

CDI Newsletter



Meeting needs, making changes, improving outcomes

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Inside this Issue:

Introduction	1
Francis Chance, Barnardos	2
Jean Courtney, SDCC	3
Sinead Kelly, Parent	4
Minister Frances Fitzgerald, TD	5
Noelle Spring, Chair, CDI Board	6
Conference Quality Services...	7

Introduction:

CDI recently held its third annual end-of-year celebration on June 23rd 2011 which was attended by the Minister for Children, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald. The purpose of the event was to acknowledge the wonderful work undertaken by a range of stakeholders in Tallaght West over the last three years to develop and deliver high quality services to children and families.

The event was attended by over 100 guests including early years providers, youth services, schools and parents as well as representatives from South Dublin County Council, the Health Service Executive and other organisations.

Marian Quinn (CEO, CDI) opened the event by welcoming everyone in particular, the Minister for Children for a second time to CDI. She emphasised how much we valued the Minister's support in meeting the needs of children and families and reminded us of the significant role that early intervention plays in their lives especially for children growing up in disadvantaged areas. Marian was not alone in strongly welcoming the priority placed on education in the Programme for Government (2011).

A number of guest speakers spoke passionately about their experiences of being involved either directly or indirectly with CDI and readers may reflect on excerpts from their presentations overleaf. Minister Fitzgerald also spoke about the importance of investing in early intervention and the long term benefits to children and families. This was followed by a presentation of Certificates of Achievement by the Minister to 25 service providers who were involved in and supported the work of CDI. Not wanting to leave anyone out, it was the Minister's turn to receive a framed picture of writing from the Doodle Den programme for her new office which was presented by Sean Vaughan (Sacred Heart School).

Noelle Spring, Chair of the CDI Board, concluded by thanking all those who continue to work tirelessly and with immense commitment to improve outcomes for children and families in Tallaght West. The A Glór gospel choir closed the session with superb renditions of well-known 'power ballads' and what followed was a great evening of catching up with colleagues and indeed, friends!

Dr. Tara Murphy
Research & Evaluation Manager



The CDI Team along with Minister Frances Fitzgerald:

Back row: Grainne Smith, Claire Barry, Claire Casey, Paula Kavanagh, Joyce Cahill, Audrey Habington and Aileen Murphy
Front Row: Tara Murphy, Minister Frances Fitzgerald, Marian Quinn and Marguerite Hanratty.

Francis Chance (Assistant Director for Children's Services, Barnardos). Member of Original Consortium and CDI's Implementation Support Group.



A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more.
- Rosabeth Moss Kanter

"The Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative is a unique collaboration of children, families, community, voluntary and statutory organisations. In 2003, under the leadership of Dr. Katherine Zappone (recently and deservedly appointed to the Seanad by An Taoiseach) 25 of us worked long and hard to come up with a strategy for children in Tallaght West. We built on a rich tradition of community participation and inter-agency co-operation. We researched our task with care, consulting carefully with experts in Ireland and elsewhere and with the most important experts – the children and families of Tallaght West to create a vision for children of Tallaght West with defined outcomes.

"To achieve these outcomes, we designed a suite of services and a ten year strategy. We brought our strategy to our Philanthropic Partners, Atlantic Philanthropies and to Government. They responded generously with an initial investment of €15 million over five years. Over the last five years we have worked hard to implement our strategy and we look forward with confidence to the evaluation reports on all our endeavours. I believe that, in our first five year strategy, we have made a significant positive impact on the lives of many children and families in Tallaght West.

"But the deterioration in the economic environment a long way from Tallaght West has conspired against our work. It has placed additional stresses on the children and families of our communities, both in relation to their employment and income and on their morale. In addition it has placed severe limitations on the providers of vital support services to children and families, both statutory services and community and voluntary services.

"Our vision was that we would create evidence based services which would be subject to rigorous evaluation. If our services are not achieving their outcomes, we expect that they will be ceased or redesigned. If they are achieving their outcomes we expect that they will be continued and rolled out to all children who need them in Tallaght West, and that they will inform policy to children and families in need throughout Ireland.

"Bertie Ahern (previous Taoiseach) on 23rd February 2007, in marking the signing of the CDI contract with the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme, was absolutely right when he said:

"A growing body of international research supports earlier intervention, and targeted intervention, to secure better longer-term outcomes for children, especially for those disadvantaged by background or family circumstance."

"Effective early intervention in the lives of children and families produces long term positive outcomes for children and families, supporting them to become less dependent over their lifetime on intensive and costly state supports and to become social and economic contributors to their community and society.

"The converse is also true. Late and ineffective interventions are more costly and less effective at creating significant and sustainable changes in children's lives. Children are more likely to go on to be long term users of the full range of state services from care homes, psychiatric hospitals and social welfare offices to Garda stations, courts and prisons. At this crucial time for Ireland, there is an economic as well as a social imperative to intervene early and effectively in children's lives. It is important to recognise that failure to invest in early intervention services will cost the state considerably more over the lifetime of the child. It makes economic sense!

"The CDI vision for ten years in which we have made significant progress over our first five years. But our work is far from complete. We hope that it will be possible to apply the learning from our evaluation results, ensuring that programmes which are proven to be effective are both mainstreamed in Tallaght West and rolled out to other communities of need.

"We owe this to the children of Tallaght West and to the children of Ireland.

Jean Courtney (Co-ordinator/Manager, South Dublin Childcare Committee). Member of CDI's Implementation Support Group.



“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself” (Henry Ford, 1863-1947).

“We meet services on a very regular basis supporting them across a number of issues i.e. implementation of the subvention schemes quality, sustainability, content etc. This sector has experienced extraordinary change for the better over the past number of years, as it becomes more focused on providing best outcomes for children, and more professional in its quality and curriculum. In any sector when this amount of change is driven in a short space of time it brings its own challenges as it has done in this sector to service providers, parents and children.

“Since its inception in 2003, CDI has played a leading role into what a ‘best outcome for children based on education and parent interaction’ should look like. SDCCC (South Dublin County Childcare Committee) together with anyone who has been involved with CDI, the services, other agencies, children and parents and teachers in primary schools in the ‘how it was then’ and ‘how it is’ now, can touch and feel the very significant improvement for children and their parents based on these strategies. CDI combined all the key elements of good practice in one study, [that is], [it] has been quite unique in that it draws in so many elements of what makes a first class quality early childhood care and education experience. [CDI’s] programme has aimed to be as holistic as possible.

“CDI has enhanced collaborative efforts not only in Tallaght West but their involvement in the work of the County Childcare Committee, South Dublin County Council, education, Restorative Practice, [etc] has improved all of our capacities to work together towards a single goal - improving lives of families and children.

“The seminars held in Tallaght Stadium last year (2010) were testament to the work and effort of CDI to engage with parents, providers, project stakeholders, community & education sectors. Again this demonstrated just how many people and projects CDI have been able to link in with.

“SDCCC have just completed an audit of every service in south Dublin to identify what the main issues for these services are now in 2011. Children with additional needs, specifically with speech and language difficulties, was one of the main issues for close to 90% of the services. CDI identified this as one of their main initiatives from the beginning in 2003.

“We have begun to track the very high volume of calls from parents to SDCCC requesting support, knowledge and general information. CDI’s use of parent/carer facilitators is particularly innovative and provides a practical support for parents during a vulnerable but critical time in their child’s life.

“It has been an uncertain year for anyone involved in the childcare sector and indeed for CDI. I would like to congratulate them on innovative initiatives and also the passion and focused energy of the staff that I have had the pleasure of working with.

“I would hope that SDCCC will work closely with CDI to identify what we can mainstream across the 267 services based on the audit of their needs and build some of this into our strategic plan for 2012. We have already begun to do this on the basis of the need for speech and language support for services, and I really look forward to raising awareness and implementing the learning’s from the interventions across services in South Dublin.

Sinead Kelly, Parent of Child Attending Doodle Den.

“While we try to teach our children about life, our children teach us what life is all about” (Anon.)

Sinead lives in Killinarden, is 28 years old and has just completed a degree in Community Leadership. Sinead’s daughter Megan, attends Doodle Den in Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa Junior School.



“One of the things I am most grateful for in Doodle Den is how much closer we have become. Doing homework used to be such a stressful time in our house. Megan hated doing homework. It was almost as if she thought I was punishing her for making her do it. Now she comes in everyday, calls me to the table and shows me how great she is at her homework. She loves showing off her reading and writing and she is so proud that she can do it and share it with me.

This made my life so much easier as I am also in education and I would have a lot of work myself. Now Megan comes over to me, looks at my notes and corrects my mistakes. It’s hilarious when she explains to me that I need full stops and paragraphs or my teacher will tell me I’m wrong.

“Doodle Den also encourages parents to get involved with the programme. One of the best days I had was when we [did] Story Stacks. I was able to go to Megan’s school and paint, play and read together. It was so much fun that by the end of it I couldn’t tell who was the bigger child, me or Megan.

Last Christmas was an eye opener regarding Megan’s literacy skills. I woke up one morning and Megan was listing all the things she was getting for Christmas. She had found my Christmas list! She told me she was the luckiest girl in the world because she was getting all the toys as well as three other surprises I had promised her. She didn’t realise the surprises were on the list. It was an expensive Christmas but it taught me a lesson in never to underestimate her again!

Since Doodle Den there have been many changes in my house. Every night Megan reads me a story before bed. She writes me letters all the time and leaves them on the fridge for me to find. I love them as she usually writes about how great I am! We also play lots of games on the laptop, do puzzles and word searches together. I am so competitive I like to get all the words and I have to remind myself I am playing with a child. Megan also loves to go to the library. This has become a regular treat for the two of us which suits me fine as let’s face it, it’s free!

I am so proud of my daughter. I believe that every child deserves support around literacy. I am 28 years old now and I am still in education. I am always being pulled up on my grammar which makes learning twice as hard. If only I had received the support that Megan gets around literacy when I was her age, my education journey could have been much shorter and a lot less painful.

I want to thank CDI for the Doodle Den programme. Megan has received a fair start. She has loved the programme, she has not only improved her literacy and reading skills but her confidence has grown so much. I am now so confident that Doodle Den has prepared Megan for first class and I am looking forward to watching her grow. Thank’s to Doodle Den our relationship has changed for the better and made my daughter enjoy learning - what a precious gift to give any child.



Minister Frances Fitzgerald, presenting Sinead Kelly at the CDI end of year event.

Minister for Children, Frances Fitzgerald TD

“For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today” (African Proverb).



“It’s fantastic to see how many people were involved in development and delivery of the CDI programmes in the past three years. Of course you didn’t get to where you are today without a vision in the early years! It is quite extraordinary, the range of peoples involved. The level of engagement from the community is the hallmark, its fantastic to see this sort of project in action and that’s what we are seeing here a very comprehensive engagement by a whole lot of stakeholders to deliver for the children and families for this area.

“We do know from the national studies that early intervention works, if we get in early and give the kind of help and support that CDI are providing here, we are not just doing them a personal favour but our country an economic favour.

“I want to see my Ministry as an economic ministry. We are talking all the time about the economy in this country and the huge challenges with the IMF and the EU, but I think it is really important that we look at the next generation and say that if the next generation don’t get the kind of opportunities that you are talking about here, than we are not going to have an economy. We need to start thinking about how central the next generations are to the economy and the future treatment of our children now is vital.

“I was delighted to know that my department was able to help you and along with the commitment from The Atlantic Philanthropies who have put support into the initiative here, because we do need to know what works and what doesn’t. I have a challenging job to do as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I would ask for your support. I would ask that when the times comes for a referendum, that this debate does not get hi-jacked by the people who say we are undermining the family, we are supporting and protecting the family by putting the children back into our constitution. It’s really important and the fact that children are not in the referendum has meant that bad decisions have been taken on their behalf in many different situations.

“In conclusion, it’s great to see such a large certificate, a very substantial and reflective of the work you do. It means a lot that when you put yourself forward you receive significant acknowledgement at this event, and tonight you are being acknowledged for all the effort and hard work you have contributed, the energetic leadership and commitment and most importantly the participants who make this project what it is.”

*Minister receiving a framed picture
of writing from the Doodle Den programme
for her new office,
presented by Sean Vaughan*



Noelle Spring, Chair, CDI Board

“Go to the people. Learn from them. Live with them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. The best of leaders when the job is done, when the task is accomplished, the people will say we have done it ourselves.” Lao Tzu



“In closing I would like to thank a number of people who have made this all possible. Firstly, Minister, thank you for being here tonight and sharing in such a special event and for your kind words and reassurance.

“I would like to thank all the members of the Board who do so much on a voluntary basis and give so freely of their time and expertise, also the community representatives on the Board that make the work real for all of us.

“Our Funders The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Office for the Minster for Children and Youth Affairs, who, we have built strong trusting relationships with and who believed that their investment would pay off and that we could put all of this together, thank you for the investment and commitment to this project.

“Thank you to all our sub committees for their support and also the Implementation Support Group whose role is vital to the success of CDI. Thank you to the Management of St Marks, especially Joe Horan from South Dublin County Council, the building is a credit to all!

“I wish to talk about the next phase, building on the investment and the investment in children that is our intention here. It’s all about the time, funding, commitment, passion and the knowledge transfer, and how we make sure we build on the implementation of the services that have happened.

“On the broader level, in Irish society for the past two decades, it has become apparent, that apparent economic prosperity does not improve the lives of a lot of people. There are a significant number of people that didn’t benefit. We know that it’s only when Ireland becomes an equal society that there will eventually be less marginalisation, social exclusion and poverty. This is a massive challenge and we all have a role to play in that and my hope is, that the referendum will promote transparency and accountability when it comes to our children. I think CDI will do our bit to ensure that we can help that agenda.”

Certificates of Achievement were awarded to the following:

- Citywise Education Centre
- An Cosán
- Foroige
- Brookview Childcare Service
- An Turas - Jobstown Childcare Centre
- Barnardos - MacUlliam
- Fledglings Childcare – Fettercairn
- St. Elmo’s Playschool
- The Little Children’s Centre
- Fledglings Childcare – Kiltipper
- Naíonra Chaitlín Maude
- St. Kevin’s Family Resource Centre
- St. Anne’s Community Pre-School
- Barnardos - Deerpark
- Rainbow House
- Fettercairn Little Ones
- Fledglings Childcare – Brookfield
- St. Muirín’s House
- St. Mary’s Community Childcare Services
- Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa SNS
- Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa JNS
- Scoil Chaitlín Maude
- Scoil Cnoc Mhuire Junior
- Scoil Cnoc Mhuire Senior



The Childhood Development Initiative Conference 2011

Quality Services Better Outcomes

About this conference

Given that CDI is now nearing the end of its third year of implementing and supporting quality, evidence based initiatives for children and families, we believe we have developed a deep understanding of what helps and what prevents us from delivering programmes as intended, and how our practice can support better outcomes for children. This conference will provide an opportunity to share some of this learning, as well as hear from national and international speakers from academic, practice and organisational perspectives. The conference will primarily target frontline practitioners and service managers, working with children, young people and families, particularly those in disadvantaged areas. It aims to offer insights, shared learning, and practical supports for those wishing to deliver quality, evidence based programmes. The day will end at 6pm with the launch of our Workbook:

*'Quality Services, Better Outcomes:
The Why, the What and the How.'*

Integrating Quality in Childrens Services

Venue:

Irish Law Society

Time:

9.30am-6.00pm

Date:

7th September 2011

Quality Services, Better Outcomes Conference Booking Form:

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Role: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Booking Fee:

(Please make cheque out to the Childhood Development Initiative and ensure that the delegate's name is placed on the back of cheque).

Registration Includes:

Access to all sessions, delegates' materials and entrance to Launch of CDI's Workbook and a light lunch.

Registration Fee:

Early Bird €35

Late fee €60

For all enquiries please contact Paula on 01 4940030 or email paula@twcdi.ie

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Quality Services, Better Outcomes Programme Schedule

Registration:	9.00am
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction & Welcome • Noelle Spring, Chair, CDI Board 	9.30
Why Quality? This session will set the context for the day, highlighting the centrality of quality processes in enabling positive outcomes for children and families.	9.40am
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, Mary Doyle, Deputy Secretary, of the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) • Mr Fergal Quinn, Senator • Professor Danny Perkins, Professor of Family and Youth Resiliency and Policy, the Prevention Research Centre, Penn State, USA 	
Quality Processes This session will focus on the practical experience of supporting quality, and generic measures and processes which facilitate this. It will also offer insights regarding the organisational context, and change management processes, and their role in supporting quality delivery.	11.30am
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, Dr. Tracy Cooper, Chief Executive Officer, Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) • Grainne Smith, Quality Specialist, Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) • Aileen Murphy, Quality Specialist, Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) • Bianca Albers, Head of Department at (FEC) Family & Evidence Centre, Copehagen (Denmark) • Liam Coen, Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) 	
Lunch	12.50pm
Workshops: Quality in Practice. Workshops from across the child, youth and family sector will demonstrate their experience and learning from delivering services within a quality framework.	2.00pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speakers to be confirmed 	
Quality: The Policy Context This session will provide an opportunity to explore current and emerging policy which supports and informs quality service planning and delivery.	4.00pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, Nuala Doherty, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Effective Services (CES) • Gordon Jeyes, National Director for Children and Family Services, Health Services Executive (HSE) • Arlene Foster, Director, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) • Helen Johnston, Senior Social Policy Analyst National Economic and Social Council (NESC) 	
Refreshments	5.30pm
Launch of CDI's Workbook: 'QUALITY SERVICES, BETTER OUTCOMES: THE WHY, THE WHAT AND THE HOW.' by Minster for Children, Ms Frances Fitzgerald, TD.	6.00pm