

Daily Digest

The Daily Digest is a compilation of articles gathered from the online editions of major Irish and international newspapers. The articles cover social, economic and policy matters as they relate to children and families. [Sign up here.](#)

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Welcome to the latest issue of Childcare eNews

In this issue of Childcare eNews, we bring you details of two reports launched in April - the 2012 State of the Nation's Children report and a report on separated children in foster care. We share news of a joint initiative by the Ombudsman for Children and Courts Service to assist separating parents and their children as well as showing the results of a survey into childcare in Ireland.

We also welcome the appointment by Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children & Youth Affairs of Ms. Norah Gibbons as the first Chairperson of the board of the new Child & Family Agency.

As always we bring you up to date on Barnardos new publications, upcoming training events and library resources.

We hope you enjoy reading

Best wishes

Sinead Lawton

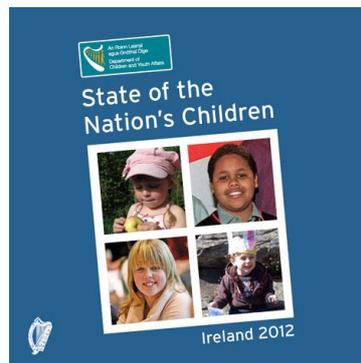
News and Developments

Barnardos Welcomes Appointment of Norah Gibbons to Child & Family Agency

Barnardos welcomes the appointment by Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, of Norah Gibbons as the first Chairperson of the board of the new Child & Family Agency. Speaking about her

appointment, Fergus Finlay, Barnardos Chief Executive, said: 'We are immensely proud of Norah and have every confidence that she will do a brilliant job. Her appointment as Chairperson will be widely welcomed throughout the community and voluntary sector and serves as an indication of how committed the new Child and Family Agency are to working closely with the sector.'

State of the Nation's Children



The Government has just published the 2012 edition of the annual [*State of the Nation's Children report*](#). The report draws together the latest statistics across a range of indicators of children's health, education, behaviour, relationships, well-being and the supports available to them. The report shows that more than 1.1 million children are now living in the State as a result of the baby boom. The child population continued to rise in the decade to 2011, with a 13.4% surge recorded which has led to Ireland having the highest percentage of children – at 25% of the total population – in the EU community.

As regards early care and education, the report says that the number of services offering the Free Pre-School Year rose 10% between 2010 and 2011, to reach 4,162. The proportion of those services that received the higher capitation grant rose from 11.0% to 14.6% in this period.

Scandinavian Childcare: Making it Happen

In a survey conducted by Barnardos, the National Women's

Council of Ireland, OPEN and Start Strong, many parents said that they are struggling to pay household bills because of the high cost of childcare and afterschool care and that childcare costs actually prevented them from taking up employment or moving from part-time to full-time work. The four organisations are calling on the Government to prioritise the development of quality, subsidised childcare and afterschool care for all children to support their development and remove barriers to work for parents.

The Scandinavian model had been much talked about in recent years but plans to start moving Ireland towards such a model continue to be piecemeal. Meaningful change requires a properly trained workforce in services with appropriate facilities that are regularly inspected, regulation for childminders and better family leave and flexible work practices to give parents more choice in balancing family and work life. Greater flexibility is also needed in the social welfare system to support parents in low paid and part-time work.

Barnardos, the National Women's Council of Ireland, OPEN and Start Strong said that the State has been slow to engage in real change in this area and that the system continues to fail children and parents: "If the Government is serious about giving all children the best start in life and about getting parents back to work, then we need to prioritise the move towards Scandinavian type childcare. Childhood is the most important period in an individual's life; giving children the strongest foundation possible creates enormous potential for them and our society."

[See our website for more information.](#)

Parental Leave and Life-work Balance



On 8th March the Irish Government issued a statutory instrument to amend parents' entitlements to leave and flexible work arrangements, to meet the requirements of the [2010 EU Directive on parental leave](#). The EU Directive required two significant changes to Irish law:

- An increase in every parent's entitlement to parental leave (unpaid in Ireland) from 14 weeks to 18 weeks per child (to be taken by the time the child is 8 years old).
- The introduction for the first time of a "right to request" flexible working arrangements, though the EU Directive only requires that this be for parents at the point at which they return from a period of parental leave.

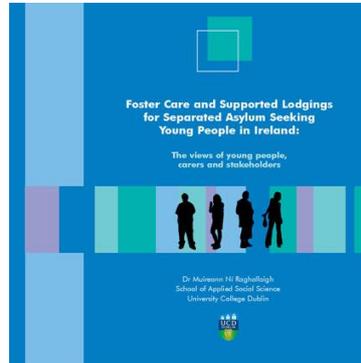
Children's Ombudsman & Courts Service in joint initiative to assist separating parents & their children

Over the next few months, the Ombudsman for Children's Office and the Courts Service will be working together on a project that aims to strengthen awareness and understanding among separating parents of key aspects of District Family Law Courts proceedings and of alternatives to court in order to address issues including those relating to parenting arrangements; and support children to have

their voices heard in this process.

[More information is available here.](#)

Separated Children in Foster Care Report



Research into the experiences of separated children who come to Ireland seeking protection, commissioned by Barnardos and the HSE, was launched at the beginning of April. The research, "[Foster Care and Supported Lodgings for Separated Asylum Seeking Young People in Ireland: The views of young people, carers and stakeholders](#)", evaluated the impact of the changes that have been made in recent years in how care is provided to these young people, who arrive in Ireland alone often fleeing conflict in their home countries.

Speaking at a seminar to launch the research, its author Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh of UCD's School of Applied Social Science said: "The research shows the enormous improvement that has been made in terms of the care being provided to separated children. These young people obviously face numerous challenges both before they arrive in Ireland and after they get here and as a result they can have very complex needs. While foster care and supported lodgings are working well for the majority of young people, one of the clear findings of the report is the need to ensure that the care offered reflects the individual needs of each child."

The Cow & Gate Big Toddle for Barnardos



The Cow & Gate Big Toddle for Barnardos is a fun sponsored walk for the under fives where children themselves have the opportunity to help create positive change for disadvantaged children in Ireland. Whether you are working in a crèche, are a parent or a childminder, you can take part anywhere, any time of your choosing between 1st May and 30th June 2013. To take part, please [register today](#) for your fantastic, free, fun pack. This pack has everything that you need to organise your toddle including hats, stickers and bunting. The entire cost of the pack and materials has been covered by Cow & Gate, so all funds raised go directly to support Barnardos work.

Early Years Care and Education



€2.75 Million Capital Funding for Childcare Providers

In March, Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, announced details of the allocation of €2.75 million to support the ongoing improvement of the childcare sector. In 2012, Minister Fitzgerald reintroduced a capital funding scheme for childcare for the first time since 2008. The 2013 funding scheme covers four strands:

- Small grants to purchase equipment or carry out small maintenance work;
- Grants to improve accessibility of services for children with disabilities,
- Grants to provide natural outdoor spaces that promote active outdoor play and;
- Grants towards critical works to ensure that buildings are fit for purpose under the childcare regulations (open to community/not for profit services only).

The scheme will be administered by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and as in 2012. Full details of the Programme and instructions are available on the [Pobal website](#).

Diversity and Equality in the Early Years

An evaluation has been published of the *Pre-School Education Initiative for Children from Minority Groups*. The initiative involved training and mentoring for early childhood educators in diversity and equality practice, using the Anti-Bias Education approach. The evaluation found the approach to be very effective in achieving positive change. The anti-bias approach supports educators to reflect critically on their practice. In Ireland it informed the development of the *éist* project, which in turn influenced the recent initiative. Its goals are to:

- Support children's identity (individual and group) and their sense of belonging.
- Foster children's empathy and support them to be comfortable with differences between children.

- Encourage each child to think about diversity and bias.
- Empower children to stand up for themselves and others in difficult situations.

[The full evaluation report is available here.](#)

NEYAI Donegal Professional Pedagogy Project

The NEYAI Donegal Professional Pedagogy Project has brought out three new publications recently. Donegal CCC are the lead partner in the consortium.

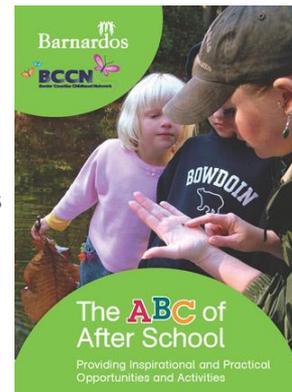
- [Professional Pedagogy Project Brochure](#)
 - [Professional Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education](#)
 - [Aistear - Enabling Children To Be Ready Willing and Able to Learn.](#)
-

Barnardos Publications

COMING SOON -

The ABC of After School: Providing Inspirational and Practical Opportunities and Activities in After School Services

The ABC of After School, produced by Barnardos and Border Counties Childhood Network, provides support, knowledge and ideas for those working in after school services to help them to meet the needs of the children in their service while enhancing their emotional, social, physical and cognitive development.



This publication focuses on the needs of children attending after school settings with regard to the quality and content

of the programmes that are provided for them. The book sets out the context for after school work, both in Ireland and through examples from other countries, and gives background on the needs of children between four to twelve years. Suitable activities are then suggested which will provide a rich programme and environment.

There is a CD to accompany this book which offers an extensive list of activities for after school services in three categories: Everyday Opportunities; Experiential or Project Based Learning Opportunities; Community Service Learning Experiences.

This publication will be available soon.

Keep an eye on www.barnardos.ie for more info.

Early Speech and Language Matters: Enriching the communication environment and language development in early childhood

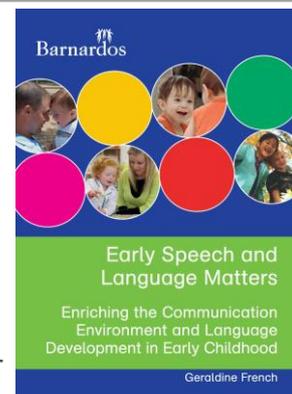
Early Speech and

Language Matters is a guidebook for

early years educators that provides

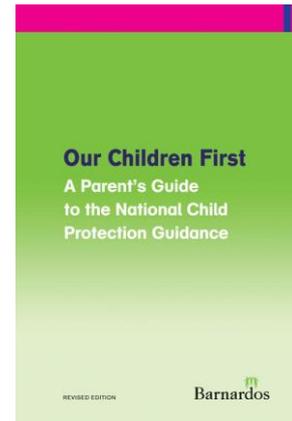
up-to-date theory and research in relation to the development of speech, communication and language in early childhood. It also gives practical guidance to early childhood educators on how they can support early speech, communication and language development as well as guidance on what to do if there are concerns about a child's speech, language and communication development, how to address those concerns, and how to support children while waiting for speech and language therapy.

[Buy this book now for €25 plus p&p.](#)



Our Children First: A Parent's Guide to the National Child Protection Guidance (revised ed. 2012)

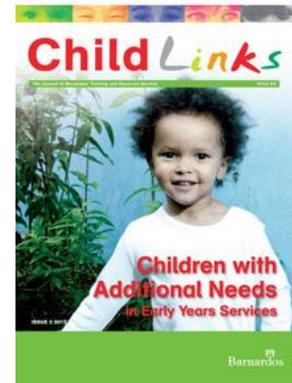
Revised to take account of the updated Children First guidance 2011, this guide explains to parents what the definitions of child abuse are; how they can help to ensure that their children are safe when in someone else's care; and what to do if they are worried that a child may be being abused.



[This booklet is now available to download from our website.](#)

ChildLinks - Children with Additional Needs in Early Years Services

This latest edition of ChildLinks contains articles from the National Disability Authority; Roscommon Childcare Committee; Early Childhood Ireland; Limerick City Childcare Committee and Mary Immaculate College; and the FIESTA Network (Facilitating Inclusive Education and Supporting the Transition Agenda).



[Buy this issue now for €3 plus p&p.](#)

Barnardos Training and Consultancy



We offer practitioners, parents, carers and all people working with children a range of high quality and innovative training programmes, which are crucial to strengthen skills in the early years sector and to benefit children.

FIRST AID - Paediatric. One day First Aid Course

Saturday 18th May, 9.30am - 5pm

Venue: Barnardos, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

All staff are required to be familiar with First Aid and to ensure Health and Safety of the children within their care.

This one day workshop links to Siolta Standard 5, 9 and Standard 15. On successful completion of the course, each participant will receive a childcare First Aid Certificate valid for two years.

[You can register for this event here.](#)

Early Speech and Language Matters seminar

Our Early Speech and Language Matters seminar held in the Hilton Hotel, Dublin 8 on 24th April was a great success. Attendees heard from speakers Dr

Geraldine French, Early Years Specialist; Dr Máire Mhic Mhathúna, DIT; Inez Bailey, Director of NALA; Niall de



Búrca, Storyteller; Marian Shiel, Senior Speech and Language Therapist; and Fergus Finlay, CEO, Barnardos.

Photo: (L to R) Ger French, author; Fergus Finlay, Barnardos CEO; Nessa McNamara

[Subscribe now](#) to receive Training Updates by email throughout the year.

We also provide:

- Tailored training events for professionals
- Parenting programmes and talks
- Consultancy service

To discuss training events or your tailored training requirements, please contact Barnardos Training & Resource Service at training@barnardos.ie or telephone 01 4530355 ext 413 or visit [our website](#) for more information.

Barnardos Library



Barnardos library provides comprehensive information on a range of child related issues such as child protection, child development, family support, bereavement, adoption, diversity, parenting, childcare and much more.

[Check out the new resources we have in stock.](#)

[Or why not have a look at our online catalogue.](#)

Upcoming Events



Bipolar Affective Disorder in Children and Adolescents - Centre for Child & Adolescent Mental Health

Date: Tuesday 7th May 2013, 9.30am-4pm

Venue: Lecture Hall, St Patrick's University Hospital, Steevens Lane, James Street, Dublin 8

The objective of this event is to assist delegates in the recognition, assessment and treatment of clinical problems involving extreme mood swings.

Email childmentalhealthevents@gmail.com for more information.

Early Years International Conference and AGM 2013 - Culture, Creativity and Community Connections Early Years - Ireland

Date: Thursday 6th and Friday 7th June 2013

Venue: City Hotel, Derry, Northern Ireland

Delegates attending the two-day conference will consist of represents of childcare settings across Northern Ireland, as well as advisory, inspectorate, academic and health care professionals working the in the early year's sector.

For further details contact Joanna Loane, Events Manager
Tel. 028 6863 3098 or email: joannal@early-years.org

**Engagement and Participation in Family Support -
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre**

6th Biennial International Conference

Date: 13th & 14th June 2013

Venue: School of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway

The aim of this conference is to view trends, challenges and options relating to citizen's engagement and participation in the field of Family Support. The conference will consider the relevance of citizenship to Family Support, exploring the potential and limitations of community and volunteer led provision, the challenges facing professional worker-citizens in embattled systems, the possibility of participatory structures within service delivery systems, the role of advocacy and protest in Family Support and the overall meaning and value of participation by children and young people for Family Support.

[Click here for further details.](#)

**International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse
and Neglect – ISPCAN**

European Regional Conference on Child Abuse

Date: 15th - 18th September 2013

Venue: The Burlington Hotel, Dublin 4.

The theme of this conference is "Protecting Children in a Changing World" and includes the following sub-themes:

- Prevention of child abuse and neglect through early and sustained involvement

- Interventions and programmes for children and families experiencing adversity
- Addressing children's rights and participation
- Reforms in child protection and welfare policy
- Children in out of home care
- Building the evidence base
- Contemporary issues

[Further details are available here.](#)

4th Biennial Child Protection and Welfare Social Work Conference

Social Work Development Unit (UCC)

Date: Friday 25th October 2013.

Venue: Áras na MacLéinn (Student Centre), University College Cork

The aim of this conference series is to provide a space for practitioners in the area of child protection and welfare to hear about and debate new developments in the areas of research, policy and practice, and to network with colleagues. The conference will be of interest to social workers, policy makers, researchers, legal professionals, social care workers, students and anyone with an interest in the field of child protection and welfare.

[Further details are available here.](#)

[You can find further details of events around the country on our website.](#)

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