

**KILDARE COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE LTD**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2014**



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## **Chairperson's Message**

I am delighted to report to you again this year in my capacity as Chairperson of a Board that throughout 2014 KCCC has continued to deliver services based on our guiding principles of collaborative working and provision of excellent quality services to our stakeholders throughout the County, while always putting children first.

The Code of Governance for the Community and Voluntary Sector was published in March 2012. Organisations in the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector are now asked to schedule time to adopt the Code and work towards complying with the implementation actions that underpin each of the five (5) principles. KCCC have commenced working on that code and it is estimated that the Document will be completed in the next 18 months.

In accordance with the principles of the code, KCCC have continued to focus on strengthening our Board of Directors, successfully recruiting three new Board members to fill skills deficits identified in finance, legal and Early Years Education Policy.

The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) was established on the October 16, 2014 under the terms of the Charities Act 2009. The (CRA) is Ireland's national statutory regulatory agency for charitable organisations and is an independent agency of the Department of Justice and Equality. Each Charity is required to register with the CRA and create an individual "online account". I can confirm that KCCC has registered with the Authority and is in the process of preparing all the necessary information for "upload" to the Authority's website. This work will be completed subsequent to the AGM scheduled for Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015.

Through the execution of our Local Implementation Plan, we continue to make significant progress on our mission statement – "promoting quality and accessible childcare provision for all children from birth to 14 years in Co Kildare in partnership with all stakeholders". This work is carried out by our CEO and staff team and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the team for their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication in progressing the work of KCCC both in the County but also the contribution they make at national level also.

Many organisations have contributed to KCCC's success in 2014 – we collaborated successfully with Kildare Local Enterprise Office in responding to the needs of the Leaders in Early Childhood Care and Education in Kildare by delivering a HR Management and Leadership Programme. We continued to work closely with Early Childhood Ireland developing Community of Practice hubs in Kildare, identifying centers of best practice in the county and sharing that practice amongst the wider Early Years community. We also linked with our City and County Childcare Committee colleagues through the work of the CCI, Childcare Committees Ireland, to promote cohesion and clarity nationwide.

We enter 2015 stronger and confident that we will continue to provide the high level of service now routinely expected of us. We are aware that our most important asset is our reputation among the stakeholders we work alongside, the services, groups and parents we support and we will endeavor to keep secure our current commitment to them.

**Patricia Garland-Moloney**

**Chair**

**Kildare County Childcare Committee**

## Manager Statement

Kildare County Childcare Committee was formed in 2001 to promote the cross-agency co-operation and co-ordination of Childcare in County Kildare. Our mission statement is to promote quality, accessible childcare for all children aged 0 – 14 years in County Kildare in partnership with all relevant stake-holders.

Kildare County Childcare Committee is a Company limited by guarantee and a registered Charity. It is currently made up of 8 Board of Directors.

- Mary Waters: Irish Farmers Association
- Ted Murray: Clane Project Centre
- Anthony Egan Community and Voluntary Forum
- Patricia Garland-Maloney Chairperson,
- Kathleen Cash Vice Chairperson, Tir Na nOg Childcare Centre
- Eilis Quinlan Quinlan Accountants
- Dr Catriona O'Toole NUI Maynooth
- Breda Cullivan Breda Cullivan & Co Solicitors

We are currently seeking a Director with PR expertise.

Kildare County Childcare Committee is made up of 6 permanent staff as follows:

CEO	Julie McNamara
Administration Officer:	Michael P Quirke
Development Officers:	Fidelma Martin
	Marianne Casey
Programme Administrator:	Emily Moore
Information Officer:	Marie Bagnall

## **Objectives/Goals**

- To develop comprehensive childcare supports, infrastructure and services where the holistic well-being, needs and rights of children and families are fundamental
- To enhance quality early childhood education and care and school-age provision
- To consolidate investment in the sector in order to support the continuing development of a stable, integrated and sustainable infrastructure
- Through on-going professional development, build on the capacity of the ECCE sector to enhance and develop quality ECCE services for children and their families
- To ensure effective and transparent collaboration, communication and consultation by all stakeholders involved in childhood care and education; optimising resources to support the implementation of the early childhood care and education strategy.

The key achievements since the inception of Kildare County Childcare Committee in 2001 include:

### **The successful administration of the National Programmes:**

On behalf of the Childcare Directorate of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Kildare County Childcare Committee administer the main childcare funding programmes that subsidise fees for parents in early year's services locally. They provide childcare providers and parents with information about the government funded childcare programmes that are available. In 2014 Pobal introduced the Programmes Implementation Platform (PIP) a new online system which will streamline the administrative processes across the three national childcare funding programmes (ECCE, TEC and CCS). The hope is that PIP will reduce paperwork and simplify administration to enable the programmes to be managed more effectively and efficiently, the 3 programmes are:

- The free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme was introduced with effect from January 2010. The Programme is administered by the Childcare Directorate of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, with the local operation of the Programme managed by the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs). Children qualify for the free pre-school year where they are aged more than 3 years 2 months and

less than 4 years 7 months at 1 September in the relevant pre-school year. Children will get 3 hours a day 5 days per week for 183 days. Kildare currently has 202 services participating in this Programme with 3774 children registered for the September 2014 term; since the Programme was first introduced in 2009 21,549 children have availed of their free preschool year in Kildare.

- The Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCS) is a support Programme for community-based childcare services to provide quality childcare services at a reduced rate to parents. It is a Programme, which enables Community Childcare Services to give parents in receipt of certain social welfare payments, disadvantaged parents and parents in low paid employment a reduction in their childcare fees. The (CCS) Programme is restricted to community/not-for-profit childcare services. The fee which a parent will pay will be the cost price of the place as advertised by the service less the relevant subvention amount. Kildare has 8 childcare services participating in this programme with 248 children registered for CCS. Since the Scheme's introduction in 2008, over 2,200 families have benefited.
  
- The Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) Programme was introduced in September 2010 and is administered by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs. The objective of the Programme is to support parents on eligible training courses and eligible categories of parents returning to work, by providing subsidized childcare places. The TEC Programmes consist of 3 strands: the Childcare Education and Training Support Programme (CETS), the After-school Childcare Programme (ASCC) and the Community Employment Childcare Programme (CEC). The allocation of childcare places under the Programme is managed by the Department, via the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) and local childcare service providers. Children are registered on PIP and Payments in respect of CETS places are made to services by Pobal. Kildare has 67 services participating in this Programme with 304 places actively registered for the 3 strands.

## **Capital investment in Early Childhood Care and Education Services**

Since 2000, 104 capital grants have been paid out to service providers in Kildare, comprising funds obtained from the European Union, Exchequer Funding and payments made from the National Childcare Investment Programme. Grants paid amount to over €8.5million.

## **Implementation of Quality Outreach Programme**

The Quality Outreach Programme aims to equip childcare providers with suitable information and skills to respond to the unique needs of all children and their families. The purpose of the Quality Outreach Programme is to empower and support providers to develop quality within their childcare services. All support on-site visits, consultation, on-going mentoring and supporting tools have “empowerment and support” as the underlying ethos. All Quality Outreach work is underpinned by the principles of Siolta and Aistear and childcare providers will have increased skills in meeting compliance with Childcare Regulations and National Schemes. The onsite support that Kildare County Childcare Committee offer to childcare providers in developing their capacity through enhancing the provision of quality childcare can, depending on providers’ needs, be based on topics such as:

- Best practice
- Policies and procedures
- Finance
- Record keeping
- Legislation
- Human resources
- Curriculum development
- Assessment and planning
- Training
- Play
- Communications
- Or any other quality related topic identified as being needed.

### **Accredited Training of ECCE practitioners:**

KCCC have facilitated and subsidised Fetac accredited training at level 5 and 6 major award and modules contributing towards Major awards, including Fetac-accredited modules for Childminders. We have also supported and organised the roll-out of the Development of Special Needs with Pre-School Child in collaboration with KARE.

### **Development of Quality Workshops**

KCCC have developed a series of workshops to support childcare services in incorporating *Aistear* into their services to support Programme/curriculum development. The KCCC “*Embracing Aistear*” Programme provides childcare practitioners with information, support and skills to engage with *Aistear* in a practical way and enables practitioners to develop the quality of the childcare services that they provide. The KCCC “*Embracing Aistear*” Programme consists of a series of workshops and a follow-up site support visit. Services must nominate key staff to include Managers, Supervisors and Room leaders, to attend the workshops so that the learning and skills can be more easily extended in the overall service. The workshops are based on the framework of *Aistear* and the Guidelines for Good Practice outlined in *Aistear*.

### **Recreated Environments**

In 2012, KCCC created an actual, real-life preschool classroom space, for providers to walk around, to experience a space that was excellent for extending children’s learning, development and creativity. It was used to show how to create clearly defined play spaces and also to show how these spaces can be used, either as an area on its own or for extending children’s play using two or more areas together. Everyone had a chance to see how they could change their own spaces with expert help from JAGGO and KCCC Development Team.

### **Development of Resources**

- Step-by-Step Guide for setting up a childcare Service



This Guidebook was developed by Kildare County Childcare Committee in conjunction with Galway City & County Childcare Committee who researched and consulted extensively to make the guidebook as comprehensive as possible. Its aim is to provide a step-by-step guide highlighting the different stages necessary to ensure that a service will provide quality childcare experiences for children and their families. The guidebook is comprehensive and aims to answer the most common questions that KCCC staff have been asked by new and existing childcare providers.

- **Playful World**

A booklet and DVD containing a selection of Games from Around the World was designed and produced with funding obtained from the FAS County Childcare Committee Grant Scheme. Playful World was the result of an innovative project facilitated by KCCC with Athy Travellers Group and Kildare Youth Services, Star Girls Youth Group, in Athy Co. Kildare. It aims to raise awareness of the role that games can play in promoting inclusiveness amongst children in our increasingly diverse society.

### **Financial Report**

The total allocation from Central Government funds in 2014 amounted to €385,000. A comprehensive analysis of this funding is available in the audited financial statements. These statements are available from the KCCC and are also on our website [www.kildarechildcare.ie](http://www.kildarechildcare.ie).

## Key Priorities 2014

For 2014, the Childcare Directorate (DYCA) named the following areas as priorities:

On-going/core work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting the delivery of the three national programmes (ECCE, CCS, CETS)</li><li>• Supporting sustainability throughout the sector</li><li>• Supporting childcare providers</li></ul>
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actions planned at a local level must be submitted to a Collaborative Quality group that will be the Clearing House for all proposed quality initiatives</li><li>• A separate but aligned Collaborative group will develop a baseline model</li></ul>
Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child Protection Early Years Committee</li><li>• Rollout of Children First Training</li></ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actions can be planned at a local level to up skill staff to Level 5 and Level 6 as appropriate</li><li>• A Training Standards Collaborative group to be formed to look at and agree common understanding of training aptitudes</li></ul>

## Highlights/successes

With the remit for the delivery of Child Protection training in Kildare transferring from the HSE to County Childcare Committees in 2014 KCCC has been able to gain a positive influence over the number of services and childcare workers trained in Children First. From the outset Kildare had one of the largest number of childcare practitioners requiring training in child protection in the country. KCCC delivered 10 training sessions in order to meet our national targets of providing training to one third of all childcare services in the county. This translated into 172 childcare practitioners obtaining their Children First Certificate from 101 services which was a phenomenal achievement given that no additional resources were provided to KCCC to roll out the training.

In 2014 the KCCC Embracing Aistear Programme was adapted due to feedback from participants to include a post training on-site mentoring visit to support the implementation of key learning from the training. This addition gave KCCC a tool to monitor the impact of the training on the delivery of quality outcomes for children. Our evaluations found that 95% of participants noted an increased confidence and understanding in using Aistear, and have a good/excellent knowledge of Aistear following the workshops.



KCCC worked collaboratively with Early Childhood Ireland to develop a model of Community of Practice for Kildare Childcare Services. The aim is to have a community of practice hub in each of the five Electoral Divisions in Kildare with the pilot commencing in Athy in 2014. The objective is to identify models of best practice in the provision of high quality childcare in County Kildare and for this best practice to be shared with other childcare services in the 5 Electoral Division by practitioners to their peers. Tir Na Nog Childcare service in Athy was the first service to be identified as demonstrating exemplary best practice in lay out of their room environments. An on-site workshop facilitated by the Owner/Manager and all staff in the service was held with 9 practitioners attending. Feed-back was extremely positive with practitioners using words such as “exciting”, “fresh”, “new ideas”, “interesting”, “curious”, and “pride” to describe how they found the event.

In 2014 a collaborative Early Years group has been set up in Kildare comprising of NUI Maynooth, ECI and KCCC. The group aims to explore areas within the Early Years in Kildare that can be supported through collective expertise and knowledge.

In 2014 KCCC implemented a new system of delivery based on the needs identified through Quality consultations, evaluations, HSE reports, national and internal research and best practice. Supports were provided to services under a number of strands including:

- Quality on site consultations based on a system of prioritisation using a base-line assessment tool.
- Sustainability supports based on a system of prioritisation using evidence based tool-kits.
- Guidance on the implementation of the Governance Code to Boards of Community Services
- Leadership/Coaching to Managers of Community Services in relation to Planning, Staff Support and Supervision, Monitoring and Reporting.
- Development of a HR/Leadership/Mentoring training programme

This approach enables us to provide a broad spectrum of support to providers focusing on key areas impacting on the overall quality of the service. It enables a number of KCCC staff members to engage with services imparting their own expertise therefore building key relationships and trust. The Quality Outreach Approach is based on a model of empowerment and support highlighting where the services are doing well and where there is room for improvements based on assessment tools developed with the core aim of improving quality and sustainability and providing services with the tools and supports to advance their practice.

Some examples of testimonials received by KCCC in 2014 include

“In an industry where Childcare Practitioners find most visits and inspections geared to find fault – it is so very important and a positive reinforcement to childcare professionals to receive a visit from KCCC that acknowledges the good work done every day... “

“Marianne’s visit had a very positive effect on staff morale... “

“I feel I simply have to contact you regarding the professionalism and efficiency of your team... I very much appreciated their input...”

To ensure that effective communication and feedback between staff working with one service KCCC have recently commenced monthly case study meetings and an Early Years support space for Development staff to share issues and challenges they are encountering in practice.

The co-ordination and management of the Learner Fund with Kildare's high uptake from applicants was another key success. The Learner Fund was not included in our original 2014 action plan. The administration involved in the Learning fund was significant with 126 applications in Phase 1 and 104 in Phase 2. KCCC dedicated a lead staff member to the role and the action was prioritised.

In 2014 KCCC had aimed to identify an evidence based support programme for Parent and Toddler Groups under Objective 3. However, this action was conducted in collaboration with the Kildare Children and Young Peoples Services Committee and an interagency response to Parent and Toddler groups has been identified and prioritised and will be rolled-out in 2015.

KCCC have worked with Kildare County Enterprise Board to develop a HR Management and Leadership programme for childcare services to include the key areas of recruitment and selection, induction, performance management, leadership, team building, conflict resolution, policies and procedures and learning and development. Services received a one to one mentoring session at the end of the Training and service level action plans were developed. Kildare County Enterprise Board funded the training and KCCC recruited the participants based on needs identified through Quality Outreach Consultations. The approach worked very well with Kildare Enterprise Board sharing their expertise and KCCC identifying gaps in training for the Childcare Sector. There were a total of 7 services – 4 community- based and 3 private based with 17 participants. The programme was very well received with participants evaluating that all their learning outcomes were achieved and knowledge, skills and confidence was rated from poor/fair to good before the training, moving to good to excellent after the training. Individual comments included:

"I liked everything about the training - the venue, information and trainer."

"The facilitator was the best ever!!"

"I liked how it helped me as a person and a manager, gave me more confidence."

"Should be compulsory for senior management."

"Excellent skill training essential in managing teams."

In 2014 KCCC continued to work cohesively as a Board. Two board members resigned as a result of the local elections held in May 2014, one board member resigned due to the closure of their community service and a fourth resigned due to work commitments. KCCC

recruited 3 new members based on skills deficits in legal, financial and Early Years identified on the board.

### **Board Meetings, Governance Code and Charity Regulator.**

The Board of Directors held seven (7) meetings plus the AGM.

Our Office Manager/Company Secretary resigned on 8th December 2014 and KCCC recruited a replacement early in 2015.

Our Development Officer completed the Dip in Early Childhood Studies qualifying with a First class honour and our second Development Officer will undertake this course of studies in September 2015.

### **The Governance Code**

The Code of Governance for the Community and Voluntary Sector was published by the Working Group of the sector in March 2012. Organisations in the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector are now asked to schedule time to adopt the Code and work towards complying with the implementation actions that underpin each of the five (5) principle's. KCCC have commenced working on the code and it is estimated that the Document should be completed in about 18 months to 2 years.

The Working Group consisted of the following organisations:-

Boardmatch Ireland, Business in the Community, Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Clann Credo, Disability Federation Ireland, Irish Charities Tax Reform, Volunteer Ireland and The Wheel.

### **CHARITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY (CRA) - CHARITIES ACT 2009.**

The CRA was established on the 16th of October 2014 under the terms of the Charities Act 2009. The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) is Ireland's national statutory regulatory agency for charitable organisations and is an independent agency of the Department of Justice and Equality

Each Charity is required to register with the CRA and create an individual "online account"

KCCC is registered with the Authority and is in the process of preparing all the necessary information for “upload” to the Authority’s website. This work will be completed subsequent to the AGM scheduled for Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015.

#### **Obstacles identified in 2014**

KCCC targets for delivering Child Protection training for 2014 was 172 participants from 101 services which translated into delivering 10 sessions; this exceeds our initial commitments to the National Child Protection collaborative of rolling out 4 sessions. KCCC released two Development Officer to training to deliver Children First which proved to be challenging on KCCC resources.

Kildare has a lower than the national average of community to private childcare services at 1:11 compared with 1:2. Of the 17 Community services, only 9 were participating in the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme at the start of 2014. Therefore, it is with deep regret that a key community service of a very high quality which provided childcare to children with challenging behaviour and their families closed its doors from 27th June 2014. The service was no longer sustainable as the lead organisation was unable to sustain funding due to the accumulation of 5 years successive budget cuts. The capitation received through CCS and ECCE were not sufficient to sustain the high quality provided by the service, which required high qualified staff and low pupil: teacher ratio’s in order to provide the level of care and expertise required by the children attending the service who all display challenging behaviours.

A second childcare service participating in CCS closed its doors from 31st December 2014 due to the lead organisation being unable to sustain the service on CCS funding alone, those children who required places were reallocated to another CCS service in the town.

Kildare CCC had been requested by Pobal to monitor two other Community Childcare services who are charging close to the private rate for their services. On initial meetings with the services they have indicated that their charges reflect the true cost of running a high quality community service with low child to teacher ratios and they are not in a position to reduce their charges as to do so would significantly compromise on quality.

The introduction of PIP coincided with a number of key actions already scheduled including the roll out of the CMDG and Parent and Toddler grants which meant that the final quarter of the year was an extremely busy period for all staff of KCCC, with many having to hold off scheduled leave until the Christmas period. The method with which the Learner Fund was rolled out by DCYA/Pobal proved to be extremely administrative burdensome on KCCC staff. In previous years KCCC managed the roll-out of the training in-house which was efficient, however the way in which the Learner fund was rolled out slowed down and complicated the process, leading to long delays, issues with monitoring tutor qualifications and the actual placement of training applicants on programmes in a timely and efficient manner. Working with several different training providers also impacted on the administration workload.

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AGM 23/04/2015