

2009
Annual Report
Summary



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South Tipperary County Childcare Committee (STCCC)

2009 Annual Report Summary

Chairperson's foreword

A Cairde,

Táim an-bhroidúil a bheith abalta an tuairisc seo an bhronnach diobh.

Welcome to the 2009 Annual Report from South Tipperary County Childcare Committee

The Board of Directors has been dedicated throughout the year, and with the strategic plan in place for the development and growth up to 2011, I am confident that the County Childcare will grow in strength. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication of a small number of Directors who resigned during the year and wish them well for the future.

Throughout this Annual Report you will find details of the wide variety of the activities of 2009. Having completed my second year term as Chairman, I have witnessed the transformation of the Childcare Committee into a relevant and integral part of the support services in the County. To be part of this has certainly given me a great sense of satisfaction and pride. I hope you enjoy our Annual Report and that you along with me, wish the Committee and staff every success in 2010.

Pally Ivers

Chairperson

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Introduction

South Tipperary County Childcare Committee (STCCC) developed the 2009 Action Plan by assessing the key issues that had arisen in 2008 and considering the objectives set out in their Strategic Plan 2006-2010. 2009 was a very successful year for STCCC with a full complement of staff on board. With Sally Ivers bringing a vast amount of experience from Community & Voluntary Forum

Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme

The announcement from the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs in April, about the 'Free Pre-school Year' or Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) scheme, added a major priority to the County Childcare Committee's work plan for the year.

The administration of the ECCE or Free Pre-school Year quickly became a priority in the second half of the year. It was firstly promoted to all providers in the county and then, seventy three applications were processed. The scheme had to be brought to the attention of parents of eligible children, through information sessions and advertisements in the local press. Local radio stations were utilised through their community noticeboard facility and by conducting live interviews.

There were sixty seven successful applicants who were assisted with compiling their statement of projected income and outgoings for 2010, which would lead to an electronic return being made in January 2010.

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Provider Training and Networks

The ‘Children First’ course delivered by the HSE in May to twenty of our childcare services’ managers was an important step in the right direction and needs to be built on quickly with a planned programme of further training for 2010 – 2012.

There was high demand for First Aid and Refresher First Aid courses. A full complement of the various Network Meetings were facilitated where relevant information was presented and discussed.

CCSS

A small number of community services received intense support with their administration and childcare planning which allowed them to stay operational until the ECCE scheme started in January 2010. All community services participating in the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) were supported with administration of the scheme and with their financial returns.

Childminding

The number of voluntary notified childminders in the region doubled in 2009. This was brought about by a number of factors;

- The support work carried out with Childminders in 2008 paid dividends.
- The Childminders subsequently voluntary notified and were happy to encourage their colleagues to do the same.

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- Having voluntary notified, they quickly availed of the Childminding Development Grant
- A new group of Childminders applied for the Quality Awareness Programme and received support visits in the voluntary notification process by the CMDO.
- Informative childminding network meetings were held around the region and the advisory service was advertised through various media in the county.

Structures and Operations

Staff at South Tipperary County Childcare Committee

The South Tipperary County Childcare Committee staff complement consists of an Administrator, three Development officers and a Manager. One Development officer works a 28 hour week and another works a 31 hour week. The other three staff work a 35 hour week.

Manager– Gerry Hickey.

Administrator – Marian O’Riordan

Childcare Development Officer – Gerardine Boland.

Childcare Development Officer- Elaine McGowran

Childminding Development Officer – Carol Knox

The Board of South Tipperary County Childcare Committee

The South Tipperary County Childcare Committee has a balanced membership to include representatives from the Statutory Sector; the Social Partners, Local Development Partnerships/Groups, National Voluntary Childcare Organisation (NCVO’s), Parents, Providers of Childcare Services in the County and Childminders.

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The following stakeholders are currently represented on the South Tipperary County Childcare Committee and vacant positions are also shown:

Sally Ivers	<i>Chairperson</i> - Community & Voluntary Forum
Kathleen Prendergast	<i>Vice Chairperson</i> - South Tipperary County Development Board
Anne Comerford	<i>Secretary</i> - Private Provider Representative
Timmy O'Donoghue	<i>Treasurer</i> - Irish Farmers Association
Tommy Coleman	FÁS
Phil Shanahan	South Tipperary Development Company
Marian Fitzgerald	Childminding Representative
Kathleen Holden-Kelly	Community Providers Representative
Margaret Cleary	POBAL
Mary Hanna-Hourigan	South Tipperary County Council
Teresa Ring	Private Provider Representative
Maire Corbett	NVCO
Patricia Power	Community Providers Representative
Louise Horgan	Parents Representative
<i>Currently vacant</i>	Health Service Executive
<i>Currently vacant</i>	Dept. of Social & Family Affairs
<i>Currently vacant</i>	Trade Union Pillar

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Successes during 2009

There were a number of significant successes in 2009, as follows;

ECCE

The ECCE was a welcome programme in South Tipperary with an uptake of 98% of service providers availing of the scheme. STCCC worked continuously to ensure that all OMCYA requirements and timeframes were met. The STCCC team provided phone supports, visits and information sessions to all ECCE recipients ensuring the smooth transition of the ECCE scheme.

Capacity Building

STCCC had a challenging but successful year in terms of Capacity Building, supporting a number of community groups with CCSS, ECCE and financial returns. Many childcare community committees required ongoing intensive assistance on basic committee skills, HR and areas of administration. This work is forecast to continue in 2010.

Road Safety Authority

STCCC was one of five counties/cities to be selected to participate in a pilot Road Safety Pre-School Programme in collaboration with the Road Safety Authority (RSA). This pilot programme was delivered by the STCCC to 23 service providers in South Tipperary as part of the National Road Safety Campaign. All 23 childcare services participated in a 'Beep Beep Day' on the 1st October with 463 children participating in the RSA Pre-school programme. Each of the 23 facilities was visited by a member of the STCCC staff on 'Beep Beep Day'. The response from the service providers on the day was overwhelming and the feedback was extremely positive towards the programme; some comments included, "*the best programme we have ever*

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been involved in.” An RSA evaluation sheet was disseminated to all participating services for completion on ‘Beep Beep Day’.

Active Pre-school Policy

The HSE & South Tipperary Sports Partnership in collaboration with the STCCC organised three Active Pre-school workshops as a pilot with a selected number of providers to develop National Active Pre-school Policy guidelines for all service providers. This was a very positive initiative which is hoped to be continued and completed in 2010.

Networks

In 2009, childcare networks took place in three general areas in South Tipperary, including Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel & Tipperary. Attendance at these networks was high, indicating providers were satisfied attending networks in these areas. There were seven Network meetings throughout the year. Training such as, Arts & crafts, Road Safety Authority Training, Health & Safety, Active pre-school and Creative music & dance was provided through the networks with over 238 childcare providers participating.

Training

The year was a very active and positive one for Training with 400 people attending the 27 courses offered. STCCC held a diverse range of courses covering areas such as LAMH, Manual Handling, First Aid, Documentation in Childcare Regulations and Child Protection Training to mention a few. Providers also enjoyed Play Therapy, Buntus First and Primary Food Hygiene. One of the most successful events was the NCNA Special Needs Awareness Workshop which took place on 3rd October 2009. The Tutor covered many areas of difficulty and special needs from ADHD to Downs Syndrome, and how to look out for these as a childcare worker/ parent. Over twenty Providers attended as did Parents of our Special Needs Network. Training calendars

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were designed and printed in-house for the second part of 2009 as it was more economically viable. 250 were printed and disseminated.

Childminding

Our Childminding Development Officer continues to be part-funded by the HSE, which is greatly appreciated in the current climate.

2009 was a very successful year for the Childminding sector. Eight information sessions were held with an overall attendance of 52. 100 tax books, 200 network leaflets and 250 newsletters were printed and disseminated to Childminders. 16 networks, two story telling sessions and three coffee mornings were carried out. There was an accumulative of 117 Childminders and 36 children in attendance. 310 training calendars were distributed in 2009. Nine childminding development grants were awarded in 2009. 35 joint visits were carried out to date, that is, information regarding voluntary notification and grants given in the same visit. Seven Childminding Development Grant verification visits were carried out. 51 visits

were carried out in total. 15 voluntary notifications were received and 30 new childminders identified, giving a total of 54 existing and potential childminders in South Tipperary. 11 Parent and Toddler group grants were awarded. Two Quality Awareness programmes were carried out with 19 in attendance.

Child Protection Policy for Childcare Committees

The committee decided to create a comprehensive policy, which would be available to other committees when completed. We were assisted in this by the local HSE and Barnardos. As part of this initiative, it was agreed that STCCC staff would be Garda vetted.

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ECCE and CCSS information for Traveller families

STCCC staff attended Traveller training courses to inform participants of the two schemes. Traveller specific leaflets on both schemes were produced in early winter and given to families with children in the appropriate age range. These leaflets were made available to all other CCCs who could carry out similar promotion. There was constant liaison with the visiting teachers in the county. The take-up of ECCE places by eligible Traveller children will be recorded in January 2010.

Challenges during 2009

The continuing recession resulted in some services in the county running into financial difficulties. Some Community Services in receipt of CCSS fell into this category also. They were not helped by the anomaly that allows eligible children gain entry to the scheme after the service has made its declaration. It was also expected that the service be able to cover this cost from their contingency, until the next declaration date. STCCC advised services on how to review the delivery of their service in order to sustain the business.

While the ECCE scheme was most welcome in 2009, it presented a difficulty by creating a much greater workload than anticipated for the latter half of the year. It is a testimony to the experience and tenacity of the staff, that the work was dealt with in a professional manner and did not disrupt the previously scheduled work in an adverse way.

Another challenge arising out of the ECCE scheme is the proposal to roll out Aistear and Siolta for all participating services, during 2010. As 2009 ends, we are still unsure as to what role we will have in trying to ensure this is a successful roll-out in South Tipperary in 2010.

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Towards the end of the year, we identified that there will be an increasing need for places to accommodate the ECCE scheme through to summer 2013. Without a capital budget for new infrastructure, this will be a problem for the county in the coming years.

Getting Childminders to voluntary notify is a challenge every year and 2009 was no different. A great deal of work went into getting another twelve Childminders to voluntary notify and this will have been worthwhile if they are happy with the support and recommend to others in the business that they follow a similar path.

Current Provision in the county and remaining gaps

There are currently 33 community and 38 private services in the county. Together, they provide 1900 childcare places. A new community service, Lullabies & Laughter opened in the Glen of Aherlow in September. Two existing services in Ballyporeen and Ballingarry are on schedule to open new facilities in 2010 and Donohill Childcare will be opening a new facility in September 2010 also.

Three areas have been identified as being in need of additional places. Two of these, Kilsheelan and Fethard had large scale applications turned down in 2009 because of the withdrawal of capital funding in the budget. There is a need for a childcare facility in the ‘Three Drives’ area of Tipperary town which is a RAPID area. STCCC are working with groups in these areas to come up with a solution.

There are 24 voluntary notified Childminders and another 30 active childminders are known to STCCC. The County Childcare Committee will continue to work with all known Childminders in the region to increase the quality of their services and increase the level of voluntary notification.

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Conclusion

2009 saw a number of new members coming on to our Board whose experience will complement and enhance the existing expertise of the Board. It was felt that the introduction of the ECCE scheme has helped to raise the profile of the STCCC to a new level and has facilitated the development of greater links with all the childcare providers involved in the scheme.

While regularly working with community childcare services, in 2009 we worked closely with private childcare providers to assist them in making returns to the OMCYA for the first time. The ECCE scheme has also enhanced the team work of the staff as we all worked together to meet the tight deadlines and challenges in administering the new scheme. We also welcome the outcomes from a meeting held in early December, between Pobal and the South & East Managers, to better co-ordinate how we do business together.

Abbreviations

STCCC – South Tipperary County Childcare Committee

NCNA – National Childcare Nursery’s Association

ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education

IPPA – Irish Pre-school Playgroups Association

NCVO – National Childcare Voluntary Organisations

CCC – County Childcare Committees

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EOCP – Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme

NCIP – National Childcare Investment Programme

VEC – Vocational Education Committee

HSE – Health Service Executive

OMCYA – Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

CMDO – Child Minding Development Officer

CMDG – Child Minding Development Grant

CCSS – Community Childcare Subvention Scheme

NCCA – National Council for Curriculum & Assessment

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