

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

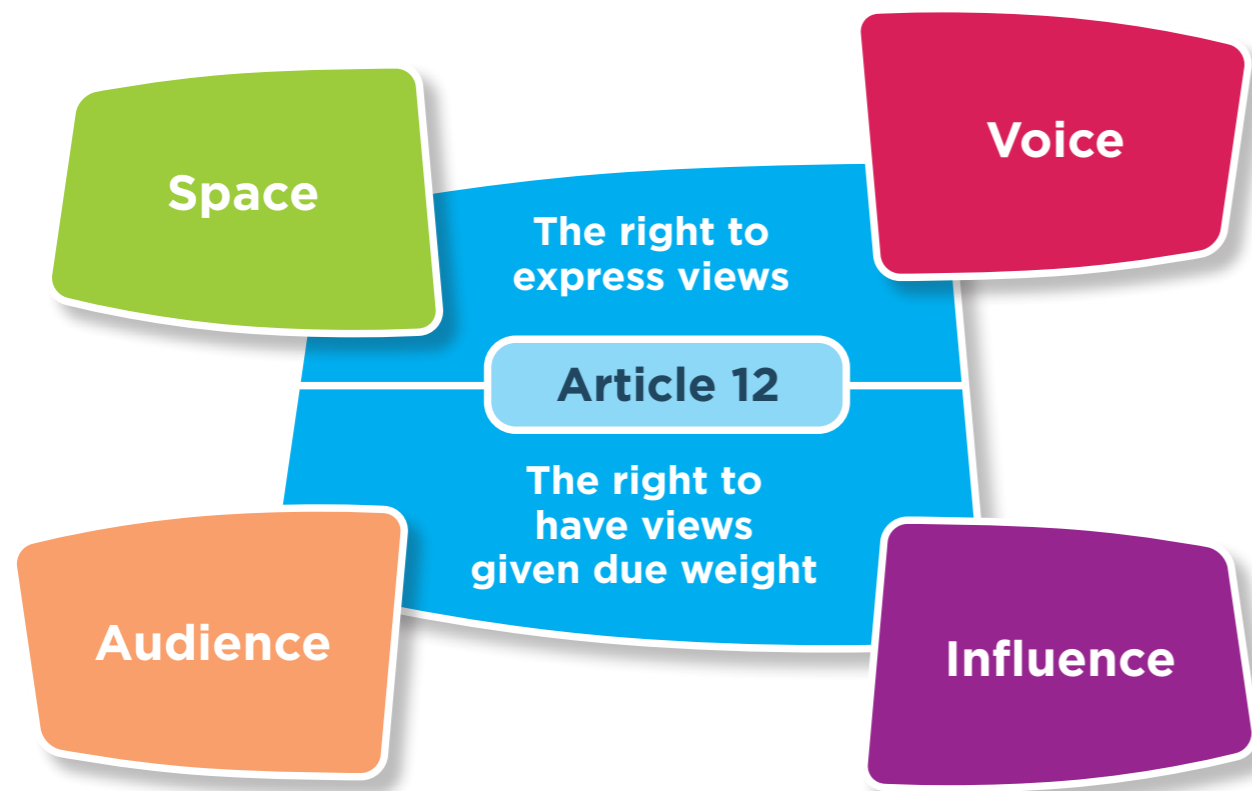


Parental
Participation
Initiatives
2023

Parental Participation

Under the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) programme, Tusla has been assisting areas in exploring and developing parental participatory practice initiatives since 2016.

Tusla has made funding available to support new initiatives that require funding to progress. Services and areas had the opportunity to submit one or several proposals endorsed by the relevant area manager. The Lundy Model of Participation (2007) was recommended for reference when completing the applications. This document contains brief descriptions of all the Parental Participation Seed Funding projects that were granted funding in 2023. Many of the projects included here can be easily replicated in other areas, and some may have resources available because of their work that can be shared with other areas/services. If you would like more information on any of the projects included, please contact your regional participation officer.



Lundy Model of Participation (2007)

Dublin Mid-Leinster

Dublin South East/Wicklow

Barnardo's - Purple Cocoon Drop in Service

The service completed a participatory consultation process with TLC Mums group to explore what issues or needs are arising for them within Dublin areas in relation to childhood violence & domestic abuse. A drop-in service was subsequently launched to provide a space for mums who have experienced domestic abuse to come and meet. Participants were provided with questionnaires at the beginning and end of their engagements, and provided with the space to express their views during the drop ins. All their views have been captured and provided to decision makers in Tusla, CYPSC (Children and Young People's Services Committee) & the TLC Steering Committee, with a hope to help further shape the service.

Foroige - Summer Programmes

During the initial consultations, parents discussed the opportunities that would be available to them from upskilling and the benefits towards future employment should they partake in such courses. It was explained to parents that their voice would be the influence for the WAY Project to support them in arranging opportunities for parents to upskill.

Parents discussed the benefit of a Family Day to strengthen the connection and communication with their children, get support from other parents and create happy memories together with their children.

Participants were provided with the opportunity gain accreditation as a nail technician and participate in a family day out for all families engaged in the project. Following on from this programme it is envisaged that participants will be supported to use their qualifications to gain employment or part-take in additional upskilling and strengthen their relationship with their children by utilising their new skills.

Dublin South Central

Archways - Little Humans Parent Training Initiative

Previous feedback from parents who engaged in this programme highlighted the benefits of encouraging parental participation in Little Humans Training in the future. The programme was provided again this year giving more parents/caregivers the opportunity to take part. Little Humans Parent Training encourages positive participation in all aspects of their child's care and education. The course provided a source of inspiration for parents/caregivers and a way to understand childhood development milestones and how to encourage the development of their children through fun and creative experiences.

Deansrath Family Centre - Fathers Group

The Fathers Group provides a parent led safe space for fathers to come together so they can help and support one another. Most of the fathers involved live away from their children and have difficulty navigating co-parenting of their children. There are over 10 fathers who now regularly attend meetings to support one another and provide insight into how they would like the group to operate.

It was noted that the children, in particular the young boys were excited and happy for their dads to be attending Deansrath Family Centre alongside themselves.

Different Dads have been acting as lead facilitator for the group over the term on subjects such as minding your mental health, managing your finances, art projects, overcoming addiction, family support etc.

The group has grown from strength to strength and looks forward to expanding into the future.

Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership - Hearing the Voice of Parents of young children in Ballyfermot

This initiative used the Lundy model to listen and consult with broad range of parents who have young children (aged between 0-6 years) in Ballyfermot. Consultations were held using a range of creative methodologies with a diverse range of parent focus groups such as: Traveller and ethnic minority parents, parents of children with disabilities, and unemployed parents. It was important to find out what parents in Ballyfermot would identify as areas of possible influence that they may have in relation to services that affect them and their children. The parents' views were all gathered throughout the various stages and will be shared with decision makers to support their influence over service provision and further supports that may become available.

Dublin South West/Kildare West Wicklow

Tusla - Appreciation Lunch for Foster Carers

An appreciation lunch was planned for foster carers who are in their positions for between 5-9 years in the DSWKWW area. The appreciation event was to acknowledge and value the ongoing commitment and work of our foster families in maintaining placements and supporting Children in Care.

Tusla, PPFS - Seomra Dunlavin

Seomra provides workshops and training events for parents to support them in key areas that have previously identified themselves. Weekly support groups for parents include; a mother toddler group and breastfeeding group. Opportunities were used to collaborate with other agencies and groups in the area and ensure on going supports for parents in the community. This included a book club and an arts & crafts group. This parent led group has been a big success over the past number of years and voices of these parents goes on to inform future practice within Seomra and wider Tusla service provision.

Midlands

CYPSC, HSE, FRC, In Sync, County Kildare LP & Kildare County Council - Engaging Dads Initiative

This collaborative multi agency group involved some fathers in the local community who came together to plan "Dad's Fest." This was an activity based indoor event where fathers could come together with their children and spend several hours engaged in various fun activities. The main aim of the event was to celebrate the role of fathers to ensure they could feel supported meeting other dads. 50 dads attended on the day with 75 children, who all provided feedback regarding activities and service provision in their community and identified the best ways to work with fathers in the future.

Offaly Traveller Movement - Supporting families who have young people with disabilities

This project provided a safe space for Traveller parents and carers to come together to explore the barriers they face when accessing disability services for their children. The aim of the project was to support Traveller parents with the most appropriate information and provide advice on accessing supports for their children in a culturally sensitive way. Traveller parents and carers identified the barriers and put a plan in place to address some of these which included facilitating workshops by local and national mental health and disability organisations. The group also discussed and agreed on creating and taking part in a culturally appropriate animative video to address other barriers identified.

Clara FRC - DIY Project

Following last year's successful "Bike Maintenance Initiative," parents requested further workshops that could be facilitated for parents and children to learn together. This year's workshops focused on home and car DIY skills helped to build parent/child relationships, as well as providing opportunity to learn important skills. Following the programmes implementation feedback was gathered from participants to explore further areas of need in their community.

Tullamore FRC - Interactive Play for Parents and Toddlers

Following consultations with parents, the need for interactive play opportunities in the area was identified. The FRC worked with families to identify sensory toys to support parent and child participation for children with additional needs. Activities such as "Zumbini" and "Ready Steady Play Music" for developmental play for parents were also provided. Parents have completed an evaluation of this activity, their child's participation, and their learning to help influence the service.

Parents First - A Sensory Development Initiative

Sensory development sessions were facilitated for parents with their children (0-2.5 yrs.). Parents were provided with opportunities to develop the skills to help their child to gain an understanding of the world around them by experiencing how things feel, taste, smell, look and sound. 27 parents engaged in this initiative, and all provided feedback, which was all extremely positive, their feedback will go on to influence how we provide similar services going into the future.

Longford FRC 'Supporting Parents - Impacting Positive Life Chances for Children'

This project provided supports to parents who have children experiencing school refusal. The service provided 3 small group workshops attended by 6 parents who shared a common challenge with their children refusing to go to school. Parents felt that they could support and learn from each other while being able to discuss the underpinning issues with professional guidance. Out of 10 families who had children refusing to attend school 9 are now attending fully and 1 is attending part of days from a base of not attending at all at the start of this initiative. Families report a deeper understanding of the factors influencing their children's behaviour. Families have addressed issues impacting their children's behaviour in the home resulting in positive change occurring. Young people involved in the project have reported less stress and increased tools to deal with anxieties and triggers that drive negative reactions to situations. A parents' forum was also established where parents experiencing similar challenges can come together to learn from each other and to have the benefit of peer support. The parents' forum was used to gather views of attendees for future learning.

Tusla - Encouraging Inclusive Communication

Recognising the diverse cohort of parents that Tusla engages with and demonstrating a commitment to communicating with parents in accessible ways. Tusla worked with families to design and print accessible information in a format that families can easily engage with, including plain English and translated information.



Dublin Northeast

Cavan/Monaghan

Parenting Cavan - Parents Matter in Cavan You talk We Listen

This initiative wanted to improve parenting support mechanisms and parents' skills throughout County Cavan. Several events were planned with parents and conducted throughout the county. These included family fun days and play weeks during which parents were asked; What is working well for parents in Cavan? What are the challenges for parents living in Cavan? Where do parents find out about supports available locally? The impact of the feedback captured from parents will inform future service provision in the area.

Parenting Monaghan - Parents Matter in Monaghan You talk We Listen

Parenting Monaghan engaged & identified the unique social and economic conditions of County Monaghan from a parental needs and support perspective. A plan of action was implemented to improve parenting and parenting support mechanisms throughout County Monaghan. A plan was developed in conjunction with parents to engage with all key community partners and as a result numerous events were planned with over 500 parents attending.

Dublin North

Empower - Prepare and cook meals using food from foodbank

This healthy food making course using the food pyramid helped families cook, create meal plans and plan food budgets. The work involved food preparation and cooking with groups and taking food packages home for cooking. The families had a cooking handbook to plan their meals. The initiative also helped families build self-resilience skills, to plan and eat healthy food.

The families involved were presented with certificates for their participation, the course facilitator mentioned that other families are interested in joining the sustainable initiative in 2024. The feedback parents mentioned was that they had gained new skills, a better understanding of food preparation, the food pyramid, developed new friendship. It is hoped they could share this new experience with their children and influence the service to roll out something similar in the future.

Barnardo's - Parental Participation Initiative in Fingal

This Barnardo's initiative designed, developed, and distributed parental questionnaires widely in Fingal. A researcher was appointed to conduct research with focus groups. The researcher engaged parents and it is envisaged that any emerging themes based on need will be added to a report to be presented to senior Prevention Partnership and Family Support staff that will influence service delivery and will feed into the CYPSC plan for 2023-2026 in the Fingal area.

The parents noted that their voices will influence delivery of services they feel they need in Fingal over the coming years.

Wellview FRC Mulhuddart - Parental Peer Support Network

The management of Wellview Family Resource Centre in Mulhuddart planned consultative sessions for parents. The focus of the sessions was on parents who had completed non-violent resistance parenting programmes and to set up parents' networks. The focus of the group was to discuss the topics covering NVR (Non-Violent Resistance) training, to explore the impact of NVR on families and whether a parent's support network could be established. The influence was that parents shared their voices on topics & themes that NVR training provided to them in their everyday experiences with their children.

Dublin North City

St. Helena's FRC Finglas & Tuath housing - Let's get involved a family response

Parents and children wanted to improve their local area. In conjunction with an artist, parents, children, and young people jointly decided to develop a mural that represents their area. In the initial stages of planning, a pre-evaluation of everyone's input and how they felt their voices were heard was conducted, this was followed by post evaluations. The mural they created enveloped the outer walls of St. Helenas FRC, spanning a corresponding laneway towards a local school. The mural tells the story of locals who live in Finglas which even shows the story of the local fox. The outcome for the participants was that they had improved the look and feel of their local area.

Treoir - Partnership support for Kinship Carers

Kinship carers have engaged in several surveys on entrance and exit regarding learning & support needs around topics such as grief, loss, bereavement, life story work, understanding trauma and attachment and what does kinship care mean. Other topic discussions included challenges; benefits & to identify where improvements can be made. Back to school-preparation, book packs in libraries for junior infants, Kinship Care Voices and a video will be produced. The outcomes for parents are that they will scale the supports they have been offered to establish whether they meet their needs across a range of presented topics.

Barnardo's & Finglas West FRC - Inclusion of LGBTQ+ young people parents and guardians

This initiative was a collaboration of professionals committed to actively achieving and creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ young people and their families living in Finglas. Throughout the summer of 2023 collaborative events were held with Dublin City Council, local Garda stations, FYRC (Finglas Youth Resource Centre) and Finglas West Family Resource Centre. The initiative increased LGBTQ+ visibility within the Finglas community. It also achieved input from young people and their parents on what they wanted in Finglas for pride month. And it provided Safe Pride celebrations within the Finglas community for young people and their families.

Daughters of Charity - Parental support and participation workshops

The focus of this initiative was parental support & participation, centred on needs based tailored workshops on healthy behaviours, positive play, early learning for first five babies. Workshops spread throughout the year gathered parent's views on numerous issues they were struggling on i.e., positive behaviour management, toileting, self-care, and healthy eating. The course facilitators helped parents understand child developmental goals, partake in mother tongue workshops, storytelling and puppets shows. Parents were encouraged to take part in "Healthy Food Made Easy" Workshops. Parents mentioned that the workshops have enabled influence of the learning to bring back into the family home.

Louth/Meath

Tusla - Louth Parent Hub Website

The website was created for parents as an easy access directory of services which will be geo-mapped and categorized for parents in County Louth, the website is operational and will be launched in December 2023.

The website has numerous easily accessed functions and a live calendar of service activity for County Louth containing parenting and other programmes. Parents from the Tusla parent pilot fora appraised the website and made suggestions that were changed. It was noted by parents that they felt listened to by the facilitator who created the website which now gives them and other parents a signpost for supports.



West

Donegal

Parent Support Workshops in Response to Creeslough Tragedy

Following the formation of an interagency working group a day of “Pampering & Parenting” took place in Masinass Hall, Creeslough, on September 28th 2023. Over 20 services attended with their stands and were provided opportunity to share with parents, information about their services. Over 40 local families were represented on the day, and feedback was received by organisers. Many families reported that they were not previously aware of some services and found the day extremely beneficial. On the day, there was a selection of free taster therapies and demonstrations from the team of therapists throughout the morning, and information stands showcasing the wide variety of both statutory & voluntary services and supports available to families in the area. Dr Caroline Burrow - clinical psychologist, gave an overview on resilience and resilience growth.

Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan

Tubbercurry FRC - New Communities Inclusion Worker & Supporting Implementation of SL Parenting Support Strategy

The Link Community Worker will continue their role, to engage with families from new communities who have been relocated to live in Tubbercurry and South Sligo. The worker is a point of contact for these newly arrived parents in South Sligo who will work with them to assess their needs, help build self-confidence and then when ready assist them to meet with other people and join appropriate groups and avail of services and training opportunities.

The Link worker also supports the implementation of the Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategy.

Sligo County Childcare Committee in Partnership with Tusla (PPFS) manages and implements programmes of parenting supports and activities.

Mayo

Tusla - Parental Information and Awareness Campaign

An 8-week pilot bespoke parenting course commenced on the 18/10/2023 for parents residing in accommodation centres in the Castlebar area. A total of 18 parents signed up, the programme continued until 13/12/2023 and then evaluated. The facilitator utilised a varied approach of decider skills; CSP skills; Circle of Security skills. This pilot initiative was very welcomed by the parents living in accommodation centres allowing them the space and influence to contribute to developing a parenting programme they can relate to.

Galway Roscommon

Esker House - Exploring the barriers for women & parents engaging with support services in County Roscommon

This initiative aimed to gather information from children, young people and adults who have experienced DVA in their lives and explore what are the barriers to engaging in appropriate service provision. The data is to be used to make necessary changes and inform future practice.

South Roscommon FRC - Lone Parents Towards Leadership

This project engaged parents in a programme to support them in building confidence, leadership skills and decision making, amongst many other areas. Following the programme participants are more confident in themselves and coming into the FRC. They have been empathetic to one another and a great support. They appreciate the opportunity afforded to them by taking part in the programme. They appreciate the space to talk about their experiences in the presence of others who have gone through the same thing and get support from the participants. Parents have voiced that they would like to continue to have this space into the future.

Tusla - Supporting participation of parents of neurodiverse children

This project engaged parents in a programme to support them in building confidence, leadership skills and decision making, amongst many other areas. Following the programme participants are more confident in themselves and coming into the FRC. They have been empathetic to one another and a great support. They appreciate the opportunity afforded to them by taking part in the programme. They appreciate the space to talk about their experiences in the presence of others who have gone through the same thing and get support from the participants. Parents have voiced that they would like to continue to have this space into the future.

Clare

Tusla - Building Connections; Hearing the lived experience of parents with mental health challenges

An independent researcher was commissioned to carry out work to better understand the needs of parents living with mental health challenges in Co. Clare in relation to their role as parents.

The aim was to hear the voice and lived experience of parents and document their needs. All information captured will be used to inform the next steps and the development of co-produced material that could be either event/programme/information alongside parents in the community.

Limerick

Croom FRC - Family Space Hub

Working with families, two spaces have been developed within the Family Resource Centre (FRC) where families can have access to things, they might need to make their time in the centre as comfortable as possible. The first space will require families to identify comfortable seating, kitchen appliances etc., while the second will be developed into a sensory room for children in those families. Families identified the need for these spaces to be available to them for workshops, Meitheal meetings, and spaces to enjoy company with peers.

North Tipperary

Silverarch FRC - Workshops for parents

This initiative was held in response to needs identified by parents and teachers across North Tipperary, who reported that school attendance issues and school refusal can occur because of young people who have difficulty in navigating social situations. The Family Resource Centre (FRC) hosted 4 x 1-day workshops for parents which were facilitated by experienced professionals working with young people. Guidance provided to parents on this issue and strategies on how to support their children in these situations. These workshops were completed parallel to separate work happening directly with children experiencing school refusal.

South

Carlow

Carlow Youth Service - Youth Participation Forum

This year Carlow youth service utilised funding to create an environment where young people's voices were heard in a collective way. A youth participation forum was set up. The aim of the forum was to support young people to affect change, if necessary, in their local youth service on a county wide basis through youth participation. The forum allowed for consultations with young people to ensure that they can have a genuine meaningful contribution into matters that are relevant to them.

Forward steps Family Resource Centre - Supporting Parents/guardians of children with additional needs

This year, work was undertaken to support parents of children with additional needs. In engaging with parents of children with additional needs through referrals from Tulsa, local schools, and the community it was shown there was a need for peer support. Workshops were carried out with parents targeting different behavioural issues in children. In conjunction with this, self-care projects were also provided with the aim of improving the wellbeing of the parents and carers and supporting them through parenting. These supports were well received by parents in the area.

Carlow Parents Hub and St. Catherines - Paediatric First Aid classes for parents

The aim of the Carlow Parent Hub is to meet the needs of parents in the area and offer support where necessary. Paediatric First Aid was identified as an area of need by parents through discussion during Parent Hub review meetings held with partner agencies at the end of 2022. With seed funding parents were offered a direct opportunity to engage in this training promoting and prioritising both parental support and education and children's health and safety.

Carlow Parents Hub and St. Catherines - Mental wellbeing training to enable staff to support parents

Mental wellbeing training for Hub and CFSN staff was funded this year, enabling them to support parents directly when parents present with circumstances around child mental health. This training lends itself to increasing parental empowerment when supporting children, going through difficult circumstances with mental health wellbeing.

Kilkenny

Newpark Close FRC - Paediatric First Aid classes for parents and Mental wellbeing training to enable staff to support parents

As with Carlow these needs were identified by parents in Kilkenny through the Kilkenny parents' hub. With seed funding, parents were offered a direct opportunity to engage in this training promoting and prioritising both parental support and education and children's health and safety.

Tipperary

Three Drives Family Resource Centre - ASD Parental Participatory Event

In response to an increase in referrals and the increased need of parents availing of the Family Support services in the resource centre, a two-hour workshop was provided to facilitate engagement of parents with the specialist autism support organisation 'As I Am.' An information seminar was held for the parents and the schools supporting both to understand and plan for the individual needs of children on different levels of the autism spectrum.

South Tipperary Parents Hub and Barnardo's - Paediatric First Aid classes for parents and Mental wellbeing training to enable staff to support parents

As with Carlow and Kilkenny these needs were identified by parents in Tipperary through the South Tipperary parents' hub. With seed funding parents were offered a direct opportunity to engage in this training promoting and prioritising both parental support and education and children's health and safety.

Father McGrath Centre - Kilkenny One Parent Community (KOPC)

The KOPC aims to amplify the voices and increase the visibility of one parent families in a positive and empowering way throughout Kilkenny. The KOPC aims to connect, support, and celebrate all single parents on their parenting journey. This year funding was used to provide programmes and activities all with the aim of raising the visibility and increasing the membership of KOPC. Participants had the opportunity to join a new social group that met every Friday over the summer. This provided a space for adolescents and their parents to engage in activities together, try new things and meet new people. The adolescent camps were a huge hit and many enquiries have been received for next year.

Cork

Barnardo's - TLC Kidz

Parental Participation seed funding has funded the running of this programme in Cork for many years with mothers and children in recovery from domestic violence. The increase in reported cases of domestic violence in Ireland currently make this a timely and much needed resource. The programme works with mothers and their children over a 12-week period, with both a parental and child group running concurrently, helping children to heal from the impact of abuse and mothers to understand their child's experience and support recovery. This year alone 19 children and young people engaged in the "Kidz" groups whilst 15 mothers were supported in the concurrent mothers group. In addition to this, 24 new facilitators were trained in the Cork area. Hopes are that next year access to the programme can be expanded in local areas across Cork.

Fostering social work team - Fostering appreciation event

This year to recognise the dedication, commitment, and work carried out by our foster carers who support the most vulnerable children in Cork an appreciation event was held. This provided an environment where foster parents can participate and engage with each other to share their experiences and where Tusla could demonstrate their appreciation for their work.

Kerry

PPFS - Researching the Needs of Parents in Kerry & the Development of a Parents Support Strategy

The Kerry CYPSC Parenting & Early Years Working Group worked to gather the views of parents of Children & Young People (0-24) in Kerry to inform the work of the committee and its 3-year Children & Young People's Plan as well as support the development of an interagency parenting & family support strategy for county Kerry. The final research report is currently being completed. Key actions will be identified for the Interagency Parenting & Family Support Strategy following this. The soon to be completed Research Report & Interagency Parenting & Family Support Strategy will be implemented by the group in 2024 and going forward. The research is very strong given the high level of participation by parents in Kerry and it will enable the development of a very effective Parenting Hub in Kerry.

Waterford/Wexford

PPFS - Traveller Parent Led Family Support

This year funding was used to continue work with traveller parents and organisations on family support needs in the area. The aim was to utilise the funding to build on existing support services. Two parent consultation workshops were held. Trainers were identified and trained from the traveller community to deliver Traveller parents plus programmes. Post delivery traveller parents were consulted again for feedback on the initiative.



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