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Welcome to the latest issue of Childcare eNews

In this issue of Childcare eNews, we bring you news of the Right from the Start advisory report on the Early Years Strategy from the expert advisory group as well as information on funding to support training for early years staff and a new National Quality Support Service. We also give details of the new reports from the Growing Up in Ireland study and the Department of Education's plans for school uniform costs.



We share news of the launch of our new After School publication, produced in collaboration with BCCN, and our first Evidence to Practice event with Professor Nóirín Hayes.

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

We hope you all have a very happy Christmas.

Best wishes

Sinead Lawton

News and Developments



Growing Up in Ireland

Growing Up in Ireland, the national longitudinal study of children, has published a number of reports in recent months.

- In September a [new report was published looking at how children in Ireland are faring at three years of age](#). The findings published focus on children's health, physical, behavioural and cognitive outcomes and the factors that affect them, including parenting and the home environment, childcare arrangements and the financial circumstances of the child's family. Key findings include: almost 98 per cent of 3-year-old children in Ireland were described as being very healthy or healthy by their parents; a quarter of all three year olds were overweight (19%) or obese (6%); cognitive ability was strongly associated mothers level of education and frequency of reading to the child in the home.
- At the start of November, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald, launched a report on infant development and the impact of parenting and family contexts. Findings include that the number of weeks of pregnancy at which infants were born was one of the strongest predictors of infant developmental outcomes, and parental stress is associated with difficult infant temperament, as well as contextual factors such as the perception of support and marital satisfaction.
- Later in November, The *Growing Up in Ireland* 5th Annual Research Conference took place in Croke Park. Minister Fitzgerald launched new key findings from the Infant Cohort (at five years). These focus on children's transition to school, socio-emotional well-being, physical well-being, play and diet, and family circumstance. Figures show that 25% of families surveyed are now finding it hard to make ends meet. More than four out of 10 families said they couldn't afford or had to cut back on basics, with 17%

having fallen into arrears with utility bills and 14% behind on their mortgage repayments or rent.

These and other reports can be found at www.growingup.ie.

€30m investment in new ABC (Area-Based Childhood) Programme

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has announced that an additional nine areas have been selected to enter the design stage of the Area-Based Childhood (ABC) Programme 2013-2016 in line with a key Programme for Government commitment. The ABC programme targets additional investment in evidence-based early interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. [For more information see the DCYA website.](#)

School Uniform Costs

School uniform costs could be significantly reduced for parents by the next school year. In November, the Minister for Education outlined plans for the Department to get schools to consult with all parents through a questionnaire on how to reform the school uniform.



This survey will be conducted in early 2014 to ensure that changes can be made ahead of school returning in September 2014.

HBSC Ireland Trends Report 1998-2010

A new report, *The HBSC Ireland Trends Report 1998-2010: Child Health Behaviours, Outcomes and Contexts*, was formally launched by Minister for Health Dr James Reilly in the Department of Health on Monday 23rd September. This trends report reviews the self-reported health status and behaviours of children in Ireland between 1998 and 2010 in relation to key indicators: the contexts of their lives, health behaviours and health outcomes. [The report is available to download from the HBSC Ireland website.](#)

Child-Friendly Healthcare - A Report Commissioned by the Ombudsman for Children

This recently published report is the result of research undertaken by an inter-disciplinary research team at University College Cork on behalf of the Ombudsman for Children.

[Download the full report here.](#)



Barnardos Parenting Course Database

Barnardos Best Practice Training and Consultancy Service is currently updating their database of Parenting Courses. This national database provides information for parents hoping to attend a Parenting Course in their own area. If you deliver Parenting Courses and would like details of the courses you provide to be included, please email parentingcourses@barnardos.ie for further details.

Early Years Care and Education

Right from the Start - Expert Advisory Group Report on Early Years Strategy

On 10th October, The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs launched the report of the Expert Advisory Group appointed to advise on what should be included in the Early Years Strategy. The Expert Advisory Group, chaired by Dr. Eilish Hennessy of UCD, was comprised of a range of individuals who have huge wealth of knowledge and expertise across the issues that affect children in their first years, including childhood development, care, education, health and well-being. Welcoming and accepting the report, the Minister stated: 'By setting out such a comprehensive range of recommendations for the continuum of service and support for Ireland's youngest children and their families, from early childhood health, to supporting parents to ensuring quality in early years provision; this report brings a much needed focus to areas of policy which for too long were discounted and undervalued.'

[You can read the full report here.](#)



Funding to Support Training for Childcare Staff

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has announced €900,000 worth of funding to be provided to Early Childhood Ireland and Border Counties Childcare Network to support training for existing childcare staff starting in 2013. The Department also provided recent updates on on Pre-School Quality Improvements:

- 1,672 pre-school inspection reports now published
- Five new pre-school inspectors currently being recruited
- Funding secured for additional inspectors and establishment of National Quality Support Service in 2014
- Changes to law on registration, enforcement and penalties has passed Committee stage in Dáil

[For more info see here](#)

New National Quality Support Service - Supporting implementation of the Siolta Framework and Aistear Curriculum

Funding of €2.75m in Budget 2014 has been allocated to establish a new National Quality Support Service. This service will employ graduates in early childhood care and education who will work directly with services to improve quality including supporting services to implement the Siolta and Aistear frameworks and will be based on a mentoring model. There will be three regional coordinators and a national coordinator. This is a major development in the right direction. Recruitment for this service will commence in 2014 and full operation is expected by September 2014.

Interim Evaluation of NEYAI and Síolta

A summary has been published of the Baseline Report on the Interim Evaluation of NEYAI and Síolta.

[You can download this summary here.](#)

Annual Cost of Fulltime Childcare for Two-Child Family is €16,500

A new report commissioned by Donegal County Childcare Committee reveals that the cost of childcare in Ireland is creating a barrier for parents who want to return

to work. Other key findings of [Supporting Working Families – Releasing a Brake on Economic Growth](#) shows:

- Barriers to employment as a result of childcare costs are severe among lower income groups, with 56% prevented from looking for a job
- 26% of parents were prevented from returning to work or training because of childcare arrangements
- Ireland has second highest childcare costs in OECD as a percentage of average wages

For more info see [Donegal CCC website](#).

Barnardos Publications

Launch of New After School Publication

In September, Ms. Mary McLoughlin, Principal Officer, Childcare Directorate in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs launched [After School: Providing an Inspirational After School Programme of Activities for 4–12 Year Olds](#) by Barnardos and BCCN at a conference on After School and Outdoor Play in Co Meath. The main focus of this publication is to enhance understanding of what children of this age need in after school settings and to support those delivering services to meet those needs through a high quality programme of activities.

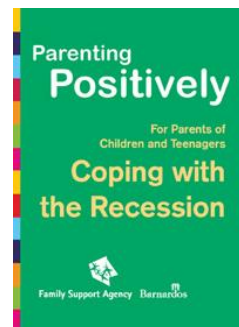


For more info click [here](#). [Buy online now for €25](#).

(in photo L to R: Denise McCormilla, BCCN; Mary McLoughlin; Sinead Lawton, Barnardos)

Free Ebook: Parenting Positively - Coping with the Recession

Parenting Positively is a series by the Family Support Agency and Barnardos that provides information and guidance to parents. The series covers general wellbeing and parenting skills as well as the complex life issues of death, separation, bullying, parental drug or alcohol problems and domestic abuse. [Coping with the Recession](#) is for parents of both children and teenagers who want to support their children to cope with the impact



of recession on their emotional wellbeing. This might involve unemployment, reduced working hours, having to move home, one parent having to move away to work, financial worries and less money to pay for items which were previously routine, and the pressure these can put on families. This ebook also gives further resources that you can follow up for more information and help on the issue covered.

[Download this free publication now.](#)

Barnardos Training and Consultancy

Barnardos Continuing Professional Development 2014

- Supervision Training for Supervisors
- Child Protection Awareness
- Paediatric First Aid
- Child Development
- Child Protection Designated Liaison Person Masterclass
- Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Development
- Environments that Support Children's Learning
- Promoting Wellbeing in Infants and Toddlers
- Interactions in Early Years Settings

Keep an eye on our website www.barnardos.ie for details. To discuss training events or your tailored training requirements, please contact Barnardos at training@barnardos.ie or telephone 01 4530355 ext 413.

Supervision Training for Supervisors

3 Day Workshop - 4 & 5 February & 4 March 2014

A three day supervision skills development course, using the **Tony Morrison** supervision model and manual.

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.



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

Evidence to Practice Event

At the first Evidence to Practice event, Professor Nóirín Hayes discussed her new publication 'Getting it Right from the Start' which explored the links between Aistear and Siolta and how to effectively implement both. Professor Hayes outlined the seven life skills that children need to be an involved, happy participant in life and highlighted the need for reflective work practices that support the development of those skills. It was a lively forum where participants shared their experiences and started a conversation about quality in the Early Years.



Look out for the next Evidence to Practice event which will be happening early in 2014.

(Photo: Noirin Hayes speaking at the event)

Upcoming Events

Oxford Round Table's [21st Annual International Conference on Childhood Education](#) during the dates of **March 16 – March 20, 2014** at Harris Manchester College in the University of Oxford, Oxford, England.

Topics of discussion will include:

- Early Childhood Education
- Early STEM Learning
- Reading First
- The Creative Child
- Children's Speech
- At Risk Children

- Preventive Health for Children
- Planning the PreK-3 Programs
- Technology and the Young Child

For more info see www.oxfordroundtable.co.uk



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