

Wicklow Children's Services Committee



**SUPPORTED IN ACTIVE LEARNING OUTCOME:
LITERACY & NUMERACY**

**PRESENTER:
EUGENE WATERS, WICKLOW COUNTY CHILDCARE COORDINATOR**

Overview



- Who we are?
- How did we get here?
- About Co. Wicklow
- CSC Subgroups and the SIAL Subgroup
- Why Literacy and Numeracy?
- What we did and how we did it?
- Challenges and Successes
- Q & A

Membership of Wicklow CSC – Who are we?



- HSE (Chair)
- Wicklow County Council (Deputy Chair)
- Garda Síochána
- Kildare and Wicklow ETB (formerly Co. Wicklow VEC)
- Partnerships (Bray and Wicklow)
- Wicklow County Childcare Committee
- Community/Voluntary Group Representatives (x 2)

Wicklow CSC – How we got here?



- Pre- Implementation Committee formed in late 2010
- Coordinator appointed in March 2012
- Socio-demographic Profile
- Audit of existing Services
- Subgroups appointed to agree priority areas, objectives and activities for inclusion in the plan
- This included a direct Youth Consultation

Key Points from County Profile



- Population 136,640 an increase of 8.3% on 2006
- 65% of the population in the County now live in the aggregate town areas
- 39,754 aged 19 years or younger i.e. 29% of the population of the county c.30,000 of these 0-14 years
- Higher birth rate than the national average and higher numbers of lone parents
- Trutz Haase reports based on CSO 2006 statistics highlighted literacy problems
- Challenging mix of urban (Bray, Arklow etc) and very rural (e.g. West Wicklow) areas makes

Key Points from Audit of Services



- Services largely centred around the large towns in the county
- Poor representation of services in the South, Mid and West of the county
- Many youth services are targeted at young people from 16 to 20 years
- Most respondents reported working in cooperation /collaboration with other organisations/agencies
- Only two services in the county are being delivered at Level 1 of the Hardiker Model

Wicklow CSC Subgroups



- Data/Planning Subgroup
- Physical Health Subgroup
- Mental Health Subgroup
- Supported in Active Learning Subgroup
- Change Management Subgroup
- Family Support Subgroup

SIAL Subgroup Composition



- Wicklow County Childcare Committee (Chair)
- Kildare and Wicklow ETB (formerly Wicklow VEC)
- Home School Liaison
- Officers from community development teams within local partnerships

Priorities identified by SIAL Subgroup



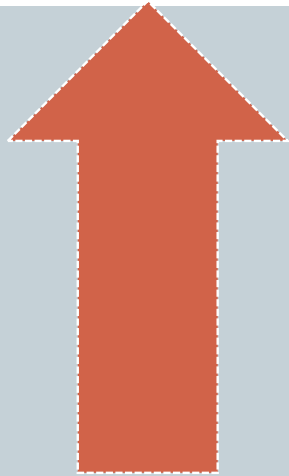
- **Family Literacy** – The need for a co-ordinated, collaborative approach to family literacy in the county
- Tackling the issue of children who do not make the **transition** from primary to secondary school
- The need to address the issue of school **exclusion/suspension** and the support structures

Why Literacy & Numeracy?



- Literacy and Numeracy identified as a key issue in this area.
- A particular focus to be given towards Family Literacy as Academic research indicates a direct correlation between levels of interest & involvement of parents in children's schoolwork and the outcomes of those children.
- Frontline workers identify L&N issues with parents as a key problem in their day to day work.
- 1 in 4 of Irish adults have literacy difficulties (The International Adult Literacy Survey)
- Also affects attitudes and participation with child's education: as one of the agencies of the subgroup noted "Some parents will not even set foot on the grounds of their child's school"
- A 'common concern' between the agencies around the table.

How we went about our work



National Strategies



Local Needs, Resources and Solutions



What are we doing?



Raising AWARENESS

- Promotion of NALA's *Help My Kid Learn* family literacy campaign
- Collation of available family learning resources in the county.
- Awareness of what specialised agencies offer and to whom (criteria/signposting etc)

Building CAPACITY

- Literacy & Numeracy workshop delivered to 100 pre-school workers at WCCC bi-annual Childcare Professional's Day
- Planned delivery of Fetac L6 module on Family Literacy to frontline staff on the sub-group

Engaging PARENTS

- Information evening for parents on preparing their children for transition from home to pre-school/primary school
- Workshop for childcare providers on working with parents to pass valuable information on from pre-school to primary schools
- Storytelling workshops for Parent & Toddler group leaders

Challenges vs Successes

CHALLENGES

- Ever decreasing budgets
- Changing Membership of the CSC
- Changing structures
- Data Collection
- No Coordinator in place before March 2012 and ongoing problems relating to funding this post
- Timeframe
- Limited Consultation

SUCCESSSES

- Invaluable working relationships formed
- Sharing of knowledge in a way that currently cannot be facilitated through official channels
- Joint bids for funding
- Engagement of staff beyond CSC Board Structure
- Added value by cooperating and achieving mutually beneficial goals
- Access to hard to reach groups

Questions



Thank you for your attention
and I would be delighted to take any questions.