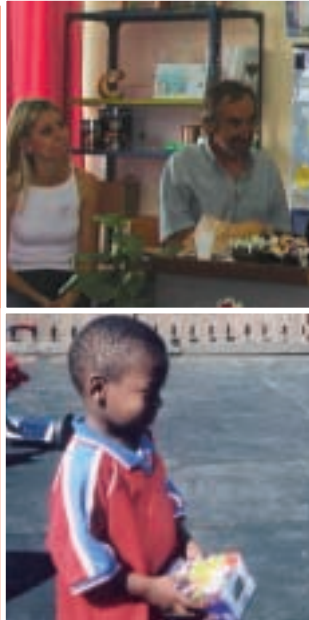


a guide to **developing**
policies & procedures
in a **childcare** setting



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INTRODUCTION

This reference guide is developed to support childcare services to consolidate good quality Policies & Procedures and to assist you in the day-to-day management of your service.

Most childcare services have some elements of documented Policies & Procedures that can be strengthened by a review based on these guidelines. New and developing services under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) can use the experience from other childcare services contained in these guidelines to make the task of compiling comprehensive Policies & Procedures that meet your needs, the needs of staff, children and parents who form the heart of the childcare service you operate, easier.

These guidelines have been compiled in consultation with key stakeholders in the childcare sector and are complementary to other guidelines that have previously been developed, for example, Children First National Guidelines and those produced by the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations etc.

ADM Ltd., June 2003

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Entering the world of childcare will involve the service provider in a whole range of quality-related matters in terms of both good practice and legislation. One of these areas is the compilation of a Policies & Procedures document relevant to the service provided.

As a childcare provider, your clients are the children and their parents/guardians that use your service. The relationships you develop with your client, and with your staff, will determine the ethos of the service you provide. Your objective should be to provide the best care possible for children while ensuring that they are exposed to a positive experience in a safe and caring environment. Putting this information down on paper in the form of a Policies & Procedures document will provide you with the direction you need to go....

- ✓ The service – mission statement, ethos, aims and objectives
- ✓ The operations – opening hours, range of services, methodologies, fee structure, activities
- ✓ Child-centered approach – how you work with children, behaviour policy, curriculum
- ✓ Health and safety
- ✓ Staff relations
- ✓ Culturally appropriate services, specific requirements etc.

Within the childcare sector, most providers, when asked about Policies & Procedures will think about childcare and the related health and safety implications. However, there are also legislative issues to consider, e.g. employment law, which requires, at a minimum, a written statement of intent.



Generally, Policies & Procedures documents tend to be similar in terms of content but it is important to recognise that as each childcare service is unique, each Policies & Procedures document should reflect the particular ethos and code of practice of the service.

In the same way, the structure of childcare services varies from one to another – some are owned, managed and run privately, while others are community-based, not-for-profit and run by a Management Committee. Regardless of the structure, the service should have Policies & Procedures which are in place and reflective of the individual service.

1.2 WHY DO YOU NEED POLICIES & PROCEDURES?

Writing up Policies & Procedures takes time but it is time well spent.

- ✓ Not only is it a matter of good practice, it will assist in establishing the service as a professional and effective organisation.
- ✓ Where policies are applied and adhered to, they will promote a level of consistency amongst the staff, parents and even amongst the children.
- ✓ Once written, various policies can be disseminated to parents thus preventing any ambiguity about how particular situations/issues are handled in the service – forewarned is forearmed.
- ✓ Psychologists and childcare professionals stress that consistency with young children is vital to aid their emotional development.
- ✓ Dealing with staff on a consistent and equitable basis promotes harmony and will contribute to reduced turnover in the workforce.



- ✓ A childcare service that has written its own Policies & Procedures is likely to be more efficient and effective in delivering their service compared with a service that has replicated/copied a document from another service.
- ✓ Not having a Policies & Procedures document can result in having to resolve the same issue each time it arises.

1.3 THE TERMINOLOGY/DEFINITIONS

You should have a good understanding of the basic terminology when you go about drawing up a Policy & Procedures document for your childcare service.

A Policy

A rule; strategy; plan; guiding principle; course of action; guidelines; procedure

A policy is a collective statement of agreed beliefs adopted/proposed by an organisation/individual on a range of topics related to the childcare service provided. It helps to ensure consistency and provides a framework for decision-making.

A Procedure

A process; practice; method; system; formula; route; modus operandi

A procedure is a course of action being adopted/implemented by a service. It details the action to be taken to address the stated policy and outlines the sequential implementation process. It facilitates decision-making, provides consistency and autonomy, and thereby enhances effective management.

Practice

To carry out; perform; apply; follow; observe

Practice is the application of a policy as laid down in your Policies & Procedures.



Custom and Practice

Tradition; norm; routine; habit; ritual

In circumstances where a childcare service has been in existence for some time and where there are no written Policies & Procedures in place, customs or norms start to emerge. These customs become the practice of the service i.e. "it's the way we've always done it", though it may not necessarily be the most appropriate or even acceptable approach for the service. When compiling the Policies & Procedures, it is vital that current practice is taken into account – it may take time for staff to accept change.



CHAPTER TWO

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO DEVELOPING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

2.1 GETTING STARTED

Food for thought ...

- ✓ It is very important to recognise that this is a PROCESS – don't take examples of other Policies & Procedures off the shelf, discuss and develop a tailor-made version that suits your childcare setting
- ✓ Contemplate what you want to achieve with the document
- ✓ Some principles that could underpin the development of your Policies & Procedures may include:
 - The delivery of a quality service
 - Adopting a child-centered approach
 - Participation of all stakeholders
 - The ethos/philosophy of the service
 - The profile of parents/guardians
 - The type of service – private, community or workplace
 - Any future developments/plans for the service
 - An anti-racist and non-discrimination practice
 - A commitment to equality – including equality of opportunity between men and women
- ✓ Policies & Procedures should reflect these principles and should be based on what the service can deliver in reality
- ✓ Policies & Procedures should be developed one-by-one following thorough examination of the specific issue. By starting small you can build up the document into a comprehensive statement



- ✓ Examining sample policies prepared by another service is useful to get you started

Questions to be answered ...

- ✓ Would it be beneficial for those involved in compiling the document to undertake some training? – the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations may be able to help, a number of them run quality programmes. Should staff be given cultural awareness and equality training?
- ✓ Is it feasible for different sections/topics to be assigned to a number of individuals?
- ✓ Who will be responsible for ensuring that new/updated information, impacting on the document, is included?
- ✓ How will amendments to the document be made and how will they be conveyed to the users?
- ✓ Who needs/will receive a copy of the document?

Suggestions on how to move forward ...

- ✓ Read up on relevant legislation and consider how it might impact on your service
- ✓ Assemble a working group responsible for the compilation of the document
- ✓ It is not always feasible, from a time perspective, to have the entire staff involved in all aspects of the development of the document – consider allocating specific sections to individuals/groups who have a particular expertise /interest in a specific area
- ✓ Consult all the stakeholders
- ✓ Research what is considered good practice
- ✓ Approach the task as you would managing any project

A productive way to approach drawing up a Policy & Procedures document is to consider it in terms of managing a project. To that end there are a number of basic questions that you will need to answer, as follows:

- Who is the Project Manager? – the lead person



- Who else needs to be involved in the project? – the stakeholders
- Are there time constraints on delivery? – is there a deadline for completion?
- What resources will you need? – finance, staff, materials etc.

There are five essential project management processes:

Process	Action
1. Initiating	Demonstrate project need and feasibility Obtain project authorisation – “go/no go” decision is made Resource allocation agreed Benefits identified Project Manager assigned
2. Planning	Project clearly described Activities defined and in sequence Timeframe estimated Costs estimated Working group organised – responsibilities assigned Potential risks identified
3. Executing	Consultation undertaken/Participation invited Outside expertise identified Working group performance assessed/ guided/improved Document under construction
4. Controlling	Decision to accept document Corrective action/adjustments agreed Update project plan/agree timeframe/agree cost List lessons learned Quality improved Complete evaluation checklist



5. Closing	Document is signed off by working group
	Document is signed off by Management Committee
	Document is printed/disseminated
Review	As soon as a project has been closed off it's time to start the reviewing process – Document is regularly reviewed and updated

2.2 WHO IS THE DOCUMENT FOR? – THE STAKEHOLDERS

When developing a Policies & Procedures document it is essential to invite/attract input from all stakeholders – this is where you get “buy-in”. Some services choose to consult with staff, parents, and the Health Board’s Pre-school Inspection team, while others will spread the consultation net even further to include e.g. the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, the Trade Unions and sometimes even the older children who will use the service.

With community-based childcare services that are run by a Management Committee, it is important that as many committee members as possible participate in the development of the Policies & Procedures. At a minimum, and in order to promote ownership of the document, all Management Committee members should “sign-off” on the final document.

Privately owned childcare services and workplace childcare facilities normally employ a Manager to run their service, or in some cases a franchise agreement is in place. It is advantageous that the same level of consultation to develop Policies & Procedures, adopted for community-based groups, also occurs with all stakeholders in these types of services.

The Management Committee, staff and parents should all be made aware of procedures for reviewing/updating the document.



Consider carefully the value of having input from all stakeholders – yes, there’s no doubt that it is time consuming but the end result will make it all worthwhile.

Staff

Where feasible, the most advantageous approach to policy development is to include all staff members who will be required to implement and deliver the service. It may not always be possible to have the entire staff involved in writing the Policies & Procedures but, at a minimum, all staff members should be involved in signing-off on the final document. Their involvement in this process will promote a sense of ownership and commitment. Staff who have participated in the process are less likely to express dissatisfaction with the Policies & Procedures and are more likely to “buy-in” to its implementation.

Manager

Leadership is essential to this process – this is normally the role of the Manager of the service. The Manager will also be the liaison person from/to the Management Committee.

Parents

It is good practice to include parents in the overall management of any childcare service – normally parents are represented on the Management Committee. For the purpose of compilation of the Policies & Procedures, it is beneficial to have input from parents. As the end user, with a slightly different perspective on the appropriateness of the service, parents are in a position to challenge and contribute in terms of how policies may affect their children. Including parents in this level of service development will promote credibility and a perception of openness amongst parents in general.

Management Committee/Board

In the case of community-based childcare services there is normally a Management Committee in place to oversee the running of the service. These committees vary in size, representation and attendance – regardless, their input/



contribution to the development of the document is important. Management Committees can also be a resource for your service – do any of your committee members have an expertise that would add value to this process e.g. facilitation or writing skills?

Other Contributors

National Voluntary Childcare Organisations – The National Voluntary Childcare Organisations can be of great assistance in supporting childcare services to develop Policies & Procedures – check out who has sample documents; are they running local training workshops; perhaps they have local development workers who could sit on/contribute to the working group.

Health Board Pre-school Inspection Team – You may find it appropriate/useful to contact your local Health Board Pre-school Inspector in terms of the current childcare legislation/regulations plus information on the 'Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children'.

Employer Organisations/Trade Unions – Liaison with these organisations can provide you with information/advice on employment legislation e.g. Small Firms Association (SFA), Irish Business Employers Confederation (IBEC), Services Industrial Professional Technical Union (SIPTU) or Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union (IMPACT).

County/City Childcare Committees – Don't forget, you can also contact your local childcare committee for support.



2.3 FORMATTING THE DOCUMENT

Remember ... a Policies & Procedures document should not be a static document, so it is inevitable that you will find yourself going through this process more than once!

- ✓ A Policies & Procedures document should be formatted in a manner that is easy to read and that has a clear progression/links to/from related sections/themes

- ✓ Define how the document will be divided – by particular headings, by specified themes or by end reader
- ✓ It is good practice to insert the author/date on each policy as it is developed (and when updates are made)
- ✓ Decide where the document will be stored electronically (disk, CD Rom, website) and in hard copy format (complete copy held in central location in the facility)
- ✓ Choose the most appropriate paper size – if a policy is to be laminated and displayed on a notice board, would A3 size be appropriate?
- ✓ Pick an appropriate typeface – for clarity and readability
- ✓ Organise each policy on a separate page, this will facilitate changes/updates to be easily made



What is the ideal size of the document?

The length of a Policies & Procedures document will vary from service to service – more importantly the document needs to be a working tool that is understood by everyone and is constantly reviewed in terms of its appropriateness.

A couple of lines or a short paragraph will suffice for some elements of the document while other elements will require a more detailed approach. The National Early Years Network (1995) advocates that the document should be shorter rather than longer and it should be supplemented with examples of what policies actually mean in practice.

Language

It is obviously more advantageous to use uncomplicated language that can be understood by any reader. The document should be laid out clearly and compiled in a manner that makes it easy to reference the sections/themes sought. The National Early Years Network (1995) recommends that:

- ✓ language is kept simple, without being patronising
- ✓ jargon should be avoided

- ✓ sentences should be kept relatively short and to the point
- ✓ text should be well spaced out
- ✓ the typeface should be easy to read
- ✓ language and images should be non-sexist, non-discriminatory and stereotyping should be avoided

2.4 COMPILING THE DOCUMENT

It is important to commence the work to be undertaken with an end plan/date in mind. While this is normally the responsibility of the lead person on the project, it is equally important that the working group/contributors also agree this timeframe. This section attempts to set out an approach to working group meetings and their content, outlining a schedule for completion of work.

Samples & Best Practice/First Meeting

- ✓ Call the first meeting of your working group
- ✓ Bring together all the samples, best practice documents etc. that you have amalgamated
- ✓ Brainstorm the various headings/sections to be included in the document
- ✓ Agree what forms will need to be designed (e.g. parental consent form) and assign responsibility for same
- ✓ Agree timeframes for completion of individual pieces and of the final document
- ✓ Assign responsibility to individuals/groups for specified pieces of the document
- ✓ Agree a schedule of meetings for the working group
- ✓ Decide who else needs to be consulted/asked to participate
- ✓ Consider the option of bringing in some "outside" expertise



- ✓ Consider inclusion of a “facilitator”
- ✓ Discuss whether training would be beneficial to the working group to assist them in their task

First Draft/Second Meeting

- ✓ Circulate the first draft of the document to the working group in advance of the meeting
- ✓ Agree an agenda for the meeting – be clear and realistic about what the meeting is to achieve
- ✓ Encourage feedback/comments on the first draft
- ✓ Discuss and agree amendments to completed sections
- ✓ Finalise forms to be implemented
- ✓ Test out/role play scenarios to visualise how policies would work in practice
- ✓ Consider whether it would be a good idea to invite some people from outside the working group to participate in feedback on the first draft?
- ✓ Consider where to display the draft policies to invite comment from staff, parents, and visitors to your service?
- ✓ Agree next steps



Final Draft/Third Meeting

- ✓ Circulate the final draft document to the working group in advance of the meeting
- ✓ Agree any final amendments
- ✓ Sign-off on the final draft document
- ✓ Sign-off on forms
- ✓ Decide on a distribution mechanism
- ✓ Agree a schedule for review of document
- ✓ Agree mechanism for presenting to Management Committee for approval and implementation

Forms

When writing up your Policies & Procedures you will find that some sections/topics will require that you have forms in place. These forms should be created by your service and attached to the relevant section of your document. Forms might include: parents' application form, parental consent form; daily record sheet; etc. Provision should be made for those with a visual disability.

Don't forget that childcare services sample forms may be available via the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations and employment sample forms can be found at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment website.

How do you know if you have it right?

A practical analysis of Policies & Procedures

- ✓ Choose a couple of sample policies
- ✓ Role play/apply them to a practical situation
- ✓ Consider the use and validity of the policy
- ✓ Does the policy address the issue under consideration?
- ✓ Identify the strengths and weaknesses in the policy
- ✓ Assess the clarity/what is understood by those who will implement the policy?
- ✓ Brainstorm what is missing/might be changed to improve the impact of the policy
- ✓ Amend the policy as necessary

Example of analysing a policy

You may have written a policy stating that your service is open to children with specific requirements – what does this mean in reality?

1. How will the service cope with a child with specific requirements?
2. Is there a shared understanding of what constitutes "specific requirements"?



3. Does your policy provide an unambiguous statement of how specific requirements are understood in the service?
4. Examine the day-to-day practice that will facilitate a child with specific requirements – meal times; sleeping arrangements; play area; staff capacity/expertise etc.
5. Are there any legislative requirements to be addressed?
6. Identify what works and what is potentially missing from the policy/practice
7. Agree what needs to be added or changed to enhance the written policy
8. Make the relevant changes
9. Distribute revised policy to relevant stakeholders



2.5 INDUCTION TO POLICIES & PROCEDURES DOCUMENT

Don't forget that you will need to allow sufficient time to undertake the induction of all stakeholders to the Policies & Procedures. This can take a number of approaches:

For parents/guardians

Organise a parents evening where you invite along all interested parents (current and potential) and present the Policies & Procedures formulated. Ensure that the meeting allows ample time for questions and answers and make copies of the document available to those in attendance. You may find that a parents' handbook (a summary of the Policies & Procedures – see section 2.7) is sufficient for most parents. Some services require parents to 'sign off' on receipt of the Parents' Handbook to say that they have received, read and understand the contents. This may be advantageous should a matter arise later which is clearly covered in your handbook.

For staff

Arrange a staff meeting where the Policies & Procedures are presented to the whole team i.e. all those working in the service, from childcare workers to the caretaker and cook (if applicable). Again, allow plenty of time for discussion and

feedback from the team and maybe even role-play some situations to show how the policies would be implemented in practice. When new staff join the team it is very important that they are given a comprehensive introduction to the document – a valuable resource for new staff members. Where relevant, Policies & Procedures can be attached to contracts of employment. Staff should be required to 'sign off' to confirm that they have received, read and understood the contents of the document.

For the Management Committee/Board

Ideally, the Management Committee will have contributed to and participated in the development of the Policies & Procedures document. Having said that, it will still be important to make a presentation of the final document to the whole committee – once more, allowing for questions and answers. The Management Committee's acceptance/signing-off on the document should be recorded in the minutes of the committee meeting. When new committee members come on board, ensure that they receive a copy of the document and are thoroughly briefed on the Policies & Procedures.

For the children

Where older children access the childcare facility (normally for after school care), it may be appropriate to discuss some of the policies with them.

Throughout the induction process you should invite feedback and comments on the document – it is amazing what a "new" set of eyes might notice!



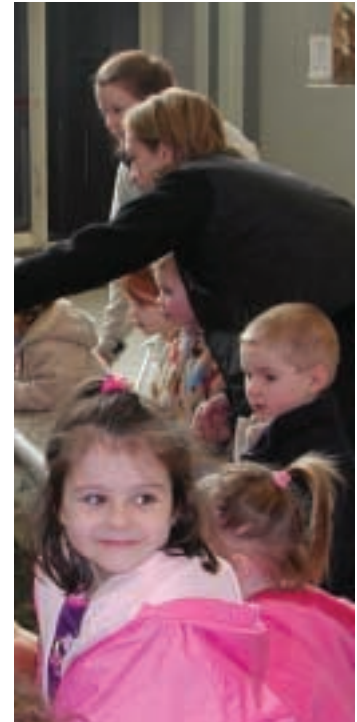
2.6 POLICIES & PROCEDURES SECTION-BY-SECTION

The following areas could be used as section headings for your document:

1. Childcare
2. Personnel
3. Health & Safety
4. Management, Administration & Finance

1. Childcare related policies e.g.:

- Services provided
- Admissions
- Settling in the child
- Staff ratios
- Parental involvement (including communication systems)
- Inappropriate language
- Equal opportunity and social justice
- Child development
- Specific requirements
- Cultural, social, moral values
- Childcare curriculum
- Observation and assessment
- Child protection¹
- Anti-bias approach
- Equipment/toys
- Dealing with complaints
- Positive behaviour management
- Sharing information with staff, parents and other services
- Collection of children



2. Employment/Personnel related policies e.g.:

- Discipline procedure
- Grievance procedure
- Bullying/Sexual Harassment
- Recruitment & Selection
- Payment of wages
- Dress code
- Time keeping
- Support and supervision
- Working hours and breaks
- Record keeping regulations
- Annual leave
- Compassionate leave
- Public holidays
- Defined closure of the service

¹ Child protection focus should be inherent in all policies.

- Sick pay
- Medical appointments
- Jury service
- Time in lieu/overtime
- Use of e-mail/internet
- Trade union membership
- Travel allowances/expenses
- Staff appraisals
- Training and development
- Force Majeure leave
- Maternity and adoptive leave
- Parental leave
- Resignation
- References
- Volunteers and students
- Equal opportunities
- Carers leave
- Use of mobile phones in the workplace
- Career breaks
- Redundancy

Please note that if your childcare service runs a Social Economy Programme, or if you have FÁS Community Employment or Jobs Initiative workers in the service, you will need to ensure that the Policies & Procedures take account of their contracts and conditions.



Please refer to the Combat Poverty Agency 2002 publication *“A Guide to Good Employment Practice in the Community & Voluntary Sector”*² for a comprehensive guide on employers’ responsibilities.

3. Health & Safety related policies e.g.:

- Fire Procedure
- Safe work and play environment
- Medical doctor
- Accidents at work
- Accident reporting requirements

² This publication is currently sent out to all successful EOCP applicants with their ADM contract letter.

- No smoking
- Taking of medication – relating to both children and staff
- Personal hygiene
- Safety and security in the service
- First aid
- Spillages and hazards
- Changing nappies
- Toilet time
- Kitchen area
- Premises indoors
- Outdoor play area
- Furniture and fittings
- Electricity and gas
- Safety on outings
- Exclusion of children and staff when sick
- Head lice and nits
- Recording of infectious diseases
- Administering of medication
- Nutrition
- Food hygiene
- Use of vehicles
- Violence at work
- AIDS
- Hepatitis
- Food handling
- HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point)



4. Management, Administration & Finance related policies e.g.:

- Management committee /board of management
- Freedom of Information³
- Code of work practice
- Aims and objectives of the service
- Ethos of the service
- Mission statement

³ It should be noted that the ADM Freedom of Information Guidelines state that "In cases where it does not already exist, beneficiaries of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006 are asked to put in place a written admission policy detailing the criteria used for allocation of places within their facilities. This is to be made available to anybody who asks for it, outside of Freedom of Information."

- Role and responsibilities of the manager
- Financial policy
- Background/history of the service
- Fundraising
- Roles and responsibilities of staff
- Communication systems in the childcare service
- Operating principles of workplace or private childcare services
- Insurance
- Record Keeping under two areas:
 - **Child/Family Records**
 - ◆ A Register to include details of children attending the service
 - ◆ Details in relation to Parent/Guardians
 - ◆ Details in relation to the children's health
 - **Personal & Operational Details**
 - ◆ Details of staff members
 - ◆ Details of the services operations
 - ◆ Details of accidents and administration of medicines
 - ◆ Details of fire procedures

2.7 FOR THE PARENTS – THE PARENTS' HANDBOOK



The Parents' Handbook is basically a summary of the Policies & Procedures document implemented by the childcare service. The Handbook will include the key Policies & Procedures that parents need to be aware of as well as providing general information about the service, its ethos, objectives, etc.

The Parents' Handbook should be made available to all parents accessing the service. Any revised/updated policies should be promptly issued as an addendum to the Handbook.

It is good practice to ask parents to sign to say that they have received, read and understand the contents of the Handbook – this may be advantageous in the event of an issue arising that is clearly covered in the Handbook.

The following is a list of information/policies that might be included in the Handbook:

- ✓ Name, address, telephone/fax number, e-mail address and list of personnel/staff – a list of the Management Committee members (and their specific roles) might also be included
- ✓ The service's mission statement, aims and objectives – as well as its philosophy and religious ethos (if applicable)
- ✓ The range of services (including related age ranges) on offer – pre-school, crèche, school-age childcare etc.
- ✓ Opening and closing hours – information on pick-up times (if relevant)
- ✓ Particulars of staff qualifications – include information on typical in-service training for staff
- ✓ Fees policy – fee scale, fee reviews, fee schedule and preferred method of payment
- ✓ List of items to be provided by parents e.g. nappies, baby wipes, bibs, change of clothes etc.
- ✓ Where food is provided by the service, samples of a typical menu and any related policies on the provision of snacks, sweets, drinks etc.
- ✓ Complaints/compliments procedure
- ✓ Notification to/observations from the Health Board
- ✓ Behaviour policy for children
- ✓ School-age childcare policy – including home-work policy (if relevant)
- ✓ Exclusion of sick children policy
- ✓ Accidents/incidents policy
- ✓ Policy on the collection/pick-up of children
- ✓ Policy vis-à-vis outings from the service
- ✓ Policy related to children with special requirements
- ✓ Child protection policy



- ✓ Working in partnership with parents and their opportunity to be involved in service
- ✓ Policy on the service's involvement with the community, statutory and voluntary agencies
- ✓ Policy on communicating with parents/guardians – in the case of children of separated/divorced parents, the policy on who is the point of communication
- ✓ Equality and anti-discrimination policy
- ✓ The core curriculum and childcare methodologies implemented
- ✓ The typical daily routine
- ✓ Records kept by the service and arrangements for parents to access them
- ✓ Observation and assessment reports
- ✓ Policy on the retention/dispatch home of items made by children
- ✓ Information about the child's settling-in period in the service



2.8 REVIEW & MONITORING

Reviewing is learning from experience, or enabling others to do so. It is an essential part of the work of any service provider to continually review and monitor its strategic plans and working methods. As a childcare service grows and evolves and as its clients' needs change (i.e. the children and their parents/guardians), so too should the Policies & Procedures that determine its ethos.

The Policies & Procedures written for your service should be a working reference. It should be well thumbed, constantly in use and regularly under scrutiny to improve its applicability.

- ✓ As new legislation is ratified or current legislation is amended, so too should the relevant Policies & Procedures

- ✓ It is normally the responsibility of the Childcare Manager to bring mandatory amendments/updates to the attention of staff
- ✓ The working group may agree to meet annually/bi-annually to monitor/review the document on an on-going basis
- ✓ Consider convening a meeting of the working group to formulate new/amendments to individual policies
- ✓ The Childcare Manager should put the review of the Policies & Procedures on the agenda for staff meetings on a regular basis
- ✓ It is good practice to have a named staff member who is responsible for changes/updating of the document
- ✓ Agree a process for informing all staff of changes/updates to Policies & Procedures
- ✓ Agree a process for informing parents of changes/updates to Policies & Procedures
- ✓ It is always useful to undertake a practical analysis of amended/updated policies i.e. check their appropriateness for the service you are providing
- ✓ Ensure that the Management Committee sign-off on any amendments/updates/additions to the document – sign-off should be recorded in the minutes of the relevant Committee meeting



In terms of on-going review of Policies & Procedures, some reasons for adding new policies/updating current policies may include:

- ✓ A request from parents to review opening hours
- ✓ A staff request for job sharing – this is where a policy on work/life balance might be applied
- ✓ Service development that involves a change in structure and thereby impacts on various current policies
- ✓ Legislation that requires updating of current policy
- ✓ Omission of a specific thematic area that requires a policy statement

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES – *Three Case Studies*

It is good practice to contemplate how the Policies & Procedures will actually be implemented in the service by the staff. Taking three case studies, this section lists some prompts for consideration and it suggests some ways in which the situations might be remedied.

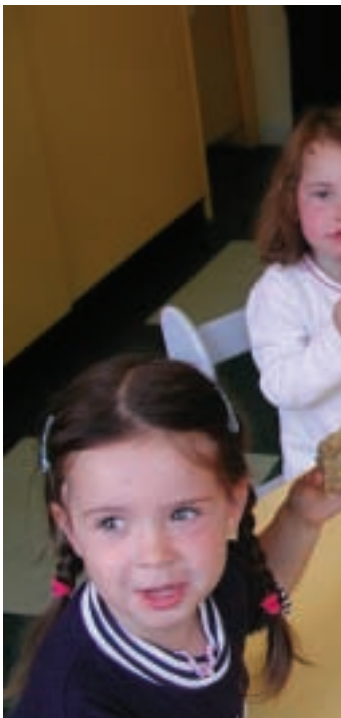
Remember that there is no magic wand to wave that can rectify every issue that arises, but having Policies & Procedures in place will definitely go a long way towards having them resolved effectively and efficiently.

3.1 CHILD BITING

There are eleven children and two staff in this service. The children are aged between eighteen months and three years. John is 20 months old and Patrick is 32 months old. For no apparent reason, John bites Patrick on the face. Obviously Patrick is very upset, while John has no idea what has happened or why Patrick is crying. This is the first time such an incident has occurred in the service.

What do you need to consider?

- ✓ How do staff react?
- ✓ As Manager, how will the situation be handled?
- ✓ In line with policy, how will this incident be communicated to the parents?
- ✓ What is the immediate response to be implemented by the staff in relation to John?
- ✓ Have you discussed with John's parents if this has happened at home or elsewhere?



- ✓ What do you say to John's and Patrick's parents when they come to collect their children?
- ✓ What do you do when Patrick's parents:
 - Suggest that John should be removed from the service?
 - Seek assurance from you that it won't happen again?
 - Threaten to remove Patrick from the service?
- ✓ What steps will you take to ensure the child who is biting is not labeled or excluded and receives appropriate support?
- ✓ It is good practice not to release the name of the child who has bitten – the child who has been bitten may/may not say who has bitten him/her.



How might this issue be remedied?

- ✓ Remember that biting is a normal part of a child's development and particularly common for this age group. In this case, there may be other contributing factors to be considered.
- ✓ The policy might state that it is not the practice to ask parents to remove their children from the service. Alternatively, the policy may suggest that such issues are handled by working proactively with the child in co-operation with the parents.
- ✓ You have to be honest – you can't give a guarantee it won't happen again but you can say that the situation is being closely monitored.
- ✓ You should also consider reviewing the room layout, the curriculum for the children in the service and sleep time.
- ✓ Do you need to review/amend your policy/procedure?

Sample of relevant Policy & Procedure

This is a sensitive area so rather than highlight it as a separate policy, perhaps statements could be included in the Behaviour Policy for the service.

- ✓ The childcare service will develop a range of approaches for dealing with difficult behaviour.
- ✓ The childcare service in co-operation with the childcare worker and the parents will develop individual plans for children who display challenging behaviour.
- ✓ Parents will be included, informed and supported to follow plans for children, as appropriate.
- ✓ The childcare service will not request parents to remove their children from the service.
- ✓ Where necessary, additional support may be sought through referral to other professionals. Such support should be viewed as impacting positively on the individual case and on the service.
- ✓ The childcare service will support the childcare worker to engage on a one-to-one basis, over an agreed period of time, with any child who is e.g. biting or displaying other challenging behaviour.

3.2 CHILDREN NOT BEING COLLECTED ON TIME



The service is open from 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and provides sessional and full-day care. Most of your parents collect their children punctually. Over the last couple of weeks a number of parents have been consistently late collecting their children. One parent is arriving late in the evening for pick-up and another is late for collection from the morning session – both situations are causing problems.

What do you need to consider?

- ✓ Has this matter been brought to the parents' attention?
- ✓ Has the issue of staff ratios been explained to the parents in relation to the sessional service, where the worker is required for another group?
- ✓ Has the impact of consistent lateness, on both the child and the service, been discussed with the parents?

- ✓ What has the parent said about being late?
- ✓ Has the staff member informed the Manager?
- ✓ Has the staff member requested overtime or time in lieu?
- ✓ Is there anything in your Parents' Handbook regarding late collection of children?
- ✓ Can you agree alternative collection arrangements with the parent?
- ✓ What structures/systems have been set up for communication between parents and Manager and staff?
- ✓ Was the time taken to explain the policy to parents when their child started in the service?



How might this issue be remedied?

- ✓ In this instance the Manager has two issues to deal with:
 1. Regulations regarding staff ratios for sessional services.
 2. Staff assuming responsibility outside normal working hours.
- ✓ The priority is to ensure that the issues are highlighted, acknowledged and dealt with to everyone's satisfaction.
- ✓ Do you need to review/extend your opening hours?
- ✓ Do you need to amend your policy/procedure?
- ✓ Some services have a policy of charging parents for every 5 minutes they are late – this type of policy will not suit every service, would it work in this case?
- ✓ Of course, there may always be valid reasons for lateness and it is appropriate for the service to take a compassionate approach to begin with.

Sample of relevant Policy & Procedure

Collection policy should be highlighted alongside opening hours in your Policies & Procedures document and in the Parents' Handbook.

- ✓ Adherence to staff ratios is a legislative requirement. Therefore, it is important that parents collect their child/ren on time from sessional services, as this will impact on the delivery of other services.
- ✓ It is a long day for both children and staff. Your assistance in ensuring that your child/ren are collected on time is appreciated.
- ✓ Ensure that alternative/additional contact names for collection are provided for each child (this should be updated/reviewed regularly).
- ✓ The childcare service will charge a fine of €x amount per week where parents are late collecting their child/ren more than twice in one week. This fine will be paid with the weekly/monthly fees.

3.3 STAFF WORKING ON SHIFT ROTAS

The service is full-day care open from 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. and you operate two working shifts. These shifts are rotated on a two weekly basis so that staff work the early shift for two weeks starting at 7.30 a.m. and the late shift for two weeks finishing at 6.00 p.m. This has worked without difficulty for the last three years. Recently a member of staff, employed for eighteen months, has been arriving late for both early and late shifts.

What do you need to consider?

- ✓ Have you discussed the situation with the staff member?
- ✓ Have you outlined the impact of being late, on the service, on other staff?
- ✓ Is there an impact on the childcare service?
- ✓ Have you discussed and agreed with your staff member how this situation needs to be resolved?
- ✓ Have you confirmed a time frame to review the staff member's timekeeping?



- ✓ Have you indicated to the staff member the consequences if his/her timekeeping does not improve and the procedure that will be followed?
- ✓ How do you deal with staff members effected by this situation?

How might this issue be remedied?

- ✓ Time keeping is essential in terms of providing a quality childcare service and if staff are consistently late they may be subject to a disciplinary procedure.
- ✓ Are your staff aware what their terms and conditions of employment are? Have you got a disciplinary policy and procedure? Have you got an Induction Programme?
- ✓ Do you need to amend the policy/procedure?

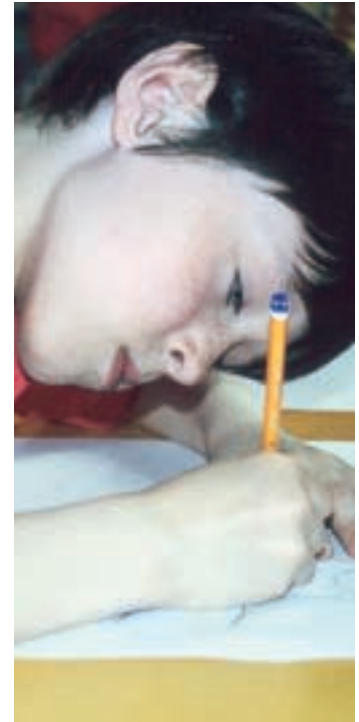
Sample of relevant Policy & Procedure

- ✓ Staff are required to work on a rota basis. The rota is as outlined in each staff member's contract of employment. The rota works on a two weekly basis i.e. two weeks early shift and two weeks late shift. Repeated lateness will be subject to disciplinary procedure.

Related Areas

- ✓ The service provides regular support to staff and supervisory relationships are practiced.
- ✓ Staff appraisal will be conducted annually.

And finally ... having Policies & Procedures will assist in resolving situations that may arise in the day-to-day delivery of your childcare service. It will also ensure that you are providing a quality service to your children, parents and staff.



CHAPTER FOUR

SAMPLE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This section contains some samples of actual policies/procedures that are implemented by childcare services. You may find it useful to use these samples as a template when you are compiling your Policies & Procedures document.

4.1 ADMISSIONS

The ethos of the service is reflected in its admissions policy. On request, basic information is provided about the service and parents/guardians are invited to visit the facility. A pre-admission visit allows the family to view the physical surroundings, assess the atmosphere, meet with staff and encourages parents/guardians to pose more specific questions. Parents/guardians are also given an opportunity to see how the service is managed/run. The admissions policy should be set within a non-discrimination framework.

The admissions⁴ form includes:

- ✓ the child's and guardian's details,
- ✓ has the child any specific requirements?
- ✓ has the child a pet name or favourite toy?
- ✓ other relevant information

The service has a criteria/mechanism for prioritising the allocation of childcare places – gathering relevant detailed information will assist this process. Some issues that need consideration in relation to an admissions policy are:



⁴ Some services require more detailed information e.g. family income, reason for requiring childcare. However, services should ensure that any information requested is relevant and necessary.

- ✓ What criteria are used by the service to allocate childcare places?
- ✓ Is there a priority given to certain childcare places e.g. siblings?
- ✓ Does the service reserve childcare places e.g. children with specific requirements, referrals by social services?
- ✓ Are there any age restrictions on children accessing the service?
- ✓ Does the service operate a waiting list?

Admission forms are held in hard copy format and input on a database – this becomes the waiting list register. Once a place becomes available, further information will be obtained e.g. start date, persons authorised to collect the child from the centre, medical information, specific requirements or dietary requirements, immunisation details, etc. This detailed information will be held in a manual register and input on a database – relevant information will be accessible to all staff.

A Parents' Handbook is given to all parents, information contained in it includes:

- ✓ Our Care Policy
- ✓ Details of the Services provided
- ✓ Opening Hours
- ✓ Financial Policy – Fees/Family rate
- ✓ Children and Illness
- ✓ Late Collection
- ✓ Closures
- ✓ Equal Opportunities
- ✓ Parental Involvement
- ✓ What Parents need to provide
- ✓ Forms to be completed
- ✓ Behaviour Management Policy



- ✓ Reminders
- ✓ Fire Procedure
- ✓ Child Protection Procedures
- ✓ Agreement Form
- ✓ Request for parents to inform the childcare service if children are leaving

(Adapted from – Source: Policy & Procedure Manual Vol. II. Tallaght Childcare Company Limited, The Little People's Palace, Byrne, 2000)

4.2 GUIDELINES ON EXCLUSION IN RELATION TO SICK CHILDREN & STAFF

Parents will be informed of exclusions for sick children. Copies of the relevant policy will be made available to all parents via staff. In order to ensure the health and safety of children and staff, children who have any of the following conditions will be excluded from the childcare centre until such time as: the condition subsides, it is no longer contagious or a doctor's note stating that the condition is no longer contagious is received.

The following ailments may be grounds for the exclusion of children and staff from the service. Some symptoms may be evident individually or may be related:

- ✓ Any member of staff or any child suffering from acute symptoms of food poisoning/gastroenteritis
- ✓ Any member of staff or any child who is seriously ill with any contagious/infectious disease
- ✓ A child's temperature if it is 38°C (100.4F) or over
- ✓ A severe earache, or a deep, hacking cough
- ✓ Difficulty breathing
- ✓ An unexplained rash – the extent of the rash and how long the child/adult has had it should be noted



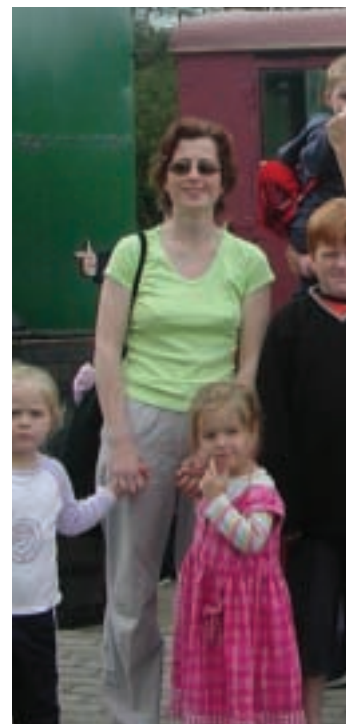
- ✓ Vomiting (more than once in last 24 hours) – if the service caters for babies remember it is common for babies to “throw up”
- ✓ Diarrhoea (more than twice in last 24 hours)
- ✓ Complaints of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms (contact their doctor immediately)
- ✓ Untreated head lice or nits

Responsibility of Parents

- ✓ Fresh air and exercise significantly enhances the health and growth of a child. Parents, who feel their child is too ill to participate in outdoor activity, should be advised by staff to keep her/him home for an extra day to ensure a complete recovery.
- ✓ Parents are requested not to bring in a child during the first two days of an antibiotic treatment. It is at the Manager’s discretion to contact the childcare centre’s GP if a child is believed to be unfit to attend the centre.
- ✓ Ensure the appropriate procedures are followed in relation to notifiable infectious diseases.
- ✓ Ensure that all parents and staff are notified of Rubella (German Measles). Display information notices in relation to Rubella.
- ✓ If a parent knows or suspects that their child has a contagious disease they are advised to call the childcare centre to let staff know, to take the child to a doctor to corroborate the diagnosis and to receive medication (if required). Parents/guardians are advised to request a doctor’s note that describes the condition and when it is safe for the child to return to the service.
- ✓ If in any doubt about a particular case the Manager will consult with the local Public Health Nurse(s) or other relevant professional officer.

This sample applies the same exclusion guidelines for children and staff in the childcare centre.

(Adapted from – Source: Policy & Procedure Manual Vol. II. Tallaght Childcare Company Limited, The Little Peoples Palace, Byrne, 2000)



4.3 NO SMOKING

- ✓ The childcare centre operates a no smoking policy.
- ✓ No smoking is permitted on outings with children.
- ✓ Smoking is permitted only in designated areas outside the building.

(Adapted from -Source: Policy & Procedure Manual Vol. I. Tallaght Childcare Company Limited, The Little Peoples Palace, Byrne, 2000)

4.4 TIME KEEPING

- ✓ It is the policy of this childcare service to operate within specified opening hours.
- ✓ Staff members are required to arrive at the service in advance of the opening hours as detailed in their contract of employment.
- ✓ Continued lateness may result in the implementation of the disciplinary procedure.
- ✓ In the interest of staff welfare, the childcare service is committed to staff members finishing their working day at the appropriate time.

(Adapted from-Source: Policy & Procedure Manual Vol. I. Tallaght Childcare Company Limited, The Little Peoples Palace, Byrne, 2000)



4.5 GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY

- ✓ There will be no smoking on the premises.
- ✓ Hot drinks will only be consumed in the staff room or kitchen.
- ✓ Children and staff are requested to wear loose comfortable clothing, with flat shoes, and appropriate jewellery.
- ✓ Running inside the building is to be avoided.
- ✓ Child supervision – developmentally appropriate supervision will be implemented at all times.

- ✓ All cleaning materials/dangerous substances will be kept out of reach of children in a locked cupboard.

(Reference: *Supporting Quality – Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Services*, French, G. 2000)

4.6 HEAD LICE

Head Lice is common amongst children; it is a problem that can be dealt with efficiently by taking direct and appropriate action.

- ✓ Once a head lice outbreak is detected, a letter will issue to parents without delay.
- ✓ Parents are asked to notify the service if their child contacts head lice.
- ✓ Parents may/will be asked to refrain from bringing their child to the service until the infection has been treated.
- ✓ The childcare service will provide information for parents on how to treat head lice.
- ✓ Staff will deal with any outbreak of head lice with discretion and confidentially.



THE LEGISLATION

The current legislation that sets out obligations in relation to the childcare sector includes:

- The Childcare Act, 1991
- The Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations, 1996
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999 – Department of Health and Children
- The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 1989
- The Equal Status Act, 2000

The current legislation that sets out obligations for employers includes:

- Adoptive Leave Act, 1995
- Carer's Leave Act, 2001
- Data Protection Act, 1988
- Employment Equality Act, 1998
- Freedom of Information Act, 1997
- Industrial Relations Act, 1990
- Juries Act, 1976
- Maternity Protection of Employees Act, 1994
- Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973-1991
- Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997
- Parental Leave Act, 1998
- Payment of Wages Act, 1991
- Pensions Act, 1990
- Protection of Employees (Employer's Insolvency) Acts, 1984-1991
- Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

- Redundancy Payments Acts, 1967-1991
- Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993
- Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994
- Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977 and Unfair Dismissals (Amendment) Act, 1993
- Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act, 2001
- Worker Participation (State Enterprises) Acts, 1977-1993

***For information on the most up-to-date legislation,
please contact the relevant Government Department.***

USEFUL CONTACTS

Childcare & Related Organisations

Area Development Management Limited, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 2400700. Fax: 01 2400760. Email: enquiries@adm.ie Website: www.adm.ie

Barnardos National Children's Resource Centre (NCRC), Christchurch Square, Dublin 8.

Tel: 01 4549699. Fax: 01 4530300. Email: ncrc@barnardos.ie Website: www.barnardos.ie

Childminding Ireland, Wicklow Enterprise Park, The Murrough, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow.

Tel: 0404 64007. Email: info@childminding-irl.com Website: www.childminding-irl.com

Children's Rights Alliance, 13 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 4054823. Fax: 01 4054826. Email: info@cra.iol.ie Website: www.childrensrights.ie

An Comhchoiste Réamhscolaíochta Teo, 7 Cearnóg Mhuirfeán, Baile Átha Cliath 2.

Tel: 01 6398442/9. Fax: 01 6398401. Email: comhchoiste@eircom.net

High/Scope Ireland, C/o NIPPA, 6c Wildflower Way, Apollo Road, Belfast, BT 126TA.

Tel: 048 90662825. Fax: 048 90381270. Email: highscope@nippa.org Website: www.nippa.org

Irish Pre-school Playgroups Association (IPPA), Unit 4, Broomhill Business Complex, Broomhill Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Tel: 01 6719245. Fax: 01 4630045. Email: info@ippa.ie Website: www.ippa.ie

Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC), 20 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 6794944. Fax: 01 6791746. Email: ispcc@ispcc.ie Website: www.ispcc.ie

National Children's Nurseries Association (NCNA), Unit 12C Bluebell Business Park, Old Naas Road, Bluebell, Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4601138. Fax: 01 4601185. Email: info@ncna.net Website: www.ncna.net

Pavee Point, North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: 01 8780255. Fax: 01 8742626. Email: pavee@iol.ie Website: www.paveepoint.ie

Refugee Trust, 73a Blessington Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 8820108. Fax: 01 8820633. Email: refugeetrust@eircom.net Website: ww.refugeetrust.org

County/City Childcare Committees (CCCs)

For your locally based support, please contact the relevant County Childcare Committee.

Carlow CCC, 16 Dublin Road, Carlow.

Tel: 0503 40244. Fax: 0503 40651. Email: carlowccc@eircom.net

Cavan CCC, Railway Station, Belturbet, Co Cavan.

Tel: 049 9529882. Fax: 049 9529881. Email: cavancccc@oceanfree.net

Clare CCC, 1 Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare

Tel: 065 6864862. Fax: 065 6865515. E-mail: cccocom@eircom.net

Cork County CCC, Floor 2, The Mill, Castletownroche, Co Cork.

Tel: 022 26648. Fax: 022-26649. E-mail: corkchildcare@eircom.net

Cork City CCC, Unit K, Ballyvolane Business Park, Ballyvolane, Cork.

Tel: 021 4309454. Fax: 021 4309464. E-mail: corkcitychildcare1@eircom.net

Donegal CCC, Main Street, Stranorlar, Co Donegal.

Tel: 074 32416. Fax: 074 30314. E-mail: donegalchildcare@eircom.net

Dublin City CCC, Block 3, Floor 3, Dublin Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8.

Tel: 01 6723073. Fax: 01 6722162. E-mail: miriam.mckeown@dublincity.ie
nuala.nicgiobuin@dublincity.ie

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CCC, 5A Woodpark, Sallynoggin, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin.

Tel: 01 2368030/31. Fax: 01 2368012. E-mail: dlrccc1@eircom.net

Fingal CCC, Mainscourt, 23 Main Street, Swords, Co Dublin.

Tel: 01 8905027. E-mail: Michelle.Butler@fingalcoco.ie

Galway CCC, 9B Liosban Retail Centre, Tuam Road, Galway.

Tel: 091 752039. E-mail: mail@galwaychildcare.com

Kildare CCC, The Woods, Clane, Co. Kildare.

Tel: 045 861307. Fax 045 982411. E-mail: cokildarechildcare@eircom.net

Kilkenny CCC, Rear Choill Mhuire, Glendine Road, Kilkenny.

Tel: 056 52865. E-mail: kkccc@eircom.net

Kerry CCC, Powers Court, Boherbee, Tralee, Co Kerry.

Tel: 066 7181582. E-mail: oonaghtwomey@eircom.net kccemc@eircom.net

Laois CCC, 6 Lismard Court, Portlaoise, Co Laois.

Tel: 0502 61029. Fax: 0502 61029. E-mail: laoischildcare@eircom.net

Leitrim CCC, Laird House, Church Street, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim.

Tel: 071 9640870. Fax: 071 9640871. E-mail: leitrimcountychildcare@eircom.net

County Limerick CCC, 32 Main Street, Croom, Co Limerick.

Tel: 061 600918. Fax: 061 600898. E-mail: clcc@eircom.net

Limerick City CCC, The Granary, Michael Street, Limerick.

Tel: 061 407546/407547. E-mail: childcare@limerickcity.ie

Longford CCC, Unit 17 Longford Shopping Centre, Co Longford.

Tel: 043 42505. Fax: 043 42504. E-mail: lcchildcare@eircom.net

Louth CCC, Unit 9, Ardee Business Park, Hale St, Ardee, Co Louth.

Tel: 041 6859912. E-mail: louthchildcare@eircom.net

Mayo CCC, Mill Lane, Castlebar, Co Mayo.

Tel: 094 34778/34779. Fax: 094 34815. E-mail: trina.mcginity@whb.ie jpower@mayococo.ie

Meath CCC, 11 Watergate Street, Navan, Co Meath.

Tel: 046 73010. Fax: 046 9067221. E-mail: meathchildcare@eircom.net

Monaghan CCC, 7 The Grange, Plantation Walk, Monaghan.

Tel: 047 72896. E-mail: bredamccc@eircom.net

Offaly CCC, St Josephs Community Centre, Kilcormac, Birr, Co Offaly.

Tel: 0509 35878, 086 8664015. Fax: 0509 35879. E-mail: offalychildcare@eircom.net

Roscommon CCC, Antogher Road, Roscommon, Co Roscommon.

Tel: 0903 28669. E-mail: roschildcare@eircom.net

Sligo CCC, 50 The Mall, Sligo.

Tel: 071 48860. E-mail: sccc@eircom.net

South Dublin CCC, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Whitestown Estate, Killinarden, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Tel: 01 4576433. E-mail: southdublinchildcare@eircom.net

South Tipperary CCC, 1 O'Connell Street, Clonmel, Co Tipperary.

Tel: 052 82274. E-mail: cccchrisheehan@eircom.net

Tipperary North CCC, Friars Court, Nenagh, Co Tipperary.

Tel: 067 44886/44887/44888/44857. E-mail: childcare@northtippcoco.ie jcoffey@northtippcoco.ie

Waterford City CCC, Waterford Resource Centre for the Unemployed, Rockfield Park, Grace Diu, Waterford.

Tel: 051 860444. E-mail: noirinwaterfordchild@eircom.net

Waterford County CCC, Dungarvan Youth Resource Centre, Dungarvan, Co Waterford.

Tel: 058 43601. E-mail: waterfordcochildcare@eircom.net

Westmeath CCC, Brosna Bridge House, Pearse Street, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

Tel: 044 35454. E-mail: Westmeathcountychildcare@eircom.net

Wexford CCC, 11 Weafer Street, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford.

Tel: 054 37156/054 39763. Fax: 054 39541. E-mail: lindacountychildcare@eircom.net

Wicklow CCC, Unit C6 Wicklow Enterprise Centre, The Murrough, Co Wicklow.

Tel: 0404 66433 (ext 4225). Fax: 0404 64444. E-mail: jeremywccc@eircom.net

Government Departments & State Offices

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01-6312121. Lo-call 1890 220 222. E-mail: erinfo@entemp.ie Website: www.entemp.ie. For information leaflets on legislation.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Equality Division, Floor2, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4790200. E-mail: info@justice.ie. Website: www.irlgov.ie/justice

Department of Health & Children, Poolbeg Street, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6354000. Fax: 01-6354001. Lo-Call: 1890 200311. Website: www.doh.ie

Government Publications Sales Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6793515 / 6710309. Mail Order Sales Tel: 01-6476000. (For copies of all legislative Acts including employment and Bills currently discussed by the Dáil).

Health and Safety Authority, 10 Hogan Place, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6620400. Email: infotel@hsa.ie. Website: www.hsa.ie

The Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. Pubic Information Centre Tel: 01-4173333 Fax: 01-4173331. Business Queries Tel: 01-4173336. LoCall 1890 245545. Email: info@equality.ie. Website: www.equality.ie

The National Framework Committee on Family Friendly Policies, c/o The Equality Authority, Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-4173386. www.familyfriendly.ie/guidelines

Revenue Commissioners, 9/15 Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1. Employer's Information, Tel: 01-8655000. PAYE Enquiries, Lo-call: 1890605090. www.revenue.ie

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), 20 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 4785777. Fax: (01) 4785778. E-mail: nccri@eircom.net www.nccri.com

Health Boards

Health Boards: East Coast Area Health Board, South Western Area Health Board, Northern Area Health Board, Midland Health Board, Mid-Western Health Board, North Eastern Health Board, North Western Health Board, South Eastern Health Board, Western Health Board. See local telephone directory for relevant numbers.

Employer/Employee – Information/Support Organisations

Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6051500. Email: info@ibec.ie. Website: www.ibec.ie

Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Head Office, 31/32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Tel: 01-8897777. Fax: 01-8872012. Email: congress@ictu.ie. Website: www.ictu.ie

Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union (IMPACT), Nerney's Court, Dublin 1. Tel: 01-8171500. Fax: 01-8171501. Email: bharbor@impact.ie. Website: www.impact.ie.

National Irish Safety Organisation, Unit A11, Calmount Park, Calmount Avenue, Ballymount, Dublin 12 Tel: 01- 4659760. Fax: 01-4659765. E-mail: info@niso.ie. Website: www.niso.ie

Small Firms Association (SFA), Confederation House, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6051500. Fax: 01-6612861. Email: info@sfa.ie. Website: www.sfa.ie

Services Industrial Professional Technical Union (SIPTU), Liberty Hall, Dublin 1. Tel: 01-8749731. Fax: 01-8748642. Email: info@siptu.ie. Website: www.siptu.ie

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