

# Investing in Children and Tusla



**TUSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



## Background

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Investing in Children provides research and participation services to organisations that work with children and young people. Investing in Children has been working with Prevention, Partnership and Family Support to develop a Quality Assurance process across TUSLA in relation to participation.

The Investing in Children Membership Award™ recognises and celebrates examples of imaginative and inclusive practice. Investing in Children members are those services that can demonstrate a commitment to *dialogue* with young people that leads to *change*.

In a nutshell - You can achieve membership if you meet the following criteria:

- You can demonstrate that you have dialogue with children and young people.
- You can show that changes have happened as a result.
- Children and young people who use the service you provide agree that this is the case.

## Benefits of IiC Membership Award™

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- By seeking evidence from children and young people themselves, it shifts power to them, avoiding tokenism.
- It provides an opportunity for children and young people to experience a sense of being actively involved in the service.
- By including change as a criteria as well as dialogue, it focuses on outcomes as well as processes.
- National recognition that as a service or team you listen and act upon what young people tell you.
- Evaluation reports acknowledge and celebrate what your team is doing right and give recommendations for further work.
- Children and young people see themselves as part of a process which affects service change and in turn results in better outcomes.

To apply for the IiC Membership Award™ simply complete the short evidence sheet available from the Tusla website. [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

# Investing in Children: Agenda Days™

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## What is an Agenda Day™?

Agenda Days™ provide the chance for children and young people to debate the important issues of the day amongst themselves.

They are most successful when children and young people see them as the start of a process of engaging in dialogue with decision-makers, and campaigning for change.

An Agenda Day™ is an opportunity for a group of children and young people to come together to begin to discuss a particular area or issue.

## Some important characteristics of an Agenda Day™:

### **It's an adult-free environment**

This means that adults don't take part in the debate, and the children and young people are free to discuss issues without adult influence. This can be achieved by having young people as facilitators. Of course, it is necessary to ensure that the event is safe, so there are a number of important safeguarding roles for adults.

### **It can be used with any age group**

Agenda Days™ have been run with a variety of age groups. The concept stays the same, but the working methods may have to vary to take into account the characteristics of the children or young people.

### **It works best when seen as a start of a process, not an end.**

Sometimes Agenda Days™ are seen as consultation events. However, they are much more potent if seen as the start of a process in which young people develop their ideas, and their capacity to engage in dialogue.

### **Some Agenda Days™ start with a blank sheet**

This means that the group are encouraged to think their own thoughts, and come up with their own ideas.

### **Other Agenda Days™ start with a series of questions**

This means a discussion/topic area has already been chosen but the group still have the opportunity to think their own thoughts and come up with their own ideas.

There is also space in the these agenda days to design new questions and discussions.

## How does this work?

A group of children and young people are invited to spend time together discussing an issue. Out of this will come some ideas about what is most important, and what needs to be changed (the 'agenda'). The group are then invited to consider whether any of them are interested in doing further work on the agenda, by finding out as much as they can about it, and by engaging adults in a dialogue about how things might change. This process normally happens over a period of months.

## An Agenda Day™ can produce a number of important outcomes:

As the name implies, it creates an agenda i.e. it identifies the particular issues seen as important by this group of participants.

It can act as a starting point for groups of children and young people to research issues, and work on projects.

To apply for the Membership Award TM or to access Practice Support Days visit the Tusla website [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

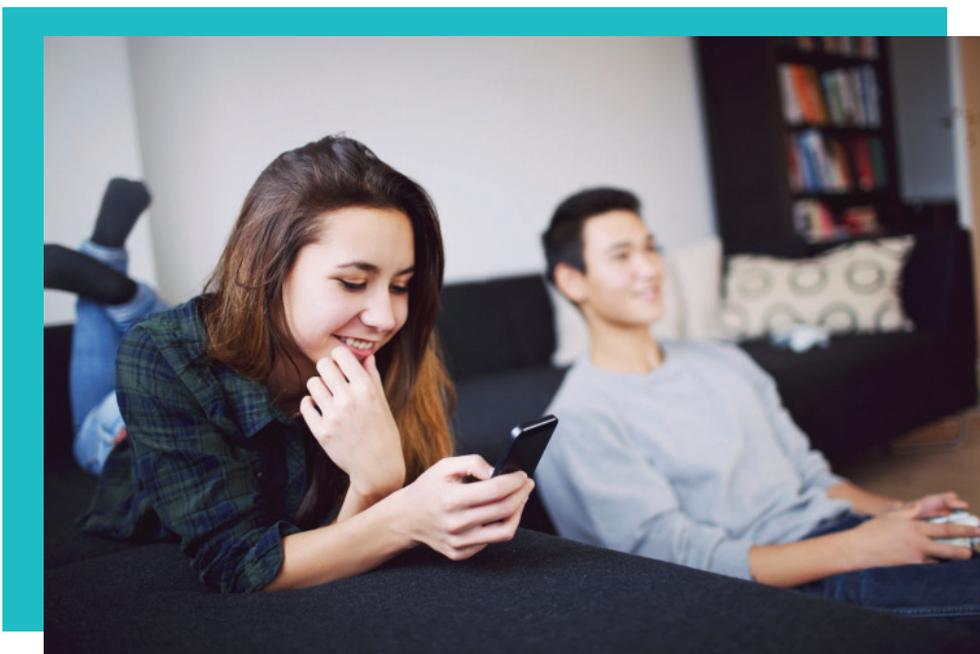
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Region	Area	Name	Date Awarded	Description
DML	Midlands	Mountmellick Youth Development Centre	2016	The Mountmellick Youth Development Centre (MYDC) was established in 1997 as a distinct programme of the Mountmellick Development Association. The Centre works with children and families living in Mountmellick, with a priority focus on those who are most disadvantaged. MYDC functions at many levels working in partnership with local schools, parents, children and volunteers.
DML	Midlands	Longford Westmeath Child & Young Person's Services Committee (TUSLA)	2017	This project represents collaboration between 7 Partners which form part of Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (LW CYPSC) and they include: Family Resource Centres, Longford County Childcare Committee, Foroige, Barnardos, Westmeath Youth Service, Westmeath & Longford Comhairle na nOg & Westmeath LCDC.
DML	Midlands	The Mighty Midlanders	2017	The Mighty Midlanders are a group of young people that come from the four counties of Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly in the Tusla DML Area. The young people involved have all availed of or are currently availing of services from Tusla. Through the medium of art, they have explored the various services provided by Tusla and have expressed what they, as young service users work well and not so well. They have engaged with service managers to voice their opinions with regard to what they feel needs to change to make the service more young person friendly. They have presented a workshop at the National Conference also. They also have learned about their rights as young people and how to make a complaint or compliment to Tusla should we feel the need too.

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DML	Midlands	Longford Westmeath PPFS Social Care Leaders	2017	Longford and Westmeath Social Care Leaders work as part of the Prevention Partnership and Family Support Service, covering the Counties of Longford and Westmeath and its communities. Many of the communities are, geographically, widely spread and very rural, because of this, remoteness from services is a huge factor for some children, young people and their families.
DML	Dublin South Central	The First Steps Trust	2017	This is a Tusla funded childcare service working in a co-ordinated multi-disciplinary and multi-agency manner, by acting as part of a cohesive support system provided to children and families in the Dublin South Central area.
DML	Dublin South Central	Familibase	2017	FamiliBase is the result of the merger of two organisations—FamiliScope and The Base. The initial priority post-merger was to improve how the space was being offered and used by young people and to ensure that it became youth friendly and accessible. This involved significant change at a range of levels within the organisation. FamiliBase's emphasis was to move to a building where the young people had ownership and were an ongoing part of the programme and service delivery through ongoing consultation and dialogue with them. The change in how the space is being used is evidenced particularly on the ground floor where the young people have made decisions about the art work, the youth café, the studio etc.

Region	Area	Name	Date Awarded	Description
DML	Dublin South East / Wicklow	Carr's Child and Family Services	2016	Carr's Child and Family Service provides support services to children and their families. The main focus of their work is on strengthening family relationships to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. Their ethos is based in the belief that while families need good quality professional care this on its own is not enough. Families need humanity. Therefore their programmes are strengths based and grounded in theory and research to build on those strengths. Their motto is doing things 'with' families not 'to' them or 'for' them.
DML	Dublin South West / Kildare West Wicklow	I Believe Group	2017	The Creative Group project for Birth Children of Fostering Families based in Kildare / West Wicklow seeks to enable children of fostering families to meet together in a supportive, fun and engaging environment and to engage in expression through artwork and consultation. This group acknowledges the experience of growing up in a family that fosters and the unique happenings, joys and challenges this brings to the life of a foster carers birth Son or Daughter.
DML	Midlands	Midlands Aftercare Service	2017	The Aftercare service provides advice guidance and support to young people in care or previously in care from ages 16-23. The aftercare workers conduct an needs assessment with the young person and significant others in order to develop an Aftercare plan, which details the areas of need and the support to be provided. All young people are encouraged to pursue education or training and there an allowance available to support them.

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DML	Dublin South West / Kildare West Wicklow	Rosebrook Children's Residential Centre	2017	Rosebrook Children's Residential Centre in Naas Co Kildare is a children's residential unit providing full time care for up to five young people between the ages of 12-18 years.
DNE	Cavan / Monaghan	Compass Outdoors Project	2017	The Compass Outdoors Project is a holistic outreach programme for both young people and their families. Engaging young people through outdoors activities provides them with a platform upon which they can build strong relationships whilst also providing young people the opportunity to address serious issues and achieve new goals.
DNE	Cavan / Monaghan	Aftercare Service Cavan/ Monaghan	2017	The Aftercare service in Cavan/ Monaghan provides leaving and aftercare services for young people which are responsive and relevant to each young person's circumstances under Section 45 of the Childcare Act 1991. All young people who have had a care history with Tusla are entitled to an Aftercare Service. Services are provided on the basis of assessment of need, age and length of time the young person was in care. Services are provided in collaboration with a wide variety of statutory and non-statutory bodies.

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DNE	Cavan / Monaghan	Youth Queer Ball	2017	The Internship Project, a Tusla Child and Youth Participation Project allowed a number of young people to develop their own participation project. One of these projects, supported by Youth Work Ireland was the "Youth Queer Ball", a ball for the LGBT+ community in Cavan/Monaghan. The "Youth Queer Ball" is an alternative to the TY Transition Year Ball for 14 to 18 year olds. The idea of the ball was to create a safe space where young people could wear whatever they wanted and feel comfortable with their peers. The ball was extended out to the surrounding areas and young people attended from Carrickmacross, Castleblaney, Clones, Dundalk and Navan. There were 5 people on the committee from different LGBT+ groups. The 1st "Youth Queer Ball" was held on the 4th of November 2017.
DNE	Dublin North City	Extern Dublin North	2017	Extern Dublin North is a Tusla funded charity that changes people's lives by meeting them at their point of need. Extern bring solutions and deliver quality services, reconnecting people with society, building better communities for us all. Extern believes that people should be able to find stability to change their lives and contribute to the community in which they live. We address homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse and rehabilitate offenders to build safer communities. We intervene with adults, vulnerable young people and their families to improve their lives. Across all of our work in supporting children, young people and their families, people who are homeless and in building safer communities, Extern works in a way which is: Life Changing, Forward - Looking, Trustworthy, Delivers Quality and Brings Solutions.

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DNE	Dublin North City	Our Lady's Nursery	2017	Our Lady's Nursery is a Tusla funded nursery that provides childcare facilities for the community of Ballymun. There are approximately 110 children in the crèche at present in ages of 3mths to 5yrs . The Nursery team has completed their Siolta portfolio and training in the High Scope Curriculum. The High Scope Curriculum is research-based, child-focused and uses active participatory learning and the plan-do-review process to achieve powerful, positive outcomes.
DNE	Dublin North City	Neighbourhood Youth Project	2017	Neighbourhood Youth Project 2 works with young people at risk and others from the North Inner City area of Dublin and that includes young people who attend local secondary schools. Priority is given to referrals from Tusla social workers or from other Tusla agencies such as NYP1. Other key referral agencies are the Probation service, the Juvenile Liaison Officer Service, the Educational Welfare Board and local schools and youth projects. We also take direct referrals from families and young people. While the project prioritises young people at risk it also runs a drop-in service which is open to all young people in the age range 12-18 years approximately. In recent years due to the changing demographics of the north inner city the project works with an increasing number of international young people. The project has approximately 45 priority young people at any given time and up to about 100 other young people avail of the drop-in and other services at different times.

Region	Area	Name	Date Awarded	Description
DNE	Dublin North City	Sensory Garden	2017	The Sensory Garden in Wellview Resource Centre is a Tusla seed funding project to develop a safe sensory space for children and provide them with a calm environment where their senses can be gently stimulated and explored without feeling overwhelmed. The Sensory Garden was developed with a group of children aged 6 – 12 years called the “Krafty Kids” who came up with the design and plan for the garden. They created art work, memory boxes and met with the landscaper as part of the Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding Projects.
DNE	Louth / Meath	Warrior Programme	2017	The Mindful Warrior Programme is a leadership programme for young people to travel a safe, mindful path to adulthood, thus building their capacity and confidence to air the issues affecting the lives of young people and identify possible solutions to address these. This programme, supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation seed funding was run with South Meath School Completion and Trim SMART project, in conjunction with the Sanctuary.
West	Galway / Roscommon	Frenchpark District Community Childcare Ltd	2017	FDCL offers a high quality, affordable child care service to the children and parents within the community and surrounding areas, catering for the disadvantaged and supporting social inclusion.

Region	Area	Name	Date Awarded	Description
West	Galway / Roscommon	The Connemara Club	2017	Dúslánn Programme is a 9 month long intensive outdoor based programme targeting older teenagers presenting with behaviour difficulties. The programme aims to challenge attitudes and behaviour and create opportunities for 14 young people throughout Galway city and county. The programme involves a range of adventure based activities, residential trips, parenting programme and a tall ship voyage.
West	Midwest	Clarecare Summer Camp Project	2017	The Clarecare Springboard project provides a targeted family support service to families and children living in the Ennis urban area. The Springboard 2017 summer camp programme is entirely created from the collectively agreed choices of the young people involved in the planning process.
West	Galway / Roscommon	Bru Bhride Girls Group	2017	Western Traveller and Intercultural Development Centre is a Community Development group and youth work provider in the Tuam Area. The mission of Western Traveller Intercultural Development (WTID) is to ensure the social, economic and cultural inclusion of the whole community in Tuam and surrounding areas and to work towards full equality for Travellers.

Region	Area	Name	Date Awarded	Description
West	Galway / Roscommon	Cool Club	2017	<p>North Galway Family Services aim to provide a service to families within their homes and communities, to build on their strengths and help them to overcome their difficulties. We deliver this through individual / group work, parenting programmes, home visits, advocating, supporting and referring you to other services. The children were offered a chance to be part of group that they could lead and be supported with and the name Cool Club was chosen.</p>
South	Carlow / Kilkenny	Carlow Area Peer Engagement	2017	<p>Carlow Area Peer Engagement (CAPE) was established by the Children in Care team in the Carlow Social Work Department. The service provided as part of the peer engagement includes peer support, inclusion, participation, opportunity for the young people to speak and be listened to, a shared attunement and understanding of each other through team work/working together, strength to influence change and feedback given to young people, knowledge of national policy and legal framework, workshops relevant to needs identified by the young people themselves and the professionals who work closely with them.</p>

Region	Area	Name	Date Awarded	Description
South	Wexford / Waterford	Youth New Ross	2017	<p>The organisation was established in 1994 to address the needs of young people in the New Ross area. In the period since then the work of the organisation has grown and expanded and now consists of three distinct programmes which are the Special Project for Youth, the Family Project (formerly The Springboard Project) and the Treoin Garda Youth Diversion Project. While the focus of each of these projects is specific, the overall service is managed and delivered as an integrated programme of supports to young people, and their families, who live in and around New Ross town, the New Ross Garda District and the South Wexford area.</p>





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