

## County Offaly 2014 Childcare Census

Thank you to all providers, childminders and parent and toddler groups who completed the recent Child-care Census questionnaire for 2014.

The purpose of this exercise was to obtain data on the maximum number of childcare places available in the private and community services for sessional services (Pre-School and After-School) and Full Day-Care as well as a picture of the number of vacancies which exist. This will support the Board of Offaly CCC to make decisions going forward as regards new entrants to the National Programmes, as well as defining policy in relation to the opening of new services in the County.

The data obtained was interesting.

### Services in Offaly

There are a total of 74 services in the county

- Eighteen services offer Full Day Care
- Forty-six services offer Pre-school
- Eight services offer Pre-school & Afterschool
- One service offers Afterschool alone
- One service offers drop in only

### National Programmes

- 70 services are in the ECCE programme
- 12 services are in the CCS programme
- 27 services are in the TEC Programme
- 3 services are in no programme.

### Places

**Pre-school:** There are a maximum of 1,932 pre-school places available per day in the County. The average number of spaces filled per day is 1,342 which equates to an estimated 590 vacancies, on average, per day.

**After School:** There are a maximum of 487 after school spaces available per day in the County. The average number of spaces filled per day is 235 which equates to vacancies of 252 per day on average.

**Full Day-Care:** There are a maximum of 440 spaces available per day in the County. The average number of spaces filled per day is 260 which equates to a possible 180 full day-care vacancies per day.

**Duplication & Displacement:** The number of vacancies in the county raises huge concerns regarding Duplication & Displacement and the Board of Offaly CCC will be contacting the DCYA with the results of the Census.

## National News Updates

### Early Years Inspectorate Update Focused Inspection

In 2014, Tusla, The Child and Family Agency commissioned a Report on the Quality of Pre-school Services. The report indicated that most pre-school services are compliant, most of the time, with three quarters of all regulatory requirements inspected as compliant with the Pre-School Regulations (2006).

The analysis of inspection reports clearly identified where improvements must be made. Significant levels of 'non-compliance' were identified in relation to a number of thematic areas within the existing regulations; Governance (Regulations 8, 9, 14 & 16), Welfare (Regulation 5) and Safety (Regulations 6, 27, 28 & 30).

Resulting from this report, the Child and Family Agency has introduced a revised model of Pre-School Inspection. Commencing on 26th January 2015, the primary scope of pre-school inspection will be the areas identified as requiring improvement; Governance, Welfare and Safety.

The inspection protocol and process remains unchanged however, pre-school services can anticipate a concentration of focus on the Pre-School Regulations (2006). The revised Inspection Toolkit and documentation can be downloaded from the Tusla website and all pre-school services are encouraged to review this documentation and evaluate their performance within these thematic areas.

### Government Committee on Affordable Childcare Established

At a Cabinet meeting on 14 January, the Government agreed to set up an inter-departmental committee to develop proposals for more affordable 'childcare'. This cross-departmental group will look at the provision across the 0 to 6 age group as well as considering the after-school needs of older school-going children. Seven different Government departments will be involved and the committee is expected to report to Minister Reilly in the summer.

The contents of this Newsletter are intended to act as a conduit for the exchange of information and is intended for information purposes only. No liability will attach to Offaly County Childcare Committee Ltd., arising from the use or misuse of any information in this Newsletter.



Volume 9, Issue 1  
February 2015

## Early Year's Service Providers Newsletter

Welcome to Issue One of the Newsletter for 2015. The information in this newsletter is an attempt to keep the sector in Offaly informed and up to date. I hope you enjoy reading it and if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the office.

### Strength in Numbers (Association of Childhood Professionals Rally)

ACP is organising a rally entitled 'Quality costs, invest now!' from 1-3pm on Tuesday 17th February 2015, outside Dáil Éireann.

The purpose of this rally is to highlight the importance of early childhood education and care and the vital role played by childhood professionals in supporting the children and families at this foundation stage of development.

The rally is calling for the following changes to be made in early year's policy:

- Immediate reinstatement of €2 capitation that was cut in 2011 budget.
- Begin work on establishing an agreed national pay scale that will be tied to increased government investment. To be in place (agreed and funded) in 3-5 years.
- Extend ECCE Scheme contract to include statutory holiday entitlements and national CPD training days. This contract should also be extended to cease making seasonal workers of qualified experienced practitioners.
- Expand eligibility criteria for accessing Learner Fund - to allow those in our profession to access L6 and degree courses even though it is not qualification requirement for their position
- Begin investment for babies-3 cohort
- That consultation and publication of the early years strategy be a priority issue so that we will have a cohesive plan to work from.
- Consultation and negotiation with our profession in relation to all policies and funding decisions that impact on our profession

If you plan to attend the rally please register with ACP on their website. If you cannot attend the rally you can show your support by filling out the online petition or by downloading it and getting parents in your service to sign it.

### Better Start (National Early Years Quality Development)

Better Start National Early Years Quality Development is a national initiative of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) collaborating with the Early Years Education Policy Unit of the Department of Education and Skills (DES), to ensure a coordinated approach to early years quality in Ireland.

It encompasses the broad suite of quality supports provided under DCYA through City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) and Voluntary Childcare Organisations to the Early Years Education and Care (EYEC) providers throughout the country, to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children they serve.

The Better Start Quality Development Service is an additional resource to support and drive quality improvement. It provides a highly skilled and experienced Early Years Specialist team to work directly in a mentoring capacity with Early Years services, complementing and adding to other quality resources such as training, CPD programmes, networking, cluster type support groups and individual or team based development work.

The Quality Development Service will operate on a national, rather than regional or county basis. Requests for the service can be made through your local CCC and will be processed centrally. Early Years Specialists will be allocated to EYEC services on the basis of availability, skills and experience, as far as possible matching the service profile.

Eligibility criteria and further information on the service can be found on the enclosed leaflet.

**Offaly County Childcare Committee**  
St. Joseph's Community Centre  
Kilcormac  
Co. Offaly

Phone: 05791 35878  
E-Mail: info@offalychildcare.com



## Offaly CCC News & Calendar of Events

Please see the enclosed calendar of events for details of upcoming activities and workshops organised by Offaly County Childcare Committee. Please display the calendar in a prominent place in your service so that all early years workers may have the opportunity to attend events. Booking forms for all courses and events are available from the office on 057 9135878. The following is a brief summary of the activities and events we have on offer.

### Appointment of Support & Development Worker

Offaly County Childcare is in the process of appointing a new Support & Development Worker with responsibility for working directly with services to support their development on a needs led basis. The new employee with a background in early years and pedagogy will commence on March 1st. If you would like a support visit for your service please contact the office on 057 9135878.

### Using Story-time to Promote Literacy

Story-telling supports children to develop their skills in listening and talking and to develop early reading and writing skills through play-based activities.

When children are read a story it supports their language development. Language is at the core of thinking. Children reflect, communicate and develop their ideas through language.

This workshops will support providers to make story-time fun, interesting and interactive which will engage children's imagination and encourage a love of books. For booking forms please contact the office on 057 9135878.

### Curriculum Support Sessions

Offaly County Childcare is offering a number of services the opportunity to engage in an Curriculum Support Activity programme. Services will be offered the opportunity to have a tutor come to visit the service and work with the staff and children for one hour a week for six weeks looking at art, music and physical activity.

Cost for participation will be €60 per service. If you are interested in participating in the programme, please contact Offaly County Childcare on 05791 35878 for further details.

### Basic Financial Workshops

A two night workshop is currently been developed for services to support them to do basic financial projections, basic book keeping, income & expenditure and bank reconciliations.

The workshops will be delivered over two or three evenings. If services require one to one support after the workshops this will be facilitated and a staff member of Offaly CCC will visit the service to assist with the setting up of spread sheets etc.

Included with this newsletter is a brief survey regarding financial supports service providers may require. Please complete the survey and return it to the office to assist us in planning the workshops tailored to your needs.

### Support Visits

Offaly County Childcare offers support visits to services on a range of topics. If you would like a support visit regarding policies & procedures, curriculum, room layout, environment, finances, committee skills, record keeping, Aistear, Siolta, behaviour management, or any issues you may be experiencing please feel free to contact the office on 05791 35878 and an appointment will be arranged with the relevant staff member.

### Occupational First Aid Refresher

QQI (formerly FETAC) Level 5 Recertification, 1 Day Refresher Occupational First Aid courses will take place in Trade Safety Training Centre, Clara on the following dates from 9.30am to 5.00pm.

- Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup> 2015
- Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> 2015
- Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup> 2015
- Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> 2015

There are 10 places available on each course. Please ensure your current training is valid on date of attending Refresher as FETAC will not recertify if current cert has lapsed and you will have to do the 3 day course again.

**To book a place please contact Patricia in Trade Safety on 057 9330782 .**

## Management & Leadership Training

(Advance Notice)

Managing an early years setting has become a daunting task. Excellent communication and leadership skills are required to deal with the needs of parents, staff, children and external agencies such as TUSLA, Pobal etc.

As a support to services Offaly CCC will organise a Management & Leadership programme for Managers and Leaders of services commencing in September and finishing in November. This is advance notice if services are thinking of engaging in training this year. The programme will run out over eight weeks. The main purpose of the "Management and Leadership" Programme is to assist Managers face the challenges associated with effectively managing an early years service in an ever-changing, diverse and complex environment.

This programme focuses completely on the "personal development and improvement" aspects of management rather than policy and procedure implementation. The overarching purpose of the programme is to develop more confident, assertive and competent managers in the ECCE sector. Canavan & Byrne will deliver this programme in a very practical manner using real scenarios, exercises and case studies and will be highly relevant.

The programme will consist of 8 sessions x 3 hours per session under four broad topics

- Leadership
- Communication
- Supervision
- Motivation

The programme is aimed at early year's workers who have a role in leading and managing their service. The cost of the programme is €60 per participant. A minimum of fifteen participants is needed for the programme to go ahead. Booking forms will be available in June.

### Child Protection Training

Three dates for Child Protection Courses have been set for the first half of the year (see dates in calendar). The training will be offered in the first instance to Designated Liaison Persons who have not completed CP training in the past three years. All DLPs must have undertaken the basic one day training course in order to do the specific training for DLPs which should be available later in the year. If you need a place on one of the courses please contact the office for a booking form.

### Pathways to Primary (Transitions Programme)

An introductory Pathways into Primary Programme evening will be held in March in Kilcormac Community Centre (date to be confirmed). The objective of the P.I.P. programme is to support the children in services make a smooth transfer between pre-school and primary school. There are five resource boxes available for services. If you wish to become involved please contact the office to express your interest.

### Aistear Cluster Group Meetings

NCCA are currently developing and refining the Aistear Toolkit for use in services. The toolkit when available will support services to plan their activities in line with the Aistear themes. Cluster Groups sessions for 2015 will (hopefully) be planned around the use of the Toolkit.

### Provider Led Supports

Included with this newsletter is a brief survey regarding supports service providers may require during 2015. Please complete the survey and return it to the office to assist us in planning workshops / training events which meet your needs.

If you would prefer please contact the office on 057 9135878 or [info@offalychildcare.com](mailto:info@offalychildcare.com) with ideas or requests.