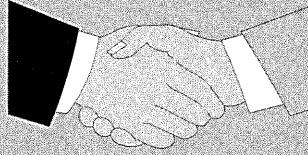


# PARTNERS PIC IN CHILD CARE

## NEWSLETTER



  
**Barnardos**  
Children, their rights  
and their needs.

ISSUE NO. 3

WINTER 2000

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to this, the final issue of *Partners in Childcare*! Over the past years Barnardos and the National Children's Resource Centre have supported community based childcare and Partnerships through the provision of information, networking and hands-on assistance. We hope you have experienced these supports as helpful.

We are witnessing major changes in the structures of childcare provision in Ireland. The development of the County Childcare Committees in particular will influence these changes in a

very significant way.

The National Development Plan and its ambitious objectives in relation to childcare is already changing the manner in which childcare is supported throughout the country.

The National Children's Resource Centre will continue to work with the Partnerships and other emerging structures throughout the country on all issues relating to children and families.

The Partnership companies also enjoyed free membership of Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre. This free service will also end by the end

of this year. We know that many of you will miss this service and would like to encourage you to renew your membership. To make it easier, we have included information on our centres in this issue.

If you would like information on our services and membership please contact us through any of our centres in Dublin, Cork and Limerick.

Finally, I would like to wish all readers a very peaceful and happy Christmas and a successful New Year!

HEINO SCHONFELD  
EDITOR

# The Collaborative Process Involving Nine National Voluntary Childcare Organisations

Gráinne Burke  
Regional Manager, Barnardos, Dublin South Region

Nine National Voluntary Childcare Organisations are involved in building and developing collaboration and understanding between the organisations at a national level.

This collaborative process has its origins in Partnership 2000 and took root during 1999. It was agreed by the organisations that time and funding should be devoted to developing this shared and interactive process. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform supported and funded a submission so as to enable this process to develop.

The organisations involved at present are:

Barnardos

*Childminding Ireland*

Children in Hospital Ireland

IPPA – the Early Childhood Organisation

An Comhchoiste Réamhscolaíochta

Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Irish Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Association

National Children's Nurseries Association

St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers Association

It was decided that to take forward the collaboration, the process needed a period of focused facilitation. To this end, Jane Kelly and Associates were appointed to work with us over six months. It was agreed that the development of the collaboration should be largely process-based rather than task-based. The work was conducted through a series of six day-long workshops.

## Outcomes required by the participant organisations

It was agreed by the group that the key aim would be the creation of a collaborative network, and

towards this end the following objectives were identified. The objectives fell into two groups, internal and external.

### Internal:

- Enhance communications
- Gain more knowledge about each other
- Recognise and accept differences and commonalities
- Acknowledge competition for scarce resources
- Create a collaborative network as a source of information and support for each other

### External:

- Increase public recognition
- Achieve acceptance as an advocacy group
- Raise status of the childcare sector

Communication skills were identified as central to all of the above.

## Workshop Activity

All the workshop sessions worked on the principle that whatever came up in relation to the process was the appropriate subject to discuss at that time. A two-layered approach to the workshops was taken in which we:

1. Discussed a particular issue, for example the age range of children within the interests of the group; the role and purpose of the collaborative process; rules, guidelines or protocols by which business would be conducted.
2. Reviewed how the group performed during the course of the previous discussion.

This allowed us to test the robustness of our communications and to clarify understanding and language. Initially there were some expressions of frustration at the lack of concrete tasks. Some of the participants wanted to go to specific tasks upon which the whole group or subgroups could work. Others were totally focused on process. The drive for action and activity was resisted by the group as a whole and the initial commitment to process was sustained throughout the six workshops.

### **The Collaborative Process**

There is no standard definition of a collaborative process or indeed, of collaboration. Collaboration is generally accepted as a characteristic of groups working together or in association with each other. There was a sense of existing collaboration at the beginning of this process particularly between some of the organisations. However, there is now a greatly deepened sense of relationship both at the personal and individual level within the various organisations and between the participating organisations, and within the collaborative group as a whole.

- The participating organisations and individuals now know each other better.
- They are clearer about each other's various roles, activities and missions.
- They are more aware of our common interest and our differences.
- They can come together on particular issues.
- They have developed relevant skills through the interactions of the group.
- They are keen to continue the process further, having had a positive experience.

As an innovative action, focused on process and with few task activities, the collaborative process is considered successful by the participants and they wish to continue to explore its potential as a new and effective way of working together.

### **Key Outcomes**

The participants believe the process has achieved many of the objectives as set out initially.

They have:

- Raised their profile.
- Achieved greater public recognition.
- Become more familiar with each other.

- Learned more about the activities of the participating organisations.
- Functioned as a cohesive group.
- Recognised their commonalities while retaining and celebrating differences.
- Developed and enhanced relevant skills.
- Shared information and experiences with each other.
- Learned from each other and from the process.
- Committed to a spirit of collaboration.

### **Emerging Strategic View**

This collaborative process has brought the organisations to the position of being able to work together in a cohesive way which will help them to develop common strategies when required. Throughout the process a greater awareness of the elements of collaboration was developed which needs to be applied to many of the issues in the childcare sector.

### **Conclusion**

This is an exciting time in childcare. Events are fast-moving and challenging. While funding has made a difference to the emerging strategic focus of the collaborative group and much has been achieved in a relatively short time, there is general acceptance that it is in our interest to maintain the momentum of our developing relationship and to pursue further collaboration.

At present the organisations are working collaboratively on the representation of the NVCOs on the County Childcare Committees. The group has developed criteria for the selection of representatives on these new committees. A brief for the representatives has been developed and an information and training programme to support and assist the representative is being designed. The selection of representatives to the committees is currently underway.

A further submission has been made to the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform to assist the organisations to continue to work together collaboratively and to play an effective role in supporting the childcare sector as it develops under the National Development Plan. It is anticipated that the collaborative process will be mirrored at a county level in time.

# National Children's Resource Centre DUBLIN

The National Children's Resource Centre was established in 1993 to "provide information, training and research to families, professionals and the general public with the aim to improve the life of children in Ireland". We aim to provide a one-stop information shop on all matters regarding childcare. Our members include professionals, parents, policymakers and students and we answer a wide range of queries on all aspects of this subject.

## Contact Details:

**Address:** NCRC, Barnardos, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

**Phone:** 01 4549699

**Fax:** 01 4530300

**Email:** nrc@barnardos.ie

## **Staff:**

The staff in the NCRC Library and Information Service at present are Heino Schonfeld, Head of Service, Peadar Cassidy, Information Officer, Martina Dumpleton, Administration and Nora Clarke, Information Assistant.

## **Opening Hours:**

**Members** Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm

**Non-members** Monday-Friday 9.30am-1pm

*Opening hours are currently under revision and we welcome feedback from our users on how to improve these.*

Group visits are welcomed; please book with staff in advance.

## **Resources:**

The library is well-stocked with many different types of resources. These include books, journals, resource packs, directories, official publications, conference papers, reports, and videos amongst others. These resources can be searched on the internet at our website [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie). We also use the *ChildData* CD ROM from the National Children's Bureau which contains information on organisations, newspaper and journal articles on children. We hold the *Family Process* CD ROM and also use the internet in our work; we also have photocopying and printing facilities.

If members are looking for a resource which we do not have in stock we will do our best to supply it whether this is through purchasing it or borrowing it from other libraries; we have links with the Irish Healthcare Libraries and Barnardos UK.

## **Membership:**

Membership of the NCRC has several benefits:

Members enjoy all day access to the library from 9.30 to 4.30 Monday to Friday.

Members are entitled to borrow 3 items for three weeks. These can be renewed if not requested by another member.

Members can request journal articles to be sent to them – one article per journal up to a maximum of three due to copyright restrictions.

Current Awareness Bulletins are circulated quarterly which hold training events guide, a list of new books added to stock, a list of new journal articles added to stock and a copy of our journal *ChildLinks*.

## Membership Fees

	1 Year	Half-Year
<b>Individual</b>	£70.00	£35.00
<b>Student</b>	£35.00	£17.50
<b>Corporate</b>	£35.00 per Team member	n/a

## **Recent Developments:**

The service continues to develop and grow both in terms of stock development and information provision.

We are constantly looking out for new titles to add to our stock and to this end we encourage suggestions from our members.

We have also recently begun to catalogue our journal articles in full which will now be searchable using keywords in our database; this we hope to have completed next year.

In terms of information provision, this last year has also seen the founding of two regional Information Centres – one in Cork, and one in Limerick.

# National Children's Resource Centre CORK

Following the appointment of information officer Fiona Ellis and the adoption of Barnardos' National Strategic plan for the information service, the southern region has commenced work on an ambitious upgrade of their NCRC and information points. The NCRC is located in the regional headquarters in Cork.

## Contact Details:

**Address:** NCRC, Barnardos, 18 Patrick's Hill, Cork

**Phone:** 021 4552100

**E-mail:** nrc@cork.barnardos.ie

**Contact:** Fiona Ellis – Information Officer,  
William O'Mahony – Information Assistant

## **Opening Hours:**

**Members** Monday-Friday 10am-2pm (in addition personal appointments on request)

**Non-members** Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Work on the physical upgrade of the resource centre is due to be complete by Christmas 2000. The new resource centre will be part of an open plan reception area with custom made shelving, readers' seating, photocopying and public computer access.

Work has also commenced on an up-grade of all stock. Our stock consists of books, journals, legislation, reference material, videos, training packs, Barnardos publications, CD ROM's, Internet access and a range of 'grey literature' such as leaflets and information sheets. The NCRC Cork aims to provide up-to-date and user friendly core resources covering all aspects of children and childcare. In addition we aim to provide comprehensive resources on specialist areas of child welfare. We aim to provide resources that are particularly relevant to users in the southern region.

Membership of the NCRC is open to child care professionals, students, parents, staff and individuals working in the private, voluntary or public domain. Members are entitled to use any of the resources in the NCRC including books, journals, CD ROM's and reference materials. They can photocopy from materials (within copyright), borrow books, request professional help with information requests and are entitled to use the service out of opening hours by appointment. In addition members are free to use the NCRC in Dublin and Limerick, they can request inter-library loans and they will

automatically receive the quarterly Current Awareness Bulletin and Training Events Guide. Non-members are welcome to use the resources within the NCRC during opening hours.

## Membership Fees

	1 Year	Half-Year
<b>Individual</b>	£70.00	£35.00
<b>Student</b>	£35.00	£17.50
<b>Corporate</b>	£35.00 per Team member	n/a

**In addition to the NCRC and to facilitate access to information, and in recognition that information is an integral and valuable resource, we provide information points in our Family Support Projects. We currently have two Family Support Projects in the southern region with a third planned for Carlow in 2001. They are:**

### Mahon Family Support Project

8/9 Orchard View, Ring Mahon Road, Mahon, Cork

**Phone:** 021 4357679

**E-mail:** info@mahon.barnardos.ie

**Contact:** Evelyn McGrath – Information Assistant

**Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-1pm**

### Waterford Family Support Project

128 Clonard Park, Ballybeg, Waterford

**Phone:** 051 844140

**E-mail:** info@ballybeg.barnardos.ie

**Contact:** Susan Cooley – Information Assistant

**Opening Hours: Tuesday – Friday 9am-1pm**

The information points in both projects are currently being up-graded and relocated to a central point next to reception. They will include readers' seating and a collection of core resources. Stock will consist of books, reports, training packs, literacy resources and a range of 'grey literature' such as leaflets, information sheets and contact details for other organisations. Membership of the project information points is £10 and is open to local families and childcare workers.

Barnardos southern region plans to formally re-launch its information services early in 2001 when all the current up-grades have been completed. We are totally committed to ensuring the best quality information services on children and childcare are available in the region. In the meantime please contact us for further information at any of the listed contact numbers.

# National Children's Resource Centre

# LIMERICK

## Contact Details:

**Address:** NCRC, Barnardos, 10 Sarsfield Street, Limerick

**Phone:** 061 208680

**Fax:** 061 440214

**Email:** ncr@midwest.barnardos.ie

**Contact:** Stephen Doherty, Information Officer, Deirdre Burke, Information Assistant and Winnie Braddish, Clerical Assistant.

## Opening Hours:

Monday-Friday 10am-1pm and 2.30pm- 5pm

A new National Children's Resource Centre has recently opened in Limerick City which will cover the Mid-West area (Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary). Located in the heart of the city, in Sarsfield Street, the new service will provide information and resources on all aspects of childcare to health board workers, childcare workers, teachers, students, medical professionals, parents, the general public and anybody else with an interest in the health and welfare of children.

The centre comprises an Information Centre and a multi-media library. The Information Centre is a bright, user-friendly, 'one-stop shop', drop-in centre with a wide range of information on all aspects of childcare. The centre is particularly targeted at parents and the general public. It provides information on health matters, education, children's rights, adoption, fostering, parenting courses, literacy classes and other relevant information of interest to parents. In an increasingly complex world, information is fast becoming a vital tool in helping to empower people to make choices that will affect their lives. This is especially true for parents who are faced with important decisions which will affect the welfare of their children.

The multi-media library has a comprehensive, up-to-date range of books, reports, journals, videos, resource packs and newsletters. An internet service is also provided. The library reflects the changing needs and experiences of families in Ireland and covers topics such as adoption, babycare, behaviour management, bullying, child development, child psychology, children's rights, day care, education, health, parenting, racism and training, among others. Although the library has a membership

system, non-members are welcome to use the stock on the premises.

The new service is much needed in the Mid West and is the first service of its kind in the area. An extensive needs analysis survey was carried out at the beginning of the year in which over seventy local organisations were consulted on the setting up of the centre. Face to face discussions took place with representatives from a wide range of organisations including the Mid Western Health Board, Limerick Social Services, Limerick Youth Service, Local Employment Services, ISPC, Local Community Centres, Pre-school groups, CIC, Irish Foster Care Association and many other similar organisations. From these meetings it became clear how important such a service was for professionals working in the Mid West area. Many of them were using the service in Dublin which was far from ideal. Barnardos has always been very keen to regionalise the service and are very happy to be delivering on this with three branches now open around the country.

In the new year, the centre will be looking at the possibility of providing an outreach service to other parts of the Mid West area. It is hoped to provide an outreach service to Newcastle West in Co. Limerick, Ennis in Co. Clare and Thurles in Co. Tipperary. Depending on resources it may be possible to provide a service to these areas at least once a month. Once again a need for such a service has been identified. By doing this the Centre will be providing a genuinely inclusive, area-wide service.

## Membership Fees

	1 Year	Half-Year
<b>Individual</b>	£70.00	£35.00
<b>Student</b>	£35.00	£17.50
<b>Corporate</b>	£35.00 per Team member	n/a