

**'Adult Attachment Theory'**  
Facilitated by Sheila Hayes,  
Clinical Counsellor:

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am-2pm  
RUA RED

Best Practice Seminar:  
**Child-Friendly Communities:  
Policy, Practice and What the  
Research Says. Speakers  
include:**

Professor Brendan Gleeson  
John Whyte, Rialto Development  
Association  
Playboard Speaker TBC

## Introduction:

Over the last three years you will have heard a great deal about how our services have been designed, the issues arising in relation to implementation, and the apparent impact these programmes are having in children, families and ultimately the wider community.

Whilst CDI has always been clear that our priority is to improve outcomes for children and families, we have other, complementary objectives which we have also been working very hard to achieve. One of these is to inform and influence policy and increasingly, Government is looking for an evidenced basis for decisions and strategic plans. We believe we are well placed to support this move to evidence informed policy and curriculum and very much look forward to our multiple evaluation results becoming available towards the end of this year. These will be critical to the thinking of all those who have invested so heavily in CDIs work and who are concerned about and interested in, improving outcomes for children.

Given the very significant focus which research and evaluation plays in our strategic plan and daily implementation, and the centrality of these elements to enabling us fulfill our policy influencing objectives, this month's newsletter particularly focuses on the many ways in which CDI is developing and supporting learning in this area.

We also have plenty of news about recent and forthcoming events so be sure and have your diary ready when you settle down for a read!

Marian Quinn, CEO



## Jump! Slam! Volley! CDI's All-In Volleyball Tournament

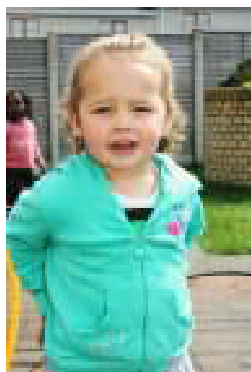
The Childhood Development Initiative will hold a one day volleyball tournament on the **28<sup>th</sup> May** at the Tallaght Leisure Centre from **10am-6pm**.

All you need is six willing participants to take part, no skill required, it's all about fun and getting to know those that live and work in Tallaght West. Practice sessions take place every Wednesday evening 5-6pm at the Tallaght Leisure centre.

For more information or to register your team please contact Paula on 4940030 or email [paula@twcdi.ie](mailto:paula@twcdi.ie).

# ECCE Programme Evaluation:

**Author: Siobhan Keegan (Lead Researcher) Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology.**



The ECCE evaluation team have been busy organising all the data that they have collected with the help of the children, parents and preschools of Tallaght West. We would like to extend a sincere thanks to everybody who has taken part in the evaluation so far. Currently, we are gearing up for the final wave of data collection with Cohort 2, which will mean working with children, parents and staff in May and June. The team are excited to be coming to the final stages of the evaluation and look forward to checking-in with everybody one last time, particularly all the boys and girls who have been such a big help to them already. As the lead researcher I will be in touch with Cohort 2 preschools in the coming weeks to make arrangements for visits and I would like to remind everybody of my contact details should they like more information about the evaluation.

[siobhan.keegan@dit.ie](mailto:siobhan.keegan@dit.ie)

# Doodle Den & Mate-Tricks Programme Evaluation:

**Author: Dr. Karen Kerr (Lead Researcher), Dr. Andy Biggart & Dr. Liam O'Hare (Principal Investigators) Centre for Effective Education, Queens University Belfast**



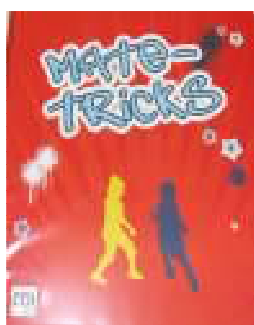
The Centre for Effective Education at Queen's University Belfast is currently evaluating the Doodle Den and Mate-Tricks programmes in Tallaght West. We are carrying out two randomised controlled trial evaluations of 'Doodle Den' and 'Mate-Tricks', along with a process evaluation. The evaluation has been following 3 annual cohorts of children, the first cohort began in October 2008.

Children complete assessments at two points in the year – at the beginning and towards the end of the school year. Alongside this, parents and teachers also complete surveys on how they perceive the performance of the children. The children's assessments, for the most part, are completed in school. We never cease to be amazed at the hard work put in by the children to complete their assessments – even if they find some of the questions difficult. Also, without the continued support of schools and service providers the smooth running of these assessment sessions would not have been possible!

It is always invaluable to collect the perceptions of teachers and parents and a combination of all viewpoints will lead to a very interesting story of what the children, in all three cohorts, have gained from taking part in the programmes. We very much look forward to completing our analysis when the final sets of data are collected in June. As part of our work with parents, there was the opportunity for parents to complete their survey over the phone. This was a very interesting process as parents talked a lot about how much their children were enjoying the programmes and how much difference they think it is making in their child's life. These were positive and encouraging anecdotes for all of those working very hard in Tallaght West to improve children's lives.



We have also had the opportunity to observe the programmes 'in action'. This has been a very enjoyable experience and we are grateful to those who work with the children for their support in conducting the observations. We have observed such dedication and hard work with a truly committed approach to not only conducting the programmes, but ensuring that children learn in a secure and positive environment.



As part of the process evaluation, the children were asked about how they are getting on at their programme. They were asked what they think of their group, how useful they think it is and about their facilitators. Conducting the Client Satisfaction survey was a great experience for the research team. The children were very responsive and excited about sharing their views on their after school programme. This work highlights the importance of giving children 'a voice' in the design and implementation of services they are involved in. The findings are a great insight into what children think and should be used to inform future practice. After all, it is important to consult with those at the receiving end of the programmes on how much they value and what they think of the impact of such work. We would like to remind everybody of our contact details should they like more information about the evaluation.

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## CDI's Healthy Schools Programme Evaluation

**Author: Karin O' Sullivan (Lead Researcher) Trinity College Dublin in collaboration with National University of Ireland Maynooth.**



The Healthy Schools Programme evaluation team comprises researchers from the School of Nursing & Midwifery at Trinity College Dublin and the Department of Psychology at NUI Maynooth. We come from a range of backgrounds including Healthcare Statistics, Maths, Psychology, Nursing, Anthropology and Education. The evaluation that we are undertaking is a three year longitudinal study on the process and impact of the Healthy Schools Programme which is being implemented in five schools in the Tallaght West community. As part of the evaluation we are carrying out a substantial amount of fieldwork in the community. Key study participants include the children from the participant schools, school staff, parents, members of the wider community, funders, and relevant health and community service representatives. The process to date has been a very interesting one where we have learned a great deal about the community and the local schools through our interactions with the project stakeholders.

A large component of the evaluation research is being undertaken with approximately 550 children across the participating schools. We are gathering information from school children through the use of a health and well-being questionnaire, and we are taking height, weight, and waist circumference measures. These latter three will be used to calculate the children's Body Mass Index or BMI). This information is being gathered at three time points over three school years.

In preparation for undertaking data collection in the schools the evaluation team recruited additional fieldworkers with backgrounds in psychology or children's nursing, from a number of institutions including Trinity College Dublin, NUI Maynooth, and UCD. Fieldworkers are crucial when undertaking fieldwork with large numbers of children. They help administer the data collection process, are available to answer any of the questions that the children might have, and collectively ensure that the children are safe and well supervised. Fieldworkers receive training on a number of areas including: introduction and background to the Healthy Schools Programme (HSP), the HSP evaluation methodology, general and research project specific child protection protocols, and the more practical tasks and processes involved in undertaking data collection in the schools themselves. All fieldworkers are required to have Garda Vetting.

One of the first and perhaps more crucial learning curves that we faced in terms of undertaking research in schools was that not only did we need to be a very organised team – but organised in a way that we could link our data collection times with the very busy schedules that are part and parcel of school life. School schedules can change for various reasons, children may be absent when we visit the school, or unexpected events can arise, all of which require the research team to be flexible in response. The schools themselves were extremely accommodating and between us we worked out a process that suited both parties. Engaging with the Principals around this issue also meant that we could eliminate any unforeseen or unnecessary burden for the schools during the data collection visits. We are currently in the middle of our final year of fieldwork in the schools which, we are delighted to report, is running very smoothly.

Children as young as Junior and Senior Infants have also taken part in the study. As they are too young themselves to fill in the questionnaire component, parents or guardians of these very young children provide information on health and well being on their behalf. This information is being collected by telephone interview. The parents and guardians taking part in the study have been extremely accommodating and generous with their time and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them. We will be conducting our third and final round of parent interviews in the coming months, and we look forward to speaking with participants again.

We are also gathering additional data from a range of other programme stakeholders including school principals, school staff, parents/guardians, programme coordinators, programme funders, and other key health and community representatives. Participants take part through one-to-one interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. This part of the study involves gleaning a better understanding of *how* the Healthy Schools programme is working in practice, and *why* it is working that way. Social programmes take place in social contexts that are themselves always changing at individual, local and national levels. Our aim is to capture this dynamic in order to inform an understanding of the Healthy Schools Programme in context. We look forward to undertaking the remaining data collection with the local community. I would like to remind everybody of my contact details should they like more information about the evaluation.

## Service and Process Evaluations:

The six independent and rigorous evaluations are now into their third academic year of implementation and what a wonderful few years it has been (if one is to ignore the unpleasant relationship we now have with the IMF and ECB!). All of the evaluations are in the midst of data collection, analysis and review, having submitted a second set of interim reports in December '10. As readers may recall, an agreed set of procedures were drawn up to facilitate the feedback process for the interim reports. Some of the key baseline and process findings from the first set of reports were presented at CDI's 'Story So Far' event last September. CDI will be organising another information-sharing event which we hope to coincide with our annual July barbeque so watch this space!

The evaluations are due to be completed by September and, in the case of the process evaluation, by December 2011 (with outcome data beginning to emerge in late 2011/ early 2012). This will be followed by a very intensive period of interpreting findings, consulting with key stakeholders, and considering the overarching message to inform policy and practice.

## Community Survey:

This survey is a follow up to the 2004 Report "How Are Our Kids?" and is intended to provide us with insights into any changes in the profile of children and families in relation to, for example, their living situation, socioeconomic status, education, access to services, use of community facilities, community connectedness, health and general wellbeing. The content of the questionnaire was revised slightly following consultation with a small working group from the Children's Services Committee to explore the many positive aspects of being a family living in Tallaght West.

The household element of the Community Survey was completed in early September '10 by fifteen trained residents who received considerable support throughout this process, the methodology of which will be fully documented. The youth survey was completed in early November, facilitated by both schools and informal education settings. 141 families with 313 children participated in the follow up study as well as 208 young people. This means we have gathered data on potentially 521 children and young people in Tallaght West. The findings from the survey are currently being analysed and a series of opportunities to feedback and engage stakeholders in interpreting the data are being planned. Following this, data will be used to inform Phase Two of CDI's 10-year strategy as well as being used as a valuable source of information for other key stakeholders. The data from this study will also be archived at a later date with the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSA) in UCD.

## Documenting the Research Experience.

The next EAC meeting will take place on May 13th 2011 with our evaluation teams. This marks the first collective meeting with the six evaluation teams and our EAC members and our funders. Both the EAC and bi-annual meetings continue to be chaired by our methodological and analytic expert (and Board member) Dr. Suzanne Guerin from UCD.

The EAC meetings offer CDI a valuable opportunity to reflect on the progress and challenges arising from the evaluations at a very broad level while the bi-annual meetings allow participants to update each other on the status of the individual evaluations in addition to exploring some of the practical issues with responding to specific elements of the evaluations. The discussion in May is expected to be an information-sharing, thought-provoking, and exciting opportunity to not only reflect on the significance of the research and evaluation taking place in a community such as Tallaght West but also to plan for the deluge of research activity over the next year. We are delighted that Dr, Sinead Hanafin (Head of Research) National Childrens Strategy Team from the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs will also attend the session.

## Expert Advisory Committee and Bi-Annual Meetings:

As well as managing six, independent evaluations of our work, CDI is leading an all Ireland process of documenting the experience of undertaking rigorous evaluations in community settings.

Over the last three years, we have become increasingly clear that we have gained significant skills and knowledge in relation to the commissioning, implementation and interpretation of research and evaluation, and have identified key elements of success and things to be avoided!

Having approached stakeholders in many organisations and settings, we now have commitment to produce a set of papers, (possibly even a book) which will guide anyone wanting to commission, undertake or understand research processes.

Each paper/chapter is being written through collaboration between at least two academic institutions, and a non-academic input. In this way, we hope that the learning will be applicable to a wide range of settings and organisations.

For more information please contact Tara Murphy at 01 4940030 or email [tara@twcdi.ie](mailto:tara@twcdi.ie)

## RACcER: (Re-use and Archiving of Complex Community-Based Evaluation and Research) Project:

CDI recently collaborated on a 12-month project with the Irish Qualitative Data Archive (NUI Maynooth) to examine and address some of the key challenges to archiving complex qualitative data using CDI as a demonstrator site. The IQDA has extensive experience in dealing with archived data and is currently managing or planning for the archiving of data sets from the national 'Growing Up In Ireland', the 'Life Histories and Social Change in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland', and the 'Returning Migrants' studies. The RACcER project was co-funded by CDI and the Irish Research Council for Humanities & Social Science (IRCHSS) under its knowledge transfer initiative.

Skilled researchers, commissioners of research and potential data users were invited to participate in the RACcER study in order to explore their experiences concerns and perceived risks of archiving qualitative data as well as ways of mitigating those potential risks.

While participants identified several reasons for not archiving qualitative data (e.g. difficulty anonymising data in a small community; resource-intensive; a reduced willingness to participate in research; limited reuse value; data being used out of context; and researchers being open to research scrutiny), there were several reported advantages including

(but not limited to) the potential to explore alternative research questions, contributing to cumulative knowledge regarding children's services, and the archive being used as a valuable teaching resource.

The project recently launched a set of best practice guidelines for archiving qualitative data at a workshop held in the Centre for Effective Services in January. More information about the study as well as access to these guidelines may be found at [www.iqda.ie](http://www.iqda.ie).

**Thought for the day!**  
**" Do not try to live 'up to a standard'  
 rather 'be the standard'.  
 Living up to a standard  
 is living up to the expectation  
 of others.  
 But to be the standard is  
 being the very best of who  
 you are."**

## Food for Growing Children-from Policy to Practice

The CDI lunchtime Seminar on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, held in Red Rua, was on the theme of promoting healthy eating for children -'food for growing children-from policy to practice.

Margaret O'Neill, Community Dietician Manager with the HSE presented a wide range of information outlining the overall policy context, facts and figures about children's food and nutrition, the food pyramid and the role of the HSE in providing supports in this area.

Margaret also provided very useful advice and guidance on healthy eating and the challenges faced by parents in getting children to eat healthily. There were also useful tips for healthy snacks, planning meals and the importance of healthy eating approaches in different settings such as pre-schools and school settings.

There were also discussion about making sense of food labels and making healthier food choices and general parenting tips.



## CDI's Speech and Language Carnival

The CDI Speech Carnival was held on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> February in Sacred Heart Junior School.

The Speech Carnival was created as a method of supporting children's language and speech development through fun, animated and engaging carnival-style games.

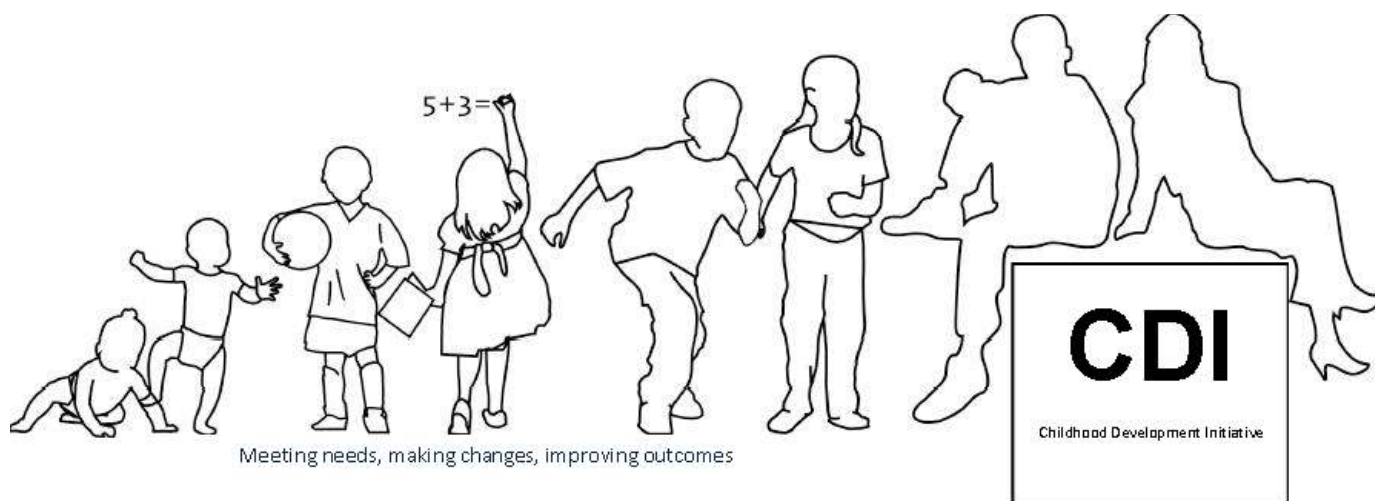
At the Carnival each parent was given a "parent pack" of ideas and ways to continue building speech and language skills within the home. Carnival games included a duck pond that encouraged speech sound learning, a find the ball under the cup game that targeted pronouns (he/she, etc), velcro archery to practice listening skills and 'pin the tail on the donkey' style game that targeted categorisation skills.

This endeavour was originally the brainchild of CDI Senior SLT Jennifer Grundulis. She and former CDI SLT Sinead O'Mahony created the games and materials for the first CDI Speech Carnival in June 2010. This year's carnival on 16 February 2011 grew larger with the support of new CDI SLT Michelle Quinn, and with the help of many Trinity College Speech and Language Therapy students and local preschool volunteers. The community dental team was at hand to meet with children and parents, and give support on tooth friendly eating, dental habits and promoting better oral development by ditching those dodies! Both parents and children alike enjoyed the activities together and many can't wait for next year's carnival!

*Jennifer Grundulis, Senior Speech and Language Therapist*

*Michelle Quinn Speech and Language Therapist*

## Date for your Diary:



## Better Services, Better Outcomes: Integrating Quality in Children's Services

This conference is aimed at frontline practitioners working with children, young people and families. It will:

- Consider research and best practice in relation to quality services;
- Explore organisational processes and staff support requirements which facilitate quality;
- Highlight current policy frameworks which inform and shape quality services.

Wednesday  
7<sup>th</sup> September  
2011  
The Irish Law  
Society  
9.30am-6pm

Further information to follow.



Our Address:  
**Childhood  
Development  
Initiative**

**St Mark's Family and  
Community Centre,  
Fettercairn  
Tallaght  
Dublin 24**

**01 4940030**

**We're on the Web!  
Visit us at:**

**[www.twcdi.ie](http://www.twcdi.ie)**

**March 31<sup>st</sup>**, 12.pm -2pm, RUA RED

**'Adult Attachment Theory'** Facilitated by Sheila Hayes, Clinical Counsellor:

"Attachment is from the cradle to the grave" according to John Bowlby, the originator of Attachment Theory. In our November lecture, Sheila Hayes introduced Attachment Theory. This focused primarily on the work of Bowlby and his collaborator Mary Ainsworth on the mother / infant relationship.

This seminar was very well received and prompted many questions – not least of which was if and how Attachment Theory is relevant to adult relationships.

In our March seminar, Sheila will revisit the topic – this time concentrating on Mary Main's work on adult attachment and in particular, the "Adult Attachment Interview" protocol, which was first, conducted in 1984. This was instrumental in linking infant to adult attachment.

This seminar will examine how the child becomes the adult and how attachment styles are consistent across the life cycle. The secure child becomes the secure adult who is able to cope with negative thoughts. The insecure child with poor self-esteem becomes the insecure adult who fears intimate relationships and/or independence. It will also look at the intergenerational aspect of attachment, how we unwittingly recreate the same attachment style in our own children.

Sheila Hayes has 15 years clinical experience as a counsellor. She holds a Masters Degree in Education specialising in Counselling and Educational Guidance from Trinity College. She runs the Attachment Theory resource website,

**To book your place please contact Paula at 4940030 or email [paula@twcdi.ie](mailto:paula@twcdi.ie)**

## **Best Practice Seminar:**

### **Child-Friendly Communities: Policy, Practice and What the Research Says.**

**April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am-2pm in RUA RED**

CDI's Safe & Healthy Place steering committee invites you to participate in our 'Best Practice' seminar which will share the learning around child friendly communities, the policy, practice and what the research tells us.

Experts in the field from Ireland and abroad will share their learning and debate the merits of different approaches.

#### ***The Seminar will:***

- Inform participants of best practice in child and family friendly urban planning and management;
- Enable participants to reflect on, and critically analyse, their own practice in this area; and
- Facilitate participants to network across a variety of agencies and sectors in order to identify integrated measures to sustain communities.

#### **Speakers:**

**Planning for Families & Children:** Professor Brendan Gleeson

**Managing Play Space Effectively:** Playboard Speaker to be confirmed

**Minimum Standards in Urban Planning:** John Whyte, Rialto Development Association

**To book your place, please contact Paula on 4940030 or email [paula@twcdi.ie](mailto:paula@twcdi.ie).**