



PRESS RELEASE

Monday 2nd March 2015

Minister for Children & Youth Affairs launches The Genesis Programme

€1.5 million funding for a new initiative for children and families in Louth as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. James Reilly, TD today officially launched The Genesis Programme to a packed audience at Dundalk's Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The Genesis Programme is a consortium of some 50 Partner Organisations and will deliver The Incredible Years suite of programmes to children, families and communities in Dundalk and Drogheda.

The consortium came through a rigorous selection process to become one of 13 ABC Programme sites/areas.

Following selection, detailed plans were developed and on the 1st December last the Genesis Project Team took up their new roles to begin the work of the programme.

The Incredible Years is a series of interlocking, evidence-based programmes for children, their parents and their teachers, supported by over 30 years of research. The goal is to prevent and treat young children's behavioural problems and promote their social, emotional and academic competence. The programme was developed in the University of Washington in Seattle by Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton. Whilst each programme has been designed as a stand-alone intervention, taken together, they provide a cohesive and uniform strategy to address and eliminate behavioural difficulties in children.

The launch event also contained a series of interactive workshops which showcased a number of the different strands of The Incredible Years suite of programmes that are being delivered as part of The Genesis Programme.

At the event the **Minister for Children & Youth Affairs Dr James Reilly TD** said: 'Louth is one of 13 Areas across Ireland in the ABC Programme that are adopting an area-based approach to address child poverty through delivering high quality, coordinated services to improve outcomes for children and families. I am delighted to launch The Genesis Programme in Louth which delivers on the government commitment to prevention and early intervention and draws on best international practice and existing service provision. This will bring benefits to children, parents and the wider community and make a significant contribution to breaking the cycle of disadvantage.'

I am really pleased to see the wide range of committed statutory and non-statutory services and partners who are working collaboratively to achieve a common purpose and deliver more integrated and coordinated services. The work is building upon the strong foundation of inter-agency working in the area and is strongly connected to Louth Children and Young People's Services Committee, which will support the mainstreaming of learning across all relevant agencies. It expands upon the excellent record of work in schools to early years and wider community settings. I look forward to hearing about the progress of the work and wish you every success.'

Also speaking at the event, **Minister for Business & Employment Ged Nash TD** said: 'I am delighted to be here to celebrate the launch of the Genesis Programme, having been involved in this really important project right from the start. Giving children, families and communities in disadvantaged areas of Dundalk and Drogheda an extra hand in the crucial first six years of a child's life will improve their life chances and I hope assist them reach their full potential as they grow into adulthood.'

Gerry Murphy, Chairperson of The Genesis Programme Management Group outlined what the Genesis Programme will mean for County Louth: 'In marginalised areas, there is often reduced ability to cope within the home and the community, thus creating oppression and perpetuating the cycle of disadvantage, early school leaving and educational failure.'

Families with these characteristics generally live in densely populated urban areas. In such situations, equality of opportunity is lacking, social exclusion is prolonged and there is a serious loss of talent to society. Everyone loses and the gap widens when we leave our most vulnerable behind.

The Genesis Programme is Louth's response to narrowing that gap and raising the bar for children and communities marginalised within our society. This will be a targeted initiative to improve life choices and outcomes for children and their families.'

Hugh Doogan, Programme Manager with The Genesis Programme said: 'Primary Schools in County Louth have led the way with The Incredible Years and this was acknowledged by Carolyn Webster-Stratton herself, the founder of the programme.'

The investment made in The Genesis Programme will allow this good work to move into the Pre-Schools, to Community and Health settings.

The Vision of The Genesis Programme is to measurably improve the well-being and development outcomes for children aged pre-birth to six years of age in the targeted areas by implementing The Incredible Years suite of programmes with fidelity using an agreed area based approach. We have a real shot at achieving this now.'

You are invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to the Launch Event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dundalk (Hamilton Suite). Interactive Workshops involving participating children, parents, teachers and other professionals get underway at 1.15pm with speeches commencing at 2pm.

Notes for Editors are on the next page. For further information please contact:

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The Genesis Programme: Delivering Incredible Years to Children, Families and Communities in Dundalk and Drogheda

In November 2013, then Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, announced that a Louth consortium of agencies, community organisations and schools had been awarded just over €1.5 million for a new initiative to support children and their families, subject to a final plan being approved.

The Consortium was formed in April 2013 when the Department of Children and Youth Affairs invited proposals under the ABC programme. The Genesis Programme and eight other new areas join the three existing ABC projects Young Ballymun, Preparing for Life (Darndale) and the Child Development Initiative in West Tallaght.

In a letter to the consortium, Minister Fitzgerald said: 'I would like to congratulate you on being one of a number of consortia which has been selected to progress and participate in the Area Based Childhood (ABC) programme and to proceed to the development and design stage of the programme. As you know, fifty proposals were received and it was, therefore, a highly competitive process'.

In June 2014, The Genesis Programme was advised that it had successfully completed the design stage and the following November entered into contract with Pobal (funding managers for the Department of Children & Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies) to deliver the ABC Programme in Co Louth.

The Genesis Programme – which has over 50 Partner Organisations – will deliver the Incredible Years suite of programmes to children, families and communities in areas of entrenched disadvantage in Dundalk and Drogheda. These programmes promote and enhance children's social, emotional and cognitive wellbeing from pre-birth to six years of age (for more details on the various strands of The Incredible Years being delivered see Appendix I).

The Vision is to measurably improve the well-being and development outcomes for children aged pre-birth to six years of age in the targeted areas* by implementing The Incredible Years suite of programmes with fidelity using an agreed area based approach.

There are six key objectives:

- That all relevant agencies work collaboratively to agree and implement an area based approach to deliver the IY suite of programmes for children aged 0-6yrs
- That those delivering the IY programmes are trained and coached ensuring fidelity and standards are met
- That a Parent Forum is developed to act as a consultative body to inform policy and practice
- That the project will work collaboratively with DKIT to develop an IY module as part of relevant degree programmes
- That the project works collaboratively with the newly established Infant Mental Health Network to develop a strategy for Co. Louth
- That the project collaborates with Louth Children's & Young People's Services Committee (Louth CYPSC) to embed IY programmes in service delivery across all relevant agencies

This is achieved through delivering short-term and longer-term outcomes across the following areas:

- Child Health and Development
- Parenting
- Children's Learning
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Mainstream Delivery

The new Genesis Project Team commenced work on the 1st December 2014. The team are:

Hugh Doogan	Programme Manager
Alice Malone	Quality Assurance Coordinator (<i>on secondment from Tusla</i>)
Claire Gleeson	Pre-School Development Officer
Frances Durnin	Community Development Officer (<i>a Public Health Nurse on secondment from the HSE</i>)
Yvonne Forde	Primary School Development Officer
Marie-Clare Hamill	Administrator

Louth Leader Partnership is the lead agency and the work is managed by representatives of the various Partner Organisations who have representatives on the Management Group and Implementation Support Teams.

Louth Leader Partnership as Lead Agency provides governance and Project Team employment.

The Management Group provide technical expertise and have overall accountability for the successful delivery of the programme.

The Implementation Support Team provides support around the delivery of the Implementation Plan with local Implementation Teams in Dundalk and Drogheda.

There is an Executive drawn from both of these to progress decision making between meetings on staffing matters, finance, budgets etc.

An expert Evaluation Sub-Group has also been established to provide advice and guidance on all matters relating to research, evaluation and measurement.