**PRESS RELEASE…PRESS RELEASE…PRESS RELEASE**

***Babbling Babies a multi-lingual nursery rhyme and action song book* was launched in the Twin Towns Library, Stranorlar on Friday last.**

This collection of traditional nursery rhymes has been developed by Lifestart Services, with the support of Donegal Library Service, the County Childcare Committee and HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Service. An enthusiastic audience of adults and young children attended the launch which was held during Wainfest the Library Service’s annual Arts & Book Festival in October promoting love of books and reading in children.

Early Years practitioners, teachers and Language Therapists have expressed concern about young children’s lack of fluency in their speech and reduced vocabulary. Child development experts have noted the fact that very many young children can no longer recite traditional nursery rhymes. Yet the research tells us that if children know eight nursery rhymes by heart by the time they are four years old, they are usually among the best readers in their class at age eight. The aim of the booklet is to stimulate language development and promote the importance of reading to children.  Rhymes and songs in English, Irish, Polish, Romanian, Hindi and Kiswahili (Kenya) are included. This is the second edition of the booklet and Arabic and Chinese rhymes been added.

Speaking at the launch Mary Walker Callaghan, Manager Lifestart Services, highlighted the benefits for children when parents read to them. These include developing their understanding of how language works, strengthening the relationship between the parent and child and developing a love of books.

Maureen Kerr, Donegal Library Services said “I am delighted to launch this second edition of Babbling Babies. The first book proved so popular that had it not been given free, it would have topped the best seller list for several months following publication. The book is important for many reasons. It helps children develop language skills. When parents read to and teach rhymes to their children it enhances the bond between the child and parent. The book in sharing nursery rhymes from around the world and honouring other languages helps promote inclusion. I thank all the Council’s partner organisations for their hard work on bringing this lovely booklet to completion. I know it will be enjoyed by families throughout Donegal in the weeks and months to come.”

Babbling Babies is part of a series of actions designed to improve children’s educational outcomes. The Library, Lifestart, County Childcare Committee and Health Promotion partnership is a Working Group of the Donegal Children & Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC). To date they have introduced the Bookworm Babies library card for children 0 -3 years. This year the Word Monsters library card has been introduced for children 4 – 6 years. The Lifelong Readers workshops have been rolled out for Early Years Practitioners and Parent & Toddler groups. Future plans include Ag Léamh le Chéile workshops in primary schools and the introduction of the Ready Readers library card.

Our communities in Donegal are very fortunate to have a high quality library service with a staff of committed librarians who are always ready to welcome parents and children, teachers and classes to the libraries. In addition to Wainfest, activities for children are held regularly throughout the year – and best of all the library service is free!

So do go along to your local library and pick up a copy of Babbling Babies for your favourite small people. Check out the books for big people too! There is a book there for everyone -from the latest books on the best-seller lists to the Healthy Ireland section where you will find advice and guidance on themes including Eat Well / Think Well / Be Well.

As Albert Einstein said – “The only thing that you have to absolutely know is the location of the library.”

END

Note to Editors: Further information from the Library Service or Lifestart

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