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

***Babbling Babies nursery rhyme and action song book* launched in Central Library, Letterkenny**

A fantastic booklet developed by Lifestart Services, with the support of Donegal Library Service and HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Service, was launched in the Central Library, Letterkenny on Wednesday the 18th of April to an enthusiastic audience of adults and young children.

Studies show that if babies and children are read to early, they will enjoy reading and learning more, and do better in school. The aim of the booklet is to encourage language and reading development, and to promote the importance of reading to children.  Rhymes and songs in English, Irish, Polish, Romanian, Hindi and Kiswahili (Kenya) are included.

Dr. Mary Roche, author of *‘Developing Children’s Critical Thinking through Picture books: a guide for primary and early years’ students and teachers’* launched the booklet. Mary is passionate about encouraging parents to read with babies and children and while launching the booklet she highlighted its benefits:

“Saying and singing rhymes along with your child is great fun and also develops essential pre-reading skills. By reading aloud and discussing books with children you are:

* Stimulating their imaginations
* Developing their understanding of how language works
* Reinforcing the value of reading
* Helping them to discover the joys of reading
* Strengthening the relationship with your child, and-
* Giving them a great start to their education”

Speaking at the launch, the Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council, Cllr. Gerry McMonagle said “I would like to congratulate and thank all involved for their hard work on bringing this lovely booklet to completion. I hope it will be enjoyed by families throughout Donegal in the weeks and months to come. If you are not familiar with Donegal County Library Service yet, I encourage you to join. It is a wonderful resource, freely accessible to everyone and has much more than books to offer. Check out the library website to see what your little library card can do for you and your family”.

*Babbling Babies Nursery Rhyme and Action Song Book*is an initiative of the Education & Learning Sub Committee of Donegal CYPSC (Children and Young People’s Services Committee) – which includes Lifestart Services, the Library Service and HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Service. The booklet was funded by The Parenting Support Initiative (PSI), administered through a collaborative partnership between the Katharine Howard Foundation and the Community Fund for Ireland.

The booklet will be distributed to families throughout the county, through Lifestart Services, the library network and other partner organisations, for all to enjoy.

**ENDS**