



# Newsletter

If you have anything that you would like included in our next newsletter, please contact the Early Years Information Team by email at [eyiit@tusla.ie](mailto:eyiit@tusla.ie).

A Chara,

I am delighted to introduce this, the fourth issue of our newsletter. Since our last newsletter I have moved from the role of National Manager of the Early Years Inspectorate and commenced in the role of Service Director of Children’s Regulatory Function. I am privileged to have been the National Manager of the Early Years Inspectorate and while I am moving into a different role, the Early Years Inspectorate remains within my remit. I have enjoyed leading the on-going development and reform of the Early Years Inspectorate and am thankful for the support and cooperation I have received from the Inspectorate, our consultative forum and other stakeholder organisations. Grant Landon, formerly our Lead Inspection and Registration Manager, has undertaken the role of interim National Manager of the Early Years Inspectorate. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Grant well in his new role.

As many of you are aware the Early Years Inspectorate postponed the launch of the Quality and Regulatory Framework which was due to take place Monday the 18th of June 2018. This is currently being rescheduled and we look forward to it being launched by Minister Zappone. Revised dates will be available in the near future. This roll out will be supported by the publication of a suite of targeted aids and training options for providers to assist with its implementation.

In this edition of our newsletter, we present independent research carried out by our Early Years Inspector Deirdre Molloy entitled: “Taking account of the voice of the child within the regulatory inspection process of Early Years Services.” We also have a short piece on Amber Teething Jewellery to promote awareness of the safety concerns. We highlight the individual’s responsibility under the Children First Act 2015 and draw your attention to the First Aid Response (FAR) Certifications extension date of the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2020. In conclusion we provide an explanatory note on the Early Years Inspectorate Consultative Forum for the purpose of provid-

ing relevant representatives and stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to on-going reform and development of the Early Years Inspectorate.

I do hope this newsletter serves as a valuable resource to all those working in early years settings, and I ask that you share this with your colleagues. If you would like to receive our newsletter directly, you can sign up to our mailing list by contacting [eyiit@tusla.ie](mailto:eyiit@tusla.ie).

Together with previous editions, this newsletter is published on our website at: <http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-newsletter>. I again take this opportunity to acknowledge your commitment to children and their families and we look forward as always to positive on-going engagement with you.

Kind regards,

Fiona McDonnell

Service Director of Children’s Regulatory Function

Inside this issue:	
Intro	1
Consultative Forum	2-3
Amber Teething Jewelry	3
QRF Postponement	4
Offaly Preschool	4



## The Early Years' Inspectorate Consultative Forum

If you have an issue or matter you would like brought to the attention of the early years Inspectorate you can do this in a number of ways including through a representative on the early years inspectorate consultative forum.

### **What is the Consultative Forum?**

The Early Years Inspectorate established a Stakeholder Consultative Forum in 2015 for the purpose of providing opportunities for relevant representatives and stakeholders to contribute to the on-going reform and development of the Early Years Inspectorate.

The objectives of the Consultative Forum are:

- To provide advice, recommendations and input where appropriate that will support the functions and operations of the Early Years Inspectorate. It is important to highlight that decisions relating to practice, policy and protocols remain within Tusla governance.
- To develop and strengthen multiagency and multidisciplinary connections between statutory, voluntary and community agencies working within the early years sector.
- To facilitate the pooling of knowledge that is representative, relevant and reflective of policy direction, evidence based practice and current thinking with respect to the inspection and quality assurance mechanisms.
- To offer information, advice and input that supports the strategic direction of the Inspectorate.
- To support the development of a transparent, robust and quality assured Early Years' Inspectorate that ensures better outcomes for children.

### **Who are the members?**

Members of the Consultative Forum are drawn from a range of organisations including but not limited to:

- Early Years Inspectorate
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- National voluntary childcare organisations (Barnardos, Childminding Ireland, Early Childhood Ireland, Gaelscoileanna Teo, Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland)
- Childcare Committees Ireland
- Association of Childcare Professionals
- PLÉ Network (Early Education and Care)
- National Disability Authority

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The consultative forum members contacts are:

Name	Organisation	Email
Dharragh Hunt	National Disability Authority	dphunt@nda.ie
Heino Schonfeld	Barnardos	heino.schonfeld@barnardos.ie
Bernadette Orbinski Burke	Childminding Ireland	bburke@childminding.ie
Teresa Heeney	Early Childhood Ireland	theeney@earlychildhoodireland.ie
Paul Fay	DCYA	paul_fay@dcya.gov.ie
Aileen Healy	Tipperary Childcare Committee	aileenhealy@tccc.ie
Caroline Ní Chualáin	Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta	caroline@cnng.ie
Tara O'Leary	Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland	Tara.oleary@snmci.ie
Denise McCormilla	National Childhood Network	denisem@ncn.ie
Marian Quinn	Association Of Childhood Professionals (ACP)	info@acpireland.com
Clare Spáinneach	Gaelscoileanna Teo	clare@gaelscoileanna.ie

The terms of reference of the Forum are available on the Tusla Website, at [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/TOR\\_Consultative\\_Group.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/TOR_Consultative_Group.pdf)

## Safety – Did you know? Amber Teething Jewellery

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission considers amber teething products inherently unsafe and will take appropriate action to remove these products from sale. For more information see <https://www.ccpc.ie/consumers/product-safety/child-safety/amber-teething-jewellery/>

Amber beads are often sold as baby teething aids in the form of jewellery. Never use amber teething jewellery such as necklaces, bracelets and anklets as relief for babies who are teething. Amber teething jewellery products are unsafe for babies, and pose several serious risks:

- Amber teething necklaces, bracelets and anklets pose a potential choking/inhalation hazard to any child under three years of age.
- The jewellery normally contains many small amber beads which can come loose from the string and be swallowed or inhaled, which could cause choking.
- Even if the parts do not break off, amber necklaces, bracelets and anklets are small enough to be swallowed whole by a small child or baby.
- The amber beads used in this type of jewellery can very easily shatter into smaller parts which can lead to choking.

You should never put any kind of cord, string or chain jewellery around a baby's neck.

The HSE Child Safety Awareness Programme also has further information. See Child Safety - Amber Teething Necklaces, Bracelets and Anklets available at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/child/childsafety/teething-necklace.html>



## Postponement and Rescheduling of QRF Launch

As you know the launch of the Early Years Inspectorate's Quality and Regulatory Framework was due to be launched at a special event in the Law Society of Ireland on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018. Unfortunately, due to circumstances outside the Inspectorates control, this launch was postponed. The launch is currently being rescheduled and the Inspectorate will issue a revised date shortly. We look forward to welcoming you all at this revised event.

Following its formal launch, the roll-out of the QRF will be supported by a suite of targeted aids and training options for providers to assist with its implementation. The Inspectorate looks forward to welcoming you all at the rescheduled launch.

## Offaly Preschool Children Share their Views on their Preschool

By Deirdre Molloy, Early Years Inspector for Mid-Leinster

A recent study, entitled 'Taking account of the voice of the child within the regulatory inspection process of early years services' has addressed the views of children attending pre-school (Early Years) services. The study, which posed the question 'how could the child's voice be listened to in the regulatory inspection of early year's services?' was carried out by serving Early Years Inspector Deirdre Molloy, under the supervision of Dr. Sheila Garrity in support of a Masters of Arts qualification in Early Childhood Studies, NUI Galway. The study, which involved the participation thirty pre-school children, aged 3 to 5 years, was carried out in two privately operated early years' services in Co. Offaly.



The research proposed to capture and understand the experiences of preschool children through qualitative research, in consideration of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which promotes the consideration of the child's voice in matters that affect their lives. Utilising a multi-disciplinary method to capture their views, the researcher asked the young children directly what they liked or did not like about their preschools. The children were offered the opportunity to draw their thoughts and then describe their artistic expressions verbally. Thanks are gratefully offered to the children who participated and to the registered providers of Busy Bees, Ferbane, Co Offaly and Happy Hours, Tullamore for facilitating the study in their services.

This independent research serves to highlight the children's enjoyment of the outdoors, of the company of their friends, of engaging in play and of their specific preferences within play. The children's artistic and verbal expressions uncovered preferences for playing with the kitchen, dressing up, potting and planting and doing arts and crafts. The children also recognised the staff in the preschool as significant and important to them, holding positive views on their preschools with statements such as '*I like playing in preschool*' and '*I like playing with my friends*'.



The study has served to distinguish the importance of play as revealed through the conversations and artistic expression of the children. The study explored the possibility of eliciting children's views in a manner that could enhance the existing regulatory inspection process, by eliciting the preschool children's views on their preschool which they were willing to share given the right circumstances. This study found that further research is required, on a larger scale to explore this evolving area.