

County childcare Committee



South Tipperary

2010

Annual Report Summary

Transforming Ireland

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Chairperson's foreword

A Cairde,

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

Welcome to the 2010 Annual Report from South Tipperary County Childcare Committee
The Board of Directors are happy to report that in this final year of the National Childcare Investment Programme 2007 – 2010, STCCC have been able to maintain a high level of support to childcare providers in the county. This support was mainly delivered through training and networking sessions, meetings with providers and telephone\email contacts.

Throughout this Annual Report you will find details of the wide variety of the activities of 2010. Having completed my third term as Chairperson, 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. 2011 brings further challenges with widespread cuts and I wish the incoming committee well in dealing with the challenge.

Sally Ivers

Chairperson

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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

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

CCS – Community Childcare Subvention scheme

NCCA – National Council for Curriculum & Assessment

CETS – Childcare Employment & Training Supports scheme



Mission Statement

‘To encourage and co-ordinate the development of child-centred, flexible, accessible childcare in South Tipperary that offers a choice of a high quality service for all in a stable, secure environment’.

Priority Areas of work during 2010

South Tipperary County Childcare Committee's (STCCC) priority for 2010 was to continue to implement the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) as directed by our strategic plan and guided by the following objectives from Pobal.

Pobal Objectives for CCCs 2007 – 2010

1. Maintain and build the local capacity to establish and sustain childcare places/services across all categories of childcare providers/services.
2. Develop and promote quality standards and targets for childcare in the county.
3. Promote initiatives that enhance the level of appropriate service provision that targets disadvantage and social inclusion issues.
4. Enhance and develop co-ordination at all levels.
5. Establish, develop and maintain a relevant support strategy for childcare providers at local level.
6. Through the CCC role in the NCIP application process, establish a strategic and proactive approach to be taken to childcare development at county level.
7. Identify and promote initiatives targeted at the development and support of School-Age Childcare in the county.
8. Identify, promote and improve the supply of early childhood care and education services for 3 to 4 year olds.

9. Promote initiatives targeted at the support and inclusion of childminders – including the development of voluntary notification with the local HSE.

10. Enhance childcare networks appropriate to the range of childcare providers and workers in the county.

11. Identify training needs, developing a relevant strategy in consultation and collaboration with relevant training bodies/agencies.

12. Develop and improve information sharing and learning systems.

The priorities set out in 2010, included the delivery of relevant training to providers and childminders, increased networking opportunities for the same cohort and sustainability for community services experiencing difficulties. The increase in the numbers of Voluntary Notified Childminders and the dissemination of appropriate grants to them, was also a priority. Parent & Toddler groups in the county, were written to and invited to apply for the P & T grant. STCCC were also intent on having a meaningful role in the development of the new national Strategic Plan 2011 – 2013. The following headings provide more detail around our main priorities.

Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme

The priority in 2010 was the administration of the ECCE process with new and existing service providers. 72 applications were received with contracts, fees policies and calendars processed. All relevant information was disseminated to parents with information sessions held.

Provider/Childminder Training

STCCC's focus is always on training that will improve the quality of the childcare service offered by both Providers and Childminders in South Tipperary. There is ongoing demand

for FETAC Level 5 & 6 Childcare courses, First Aid and the other courses necessitated by the Childcare Regulations.

The aim in 2010 was to continue what has been an impressive programme of childcare training since the beginning of the current strategic plan. STCCC provided relevant courses which were requested by providers and childminders in the evaluations and feedback we received in 2009. The priority for 2010 was to provide the best value for money training and to offer as diverse a range of courses and workshops as possible. Keeping in line with new national initiatives, STCCC have provided, based on demand, relevant information sessions on Siolta and these will remain a priority in 2011.

Community Childcare Subvention Scheme CCSS

The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) has played a vital role in the sustainability of community services in South Tipperary.

The priority here was that all parents who could avail of the scheme, would be aware of it. Another priority was that services would submit accurate electronic returns by the due dates during the year.

Childcare Employment & Training Supports CETS

This scheme became a priority when introduced in 2010. It was recognised as an important support for parents who were intent on getting back into employment and who needed free childcare while attending a relevant FAS or VEC course. STCCC advertised this scheme to childcare services providing full day care and/or school age childcare. All eligible private and community facilities were assisted with the application process and supported with allocation of places and payments.

Childminding

On the Childminding front, running two Quality Awareness Programmes was seen as an important vehicle in delivering new voluntary notified childminders. Increasing the level of awareness as regards the quality aspect of the Voluntary Notification to parents and potential childminders was a main concern also. In January 2010, providers asked us to

look at the possibility of having an Autumn conference on ‘play’. This became another priority for the STCCC.

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 23 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 Company, National Voluntary Childcare Organisation (NCVO’s), Parents, Providers of Childcare Services in the County and Childminders.

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

Sally Ivers -	<i>Chairperson - Community & Voluntary Forum</i>
Kathleen Prendergast -	<i>Vice Chairperson - South Tipperary County Development Board</i>
Ann Comerford -	<i>Secretary - Private Provider Representative</i>
Timmy O’Donoghue -	<i>Treasurer - Irish Farmers Association</i>
Tommy Coleman -	<i>FÁS</i>

Kaye Mullaney -	VEC
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
Sandra Gibbons -	Parents Representative
Seamus Anderson -	Parents Representative
Currently vacant -	Health Service Executive
Currently vacant -	Dept. of Social & Family Affairs
Currently vacant -	Trade Union Pillar

The Board of South Tipperary County Childcare Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis. The Manager reports to the board at each meeting and also meets with the Chairperson on a regular basis. Listed below are the sub-committees, which also meet on a minimum bi-monthly basis:

Finance

Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion (EDSI)

Training, Quality & Networks (TQN)

Project Evaluation (PESC)

Childminding

There is also an appraisal sub-committee which meets twice yearly to consider applications to the subsidised training fund.

Sub-Committees membership

Finance:

Timmy O'Donoghue - Treasurer

Sally Ivers -	Chairperson
Kathleen Prendergast –	Vice Chairperson
Kathleen Holden Kelly –	Community Provider Representative
Gerry Hickey -	Manager

Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion:

Sally Ivers -	Chairperson
Gavin Cullen -	South Tipperary County Council Access Officer
Ruairi O’Caisleain -	Health Service Executive
Marian Fitzgerald –	Childminding Representative
Elaine McGowran –	Development Officer

Training, Quality & Networks:

Teresa Ring –	Private Provider Representative
Tommy Coleman -	FAS
Kay Mullaney -	VEC
Maire Corbett -	NVCO
Ann Comerford -	Private Provider Representative
Ger Boland -	Development Officer

Project Proposal Sub-Committee:

Phil Mackey -	Health Service Executive
Caroline Conway -	South Tipp County Council Planning Dept.
Margaret Cleary -	Pobal
Sally Ivers -	Chairperson
Gerry Hickey -	Manager

Childminding:

Marian Fitzgerald –	Childminding representative
Gwyneth Brophy -	Childminding Ireland Representative
Patricia Power –	Community Provider Representative
Liz O’Neill -	Childminding representative

Carol Knox - Childminding Development Officer

Appraisal Committee for Subsidised Training Fund:

Sally Ivers -	Chairperson
Tommy Coleman -	FAS
Kay Mullaney -	VEC
Timmy O'Donoghue -	Treasurer
Ger Boland –	Development Officer

The staff members support the sub-committees and report on the progress of assigned actions to the specific sub-committee. The Chairperson of each sub-committee reports on their activities to each Board meeting. The Administrator also brings the financial reports on the actions to the finance sub-committee and Board.

Collaborations

STCCC has worked professionally with a variety of bodies, both within the county and nationally during 2010. We have experienced high levels of co-operation and continue to strengthen relationships that have been built up over recent years. The following are some examples of our professional collaborations;

- **OMCYA:** Implementing the ECCE and CETS schemes. Producing a review of CETS. Developing the Strategic Plan 2011 - 2013.
- **Pobal:** Administering CCSS and supporting community services that were experiencing difficulties.
- **NCNA:** A Siolta Co-ordinator carried out a Siolta workshop in one of our services and STCCC staff attended the Siolta information workshops. Following on from last year, another Special Needs course was held. One staff member completed the 'train the trainer' course.
- **HSE:** The HSE part-fund our Childminding Development Officer and we give quarterly written reports on her activities. We co-operate with and contribute

financially to joint training courses, such as Child protection, Healthy Eating and Active Pre-school. There was also an initiative with the Disability Services Co-ordinator on pre-school children with special needs.

- **South Tipperary County Council:** Close liaison on all planning applications that have a provision for childcare facilities included within the plan. We share our mapping information as it is updated so that it will be available from the County Data Unit.
- **South Tipperary County Development Board:** Attendance at and chairing the Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) group and attending the Traveller Interagency Forum.
- **South Tipperary VEC:** We support their FETAC Level 5 & 6 Childcare training programme. We also assisted their officers in implementing the CETS scheme.
- **FAS:** We administer the ‘subsidised training fund’ which they provide. We also assisted their officers in implementing the CETS scheme.
- **County Enterprise Board:** Support us on sustainability training for voluntary committees of community services.
- **Tipperary Institute:** Collated our Traveller Childcare Needs survey and produced the report.
- **RAPID:** We are represented on the relevant sub-committees of the three RAPID areas of Tipperary South Riding.
- **South Tipperary Sports Partnership:** Organising and tutoring the Buntus training for childcare services. They worked on the ‘Active Pre-school’ initiative with STCCC.
- **An Garda Siochana:** ‘Beep Beep’ safe cross training and workshops for non-national families.
- **South Tipperary Disability Group Forum:** We contribute information and attend meetings when required.
- **Tipperary Libraries:** We provided a desktop computer for ECCE children with special needs. Parents will get an introductory course on the computer and its packages. We supply all relevant publications and information leaflets to the libraries on an ongoing basis.

- **St Nicholas Montessori Society:** Preliminary discussions on a network event for 2011
- **Barnardos:** Preliminary discussions on developing a policy on using cctv in childcare settings.

Successes during 2010

There were a number of significant successes in 2010, as follows;

ECCE

The successful roll out of the ECCE scheme to 72 service providers in line with the new terms and conditions around contracts, fees policies, calendars and changes to the electronic returns. Greater links were forged with parents and service providers.

Capacity Building for Community Services

STCCC had a challenging but successful year in terms of Capacity Building, supporting a number of community groups with CCSS, ECCE and financial returns. A comprehensive training course was provided for ten committees and the feedback was very positive.

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 in 2009/2010 to 50 service providers in South Tipperary as part of the National Road Safety Campaign. All 50 childcare services participated in a 'Beep Beep Day' with 863 children participating in the RSA Pre-school programme. Each of the 50 facilities was visited by a member of the STCCC staff on 'Beep Beep Day' where services displayed part of the new programme to parents and the community. 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 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. All providers were visited and assisted with the development of an Active Pre Policy. This was a very positive initiative which is hoped to be continued in 2011 with an additional workshop on "Disability Awareness and Inclusive Play". STCCC will continue to run this programme into 2011 with new providers on board.

Networks

In 2010 a total 17 childcare networks took place in three general areas in South Tipperary, including Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel & Tipperary. 384 service providers and Childminders attended these networks, indicating providers were satisfied attending networks in these areas. The Network meetings throughout the year included training and information sessions such as Arts & crafts, Road Safety Authority Training, Health & Safety, Active pre-school, Allergy Awareness, Creative music & dance and three Siolta level 1 awareness workshops

Training

The year saw a very busy and diverse Childcare Provider and Childminders training schedule. Twenty two courses were delivered with approx. 350 people attending. In this recession the aim of STCCC was to ensure that the budget was worked effectively to provide the basic courses required for childcare workers thus ensuring that quality is constantly nurtured within the childcare setting. The courses which were delivered ranged from Occupational First Aid to Managing Challenging Behaviour to Working with Special Needs children. Our Buntus programme saw another three rounds of new groups being trained in 2010. One of the most successful courses was on Curriculum Planning which saw over thirty providers in attendance. To reduce costs the training calendars for 2010 were produced in house and distributed to all relevant people.

Childminding

On the Childminding front, it was heartening to have twenty four new applicants for our Quality Awareness Programme and these are now being supported through the voluntary notification process. There were nine new voluntary notifications and fourteen applications for the CMDG, ten of which were approved. The CMDO co-ordinated a 'Play' conference entitled "Freedom to Play", which was held on the 16th October 2010 in the Clonmel Park Hotel. The following experts spoke at this conference: Mr. Mark Armitage (The Play People), Dr David Coleman (Psychologist) and Dr .Noirín Hayes (DIT). The speakers discussed play and the effects it has on childrens' behaviour and education. This conference was open to all Childcare Providers, Childminders and all professionals working in the field of early childhood.

Equality Diversity & Social Inclusion

STCCC were happy to support an initiative for Traveller women which trained them to assist in after-school services which would have Traveller children attending. This included a financial contribution and a number of development worker hours spent in the training programme with the participants. We were also happy to play our part in rolling out a Traveller parent DVD in the South & East region.

Staff training event for South & East Staff

This proved to be a worthwhile venture with training on procurement and the sustainability toolkit. There were also workshops on the Waterford review of the Childminding Initiative and the three government funding schemes.

Strategic Plan 2011 - 2013

STCCC welcomed the OMCYA invitation to have a number of inputs to the compilation of the plan and were happy with the final document which was launched on December 15th by the minister.

Specially adapted computer for ECCE children with special needs

STCCC were pleased to be able to address this gap in the care and education of children with special needs. The specially adapted computer will be available in Clonmel library for

the immediate future until the disruption caused by flood works around the STCCC office, ceases.

Challenges during 2010

The main challenge was in being able to make a meaningful start to the rollout of Siolta in the county. South Tipperary continued to be without the services of a Siolta co-ordinator in 2010. The committee decided in September to run the Stage 1 'Awareness' sessions in-house and they were well received. However, this led to a new challenge for STCCC and the participating services; when would they be able to progress to the next stage? This problem has continued into 2011.

Another challenge was in trying to secure an affordable part-time evening Level 6 'Supervision in Childcare' course for our childcare workers. The VEC came to the rescue by setting up one course. However, because it was an evening part-time course, the participants were expected to pay for the total cost. STCCC were able to make a contribution which helped to alleviate the financial demands on the participants.

Getting Childminders to voluntary notify is a challenge every year and 2010 was no different. A great deal of work went into getting another twenty four Childminders to partake in the Quality Awareness Programme (QAP) and seven of these subsequently voluntary notified to STCCC.

A number of training courses had to be postponed in November & December due to the hazardous weather conditions. They have been successfully rescheduled for early 2011.

A number of our providers indicated to us that they were being asked to take in children with mild special needs. When they take them in, they quickly find that the children are more demanding and need 1-to-1 support, ideally from a Special Needs Assistant. Some services have staff with an SNA qualification but cannot schedule them for this work because of ratios. They cannot recruit the extra SNAs due to the level of current funding.

Other services do not have any SNA qualified staff. Both scenarios are non-beneficial for the special needs child.

STCCC worked with the HSE Disability Services Co-ordinator during 2010, in trying to get FAS on board with a solution. The suggested solution would see FAS adding a small number of unemployed SNAs to a small number of Community Employment schemes in the county. These would then be available to the childcare services that needed them. FAS were eventually unable to co-operate with this idea so we are now going back to the drawing board.

Current Provision in the county and remaining gaps

STCCC carried out a comprehensive survey of the childcare provision in the county in early 2010. The main findings are as follows;

There are currently 34 community and 37 private services in the county. There are also three stand-alone After-school services. Two existing services in Ballyporeen and Ballingarry, under the NCIP Capital programme, constructed new facilities in 2010 and Donohill Childcare also opened a new service in September 2010.

581 children are availing of the Community Childcare Subvention CCS scheme and 1,169 children are in the Early Childhood Care & Education (Free Pre-school Year) ECCE.

(a) total no of private childcare providers operating in the county	37
(b) total no of community childcare facilities operating in the county	34
(c) Number of full time places in the county	805
(d) Number of part time places in the county	171
(e) Number of sessional places in the county	
Morning	1110
Afternoon	355
(f) Number of After-school places in the county	319

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 31 voluntary notified Childminders and another 24 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.

Commitments under Social Partnership (Towards 2016)

Our commitment to the ‘Towards 2016’ programme, can be considered under the following paragraphs of that report;

- Creation of 50,000 new childcare places, including 10,000 pre-school places and 5,000 after-school places, as part of the €2.65 billion National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010;
- Development of a National Childcare Training Strategy which will aim to provide 17,000 childcare training places during 2006-2010, and include quality and training provisions of the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP).
- Targeting the early childhood education needs of children from areas of acute economic and social disadvantage through DEIS (the action plan for educational inclusion). It will concentrate early education on children who will subsequently attend urban/town primary schools serving the most disadvantaged communities (180 urban/town primary school communities will be targeted for support).
- Relevant departments and agencies will work together to complement and add value to childcare programmes in disadvantaged communities with a view to ensuring that the overall care and education needs of the children concerned are met in an integrated manner. This will also involve the provision of education related professional support and training to existing providers, together with a curriculum and quality framework for early childhood education.

- Steps to standardise and improve inspections under the Child Care (Pre School) Regulations by publishing the strengthened revised regulations and providing training for inspectors across the HSE, establishing improved administrative systems to facilitate a national standardised inspection service and ensuring that standardised inspection reports are publicly available.
- In order to facilitate the provision of after-school facilities, the parties agree to support and encourage school facilities being made available for childcare provision as a key addition to the utilisation, development and support of local community facilities.
- This will ensure substantial progress towards meeting the Barcelona targets of making childcare available to 90% of children aged between 3 and the mandatory school age and 33% of children aged under 3 years by 2010.
 - It is also agreed that:
- A review of the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 will be undertaken prior to its conclusion in consultation with the social partners. This will assess the progress made to date to address childcare needs with a view to developing new policy responses and successor programme(s) appropriate to emerging needs in childcare;

The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme EOCP and the National Childcare Investment Programme NCIP have created 65,000 new childcare places nationally and South Tipperary has played its part through the efficient use of the capital funding available to the county until

2009. 376 new places have been created in the county between 2007 – 2009. STCCC have been collaborating with the VEC in providing FETAC Level 5 & 6 childcare training since the start of this programme. The number of workers qualified at level 5 currently, almost matches the required need. While Level 5 courses continued on a reduced basis, the focus for STCCC switched to Level 6 childcare training in 2010. This addressed the higher quality ethos that the ECCE scheme brings to childcare in the county.

As outlined under collaborations, STCCC works with all relevant bodies to try and ensure that social exclusion in childcare in the county is being addressed and eliminated.

Since 2006, STCCC have been looking at after-school provision in all capital applications and this has resulted in provision in some parts of the county. It has been apparent in 2008, 2009 & 2010 that the demand for after-school service has been declining, probably driven by the changing circumstances of parents in the ongoing recession.

In relation to the expectation of making childcare available to 90% of children aged between three years and the mandatory school age, South Tipperary met its obligations to the ECCE scheme in January and September 2010. However, a recent analysis undertaken by the committee, indicated that there will be an increasing demand for places from September 2010 – September 2012. It is hoped that there will be a capital allocation to the county in 2011 which will help alleviate this.

Other commentary on the year

STCCC have been actively campaigning through SIM, for a Children's Services Committee in South Tipperary. A Director of Services from the County Council and the HSE Childcare manager have had initial discussions on this recently.

A significant number of hours were given over to assisting with the Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2013 in the second half of 2010. The plan was launched by the Minister on December 15th and forms the basis for quality childcare provision until 2014.

STCCC would recommend that whoever has responsibility at national level for realigning the HSE funding year, currently April to March, would do so and bring it into line with the normal accounting year, January to December. CCCs get our core funding in December, but have to wait until March of the following year to find out if the HSE are providing funding for our Childminding Advisory officer.

STCCC would also recommend to OMCYA and Pobal that they move to a common reference number system for childcare facilities. The current ECCE reference number should be able to identify a service regardless of the funding stream it is availing of.