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The Childcare Strategy 2007-2010 for North Tipperary

S U M M A R Y



north tipperary county
childcare
committee

Coiste Cúraí Leanaí Chontae Thír na nÓg Thuaidh



THE NORTH TIPPERARY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

The role of the North Tipperary County Childcare Committee (NTCCC) is to co-ordinate, support and assist the development of quality childcare services in North Tipperary.

The NTCCC Mission Statement for 2007-2010:

To lead the promotion and development of a range of childcare options in North Tipperary;

To work together with all stakeholders to increase the quality and quantity of childcare places based on identified need.

The NTCCC Vision:

A well supported and developed childcare provision in North Tipperary; improved quality childcare available and accessible to all.

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My Carer



WHAT IS THE NORTH TIPPERARY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE?

The North Tipperary County Childcare Committee (NTCCC) was established in 2001 along with 32 other Childcare Committees throughout the country as part of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000-2006. The EOCP is now succeeded by the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006-2010. The NCIP has key objectives to:

- Increase the supply and improve the quality of early childhood care and education services, part-time and full day care, school age childcare and childminding
- Support families to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage
- Support a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of childcare which is centred on the needs of the child.

The North Tipperary County Council supports the management of the NTCCC by employing the staff group, administering the budget and providing the necessary IT support to develop and maintain the NTCCC website. The NTCCC office is also located at the Civic Offices, Nenagh.



THE NTCCC STAFF & COMMITTEE

The current staff composition includes a Co-ordinator, two Development Workers and an Administrator.

The Committee members include representatives from a variety of statutory, community and voluntary groups including the following:

- Health Service Executive (HSE) West - Mid West Region
- North Tipperary County Council
- North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee
- FÁS
- Department of Social & Family Affairs
- Department of Education & Science
- National Voluntary Childcare Organisations
- Community Childcare Providers Representative
- Private Childcare Providers Representative
- National Voluntary Childcare Organisations
- Local Development Partnerships
- Trade Union Sector
- Farming Community
- Parents.



THE CHILDCARE STRATEGY 2007-2010

The 2007-2010 Strategy builds on the experience of the previous 2002-2006 Childcare Strategy for North Tipperary during which time considerable progress has been made in terms of promoting quality in childcare services and in supporting childcare providers to avail of training, information and funding.

Based on this experience and following an extensive consultation process in North Tipperary during 2006, the feedback from parents, agencies, Committee members and staff was brought together in planning the next strategic phase. A number of independent consultants were also commissioned to undertake an in-depth needs analysis that informed the strategy development process.

Pobal is a not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages the EOCP 2000-2006 and the NCIP 2006-2010 on behalf of the Irish Government. Within this context, Pobal devised an outline of the key objective areas that the City and County Childcare Committees should consider when developing their strategies.

The following sections present the 2007-2010 Childcare Strategy for North Tipperary under these objective areas.





Strategy Objectives



OBJECTIVE 1
Strengthen local capacity to establish and sustain childcare places and services.

Local childcare services will be assisted to apply for funding. Community based services will be supported particularly in rural areas.

OBJECTIVE 2
Promote quality standards.

Information on quality standards will be made available and the training of childcare providers will be supported. A public forum will be arranged to discuss quality, safety, inspections in childcare.

OBJECTIVE 3
Support services that target disadvantage and social inclusion.

The NTCCC will engage with groups and parents in areas of disadvantage and with those at risk of social exclusion on what is needed in terms of childcare. Parents will be supported to volunteer for community childcare activities.

OBJECTIVE 4
Develop co-ordination
at all levels.

The NTCCC will ensure greater representation from all groups in North Tipperary and will organise publicity campaigns to promote a better awareness of the NTCCC by the public.

OBJECTIVE 5
Devise a support
strategy for childcare
providers locally.

An information and training strategy will be developed to complement other information sources and training programmes for providers.

OBJECTIVE 6
The NTCCC will take a
proactive approach to
childcare development
in the NCIP application
process.

The NTCCC will identify areas of most need for childcare in North Tipperary and encourage these areas to apply for funding. Training will be organised for providers on writing funding proposals and on the NCIP application process.

OBJECTIVE 7

Promote initiatives to develop and support school-age childcare in North Tipperary.

Linkages with parents, teachers and school boards of management will be developed so that community based services can be explored particularly in school localities and childcare can become a greater priority for community leaders and local politicians.

OBJECTIVE 8

Advance early childhood care and education services for 3 to 4 year olds.

The NTCCC will support training events and networking for providers who care for 3-4 year olds.

OBJECTIVE 9

Promote initiatives for childminders including voluntary notifications to the HSE.

A public forum will be developed to discuss key aspects of quality standards in childminding settings; training and information targeting childminders will be provided.

OBJECTIVE 10

Strengthen childcare networks in the county.

A contact database and a discussion forum for providers will be established and networking will be promoted at all training events within and outside of North Tipperary.

OBJECTIVE 11
Identify training needs.

The NTCCC will engage regularly with childcare providers to identify training needs and will plan training events in different areas in response to these needs.

OBJECTIVE 12
Develop information sharing and learning systems.

The NTCCC will identify and explore best practice regarding information and learning systems in other agencies nationally and internationally.

OBJECTIVE 13
Attract resources from local, regional and national sources.

The NTCCC staff will promote childcare with influential agencies and they will seek to become representatives on other committees responsible for decision making.



IMPROVED CHILDCARE FOR NORTH TIPPERARY

It is anticipated that a number of outcomes will result from the Childcare Strategy 2007-2010 including:

- greater availability of quality and sustainable childcare services and places for all children;
- a wider choice of services for parents;
- better understanding of quality standards and the establishment of minimum core standards in all services;
- improved levels of qualifications and training of staff including childminders;
- improved networking between services particularly in rural/remote areas.

The success of the previous strategy was due primarily to the commitment of dedicated individuals and agencies who had a vision that childcare in North Tipperary could be improved so that children in the 21st Century would have better services and that parents would be more confident their children were safe and well cared for. It is on this foundation that the new Strategy for 2007-2010 begins.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- the parents, childcare providers and agencies in North Tipperary,
- the school children who participated in the art competition - some of their artwork is presented in this document,
- the national school principals and teachers who facilitated parents' surveys and the children's art competition,
- Dr Brendan O'Keeffe, NIRSA NUI Maynooth for the Spatial Analysis of North Tipperary,
- Mary O'Sullivan, the Irish Society for Quality & Safety in Healthcare who facilitated the preparation of the strategy.