



Provided by the author(s) and NUI Galway in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

Title	Parenting support and parental participation: Mapping parenting support in the Irish context
Author(s)	Connolly, Nuala; Devaney, Carmel; Crosse, Rosemary
Publication Date	2017-03
Publication Information	Connolly, N., Devaney, C. and Crosse, R. (2017) Parenting Support and Parental Participation: Mapping Parenting Support in the Irish Context. Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway.
Publisher	UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
Link to publisher's version	<a href="http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/media/unescochildandfamilyresearchcentre/dmpfilesmaster/2017_Mapping-Parenting-Support-final_digital.pdf">http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/media/unescochildandfamilyresearchcentre/dmpfilesmaster/2017_Mapping-Parenting-Support-final_digital.pdf</a>
Item record	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10379/6876">http://hdl.handle.net/10379/6876</a>

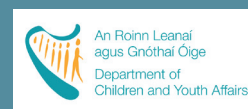
Downloaded 2018-10-21T19:34:09Z

Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.





*The*  
**ATLANTIC**  
*Philanthropies*



## Parenting Support and Parental Participation

### Mapping Parenting Support in the Irish Context

BY  
Dr Nuala Connolly, Dr Carmel Devaney and Dr Rosemary Crosse  
The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway

MARCH 2017

The authors of this report are:

**Dr Nuala Connolly, Dr Carmel Devaney and Dr Rosemary Crosse**

How to cite this report

Any citation of this report should use the following reference:

Connolly, N., Devaney, C., and Crosse, R., 2017 *Parenting support and Parental Participation: Mapping Parenting Support in the Irish Context*. The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank Carmen Kealy (UCFRC) and all stakeholders who participated in the interviews. We would also like to thank Morgan Mee (West Training) for his help with the FRC SPEAK Data.

ISBN: 978-1-905-861-33-0

Copyright © UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, 2017.

For further information, please contact:  
The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre,  
Institute for Lifecourse and Society,  
National University of Ireland,  
Galway  
Tel: +353 (091) 495398  
E-mail: [cfrc@nuigalway.ie](mailto:cfrc@nuigalway.ie)  
Web: [www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch](http://www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch)

*"The authors are responsible for the choice and presentation of views expressed in this Literature Review and for opinions expressed herein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organisation."*

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the copyright holder.*

*For rights of translation or reproduction, applications should be made to the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, Institute for Lifecourse and Society, Dangan, Upper Newcastle Road, National University of Ireland, Galway*

## **DISCLAIMER**

Although the Author and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information in this book was correct at press time, the author or publisher do not assume and hereby disclaim any liability to any party for any loss, damage or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident or any other cause.

# The Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention Partnership and Family Support



The research and evaluation team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway provides research, evaluation and technical support to the Tusla Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS). This is a new programme of action being undertaken by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency as part of its National Service Delivery Framework. The programme seeks to transform child and family services in Ireland by embedding prevention and early intervention into the culture and operation of Tusla. The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centres' work focuses on research and evaluation on the implementation and the outcomes of the Tusla Development and Mainstreaming Programme and is underpinned by the overarching research question:

... whether the organisational culture and practice at Tusla and its services are integrated, preventative, evidence informed and inclusive of children and parents and if so, is this contributing to improved outcomes for children and their families.

The research and evaluation study is underpinned by the Work Package approach. This has been adopted to deliver a comprehensive suite of research and evaluation activities involving sub-studies of the main areas within the Tusla Development and Mainstreaming Programme. The work packages are: Child and Family Support Networks and Meitheal, Children's Participation, Parenting Support and Participation, Public Awareness and Commissioning

**This publication is part of the Parenting Support and Parental Participation Work Package**

## About the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre

The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (UCFRC) is part of the Institute for Lifecourse and Society at the National University of Ireland. Founded in 2007, through support from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Health Services Executive, with a base in the School of Political Science and Sociology, the mission of the Centre is to help create the conditions for excellent policies, services and practices that improve the lives of children, youth and families through research, education and service development. The UCFRC has an extensive network of relationships and research collaborations internationally and is widely recognised for its core expertise in the areas of Family Support and Youth Development.

### Contact Details:

**Address:** UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, Institute for Lifecourse and Society, Upper Newcastle Road, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland

**Tel:** +353 91 495398

**Email:** [cfrc@nuigalway.ie](mailto:cfrc@nuigalway.ie)

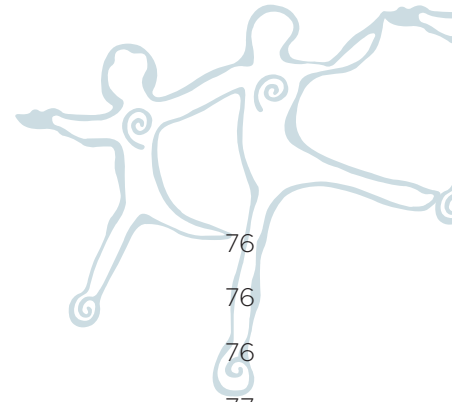
**Web:** [www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch](http://www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch)

**Twitter:** @UNESCO\_CFRC

**Facebook:** [cfrc.nuig](https://www.facebook.com/cfrc.nuig)

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Organisation of the Study	7
1.2 Design of the Study	7
<b>2. The Irish Policy Context</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3. Delivering Parenting Supports in Ireland</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Tusla, the Child and Family Agency	12
3.2 Tusla's Parenting Support Service Structure	13
3.2.1 Tusla Partnership Approach	14
3.3 Other Service Providers	15
3.3.1 The Health Service Executive (HSE)	15
3.3.2 Childcare and Early Education	16
3.3.3 Community and Voluntary Sector	17
3.3.4 Private Providers	19
<b>4. The Evidence Base</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 Programmes, Practice and What Works	20
4.2 The Evidence Base	21
<b>5. Profile of Selected Areas</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1 Longford/Westmeath Profile	34
5.1.1 Longford/Westmeath Parenting Support Profile	36
5.2 Dublin City South Profile	40
5.2.1 Dublin City South Parenting Support Profile	42
5.3 Limerick Profile	47
5.3.1 Limerick Parenting Support Profile	49
5.4 Kerry Profile	58
5.4.1 Kerry Parenting Support Profile	59
<b>6. Conclusion and Key Messages</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Stakeholder Scoping Interviews</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Family Resource Centre SPEAK data</b>	<b>75</b>
1. Programmed Parenting Courses	75
1.1 Strengthening Families Programme	76



1.2 Common Sense Parenting Programme	76
1.3 Community Mothers Programme	76
1.4 Incredible Years Programme	76
1.5 Parents Plus Programme	77
1.6 Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P)	77
1.7 Functional Family Therapy	78
1.8 Parent & Toddler Groups	78
1.9 Home-based Family Support Programmes	78
1.10 Other Groups	78
1.11 Parenting Information Initiatives	79
<b>Appendix 3: Levels of Evidence</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	
Table 1: Sources of Data	8
Table 2: Rationale for Areas Chosen	9
Table 3: The Evidence Base	23
Table 4: Longford Census Profile	34
Table 5: Westmeath Census Profile	35
Table 6: Longford/Westmeath Parenting Support Profile	36
Table 7: Dublin City South Census Profile	40
Table 8: Dublin City South Parenting Support Profile	42
Table 9: Limerick Demographic Profile	48
Table 10: Limerick Parenting Support Profile	50
Table 11: Kerry Demographic Profile	59
Table 12: Kerry Parenting Support Profile	60

# 1

## 1. Introduction

It is accepted that parents play a critical role in influencing their children's lives, before and after birth. Parenting can influence children's behavioural, emotional, physical and cognitive outcomes. Increasing government interest in parenting support as a policy issue (Broadhurst, 2009) has contributed to a range of stakeholder activity and engagement in the area, while the notion of parenting as a set of skills that can be learned is now widespread (Daly, 2011). In addition, there is an identified need to establish 'what works' in parenting support (Shulruf et al., 2009), resulting in considerable research, with evidence supporting a shift to an approach of progressive universalism, with services provided to all, but also tailored and targeted, considering a broader ecological approach (Rochford et al., 2014; Lucas, 2011).

The consensus that parenting support should be evidence-led has resulted in evaluation research and positive evidence-based outcomes for parenting support programmes. Such programmes have become well recognised as effective prevention and early intervention initiatives (Centre for Effective Services, 2012). Prevention and early intervention initiatives are seen to support today's children to become healthy, socially and economically engaged adults in the future (Centre for Effective Services, 2012: 15). Diverse modes of delivery across the lifecourse include population approaches, home visit programmes, group-based programmes, one-to-one support and family-based interventions. The common underlying principle is that of empowering parents to support the development of their children.

Services supporting parents may take many forms, ranging from 'universal support in informal settings for self-referring parents' through to 'specialist services to support families in particular situations, dealing with specific problems that may present at different times in the life-course of the child' (Devaney and Dolan, 2015). There is recognition of the need for differentiated parenting services to take account of the diversity of families, with a particular focus on the need for cultural relevance and cultural acceptability (Devaney and Kearns, 2010). Clavero (2001: 8) notes that in the broadest sense, parent supports can include maternity and parental leave schemes, public health care services, and childcare and early education programmes, but tend to focus on 'service-orientated policies aimed at assisting parents in their role as carers and educators of children'. For the purpose of their review of what works in parenting support, Moran et al. (2004: 6) took parenting support to include 'any intervention for parents or carers aimed at reducing risks and/or promoting protective factors for their children, in relation to their social, physical and emotional wellbeing'. As with other definitions, the focus was on parenting supports that are both targeted and universal.

It is clear that the experiences and circumstances of parents in Ireland vary considerably. While some families may require universal supports, others may have more complex needs and require more tailored interventions. Parents without immediate family and kinship support networks, such as many of those with migration backgrounds, may become even more vulnerable and at risk of poverty (Millar et al., 2012). It is identified that while flexible packages of parental support tailored to parents' needs can enable them to enhance their parenting skills, knowledge and familiarity with available services (Rochford et al., 2014), a targeted approach can directly support parents in a variety of contexts. This study provides a mapping of parenting support service provision in Ireland. It outlines the policy context, the existing evidence base and is informed by the best available data. It details the delivery of services in specific geographical

areas to provide additional insight, highlighting the similarities and diversity across areas in providing parenting support.



### 1.1 Organisation of the Study

The study has been organised into sections. The sections are introduced here:

- **The Irish Policy Context** explores parenting support as a policy imperative in an Irish context, including the government's agenda in relation to children's services, and the Child and Family Agency Act 2013.
- **Delivering Parenting Supports in Ireland** looks at the structure and coordination of parenting supports in Ireland, including Tusla's approach and activities in parenting support, in addition to the work of other service providers.
- **Programmes and Levels of Evidence** presents a brief description of the evidence available – including evaluations and the rationale behind what is evaluated and why – and the implications of this.
- **Profiles of Selected Areas** includes Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) area profiles of parenting support services, including direct and indirect supports. The provider of the service, the nature of the service, Hardiker<sup>1</sup> level of the service and lifecourse stages are outlined. Profiles are based on the best available data and are not intended as exhaustive. The Profile for each area includes a demographic overview.

### 1.2 Design of the Study

The approach to this study is documentary analysis, drawing on the best available secondary data from a variety of sources. This has allowed for a concentration on analysis and presentation (Robson, 2002). The strategy for searching, retrieving and selecting data was multi-layered. Initially, a number of scoping exercises in the form of informal meetings and conversations with a range of service providers were undertaken to map the landscape and identify available data sources. Simultaneously, a complementary literature review on parental participation was undertaken (Connolly, 2015), informing the study formatively. From this, a plan was prepared, outlining the sources of data and structure of the report. Identified data sources included:

<sup>1</sup>The Hardiker model is a widely used planning framework outlining four levels of intervention (Hardiker, 1991).



Table 1: Sources of Data

Source	Description
Children and Young People's Services Committees Audits of Services & Plans	CYPSCs are a key structure identified by government to plan and coordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. CYPSC plans and service audits, where available, provide area-level detail on parenting support services. CYPSC coordinators were contacted individually, provided with a copy of the plan and asked to share their most up-to-date plans and service audits.
Family Resource Centre Data	The Family Resource Centre <sup>2</sup> data reporting system SPEAK provides national and local-level data on programmes offered by the FRCs. Scoping exercises were undertaken including contacting and liaising with SPEAK and FRC stakeholders (Appendix 1), to retrieve the relevant data.
Tusla Reports, Documents & Materials	Tusla documents and materials relating to parenting strategy, information, support and resources contributed to data for this activity.
Academic Literature	The academic literature on parenting support has contributed to context setting and also building the evidence base for the mapping study.
Web sites, Web pages and Web-based documents	Web searches were utilised to identify, clarify and verify content. All were subject to scrutiny to discern that material was authoritative, timely and reliable.

The policy context explores parenting support as a policy imperative in an Irish context, drawing on related web-based and academic materials. This mapping of the landscape provides insight into where and how decisions were made and provides an historical context for recent policy developments. It is followed by a description of current parenting support structures in Ireland, again drawing on a range of web-based, print and academic literature. This is complemented by a literature review on parenting support, with key messages incorporated into this study where appropriate.

This review of the literature also contributed to building the evidence base for the Irish context and identifying the levels of evidence available. The evidence base provides insight into the range of studies undertaken on programmes to support parenting, the outcomes and impact of those studies. Evaluation research is concerned with the evaluation of programmes or interventions and, as such, explores whether the intervention has achieved its anticipated goals (Bryman, 2012). In this sense, a focused mapping of the evidence base provides insight into what is happening presently on an all-island level, and what works.

The case study approach to profiling activity in a small number of areas provides additional insight, highlighting the similarities and diversity across areas providing parenting support. This case study approach involves concentration on a small number of cases in their own right, context and setting. Multiple cases can build upon the first case, or seek to complement it (Robson, 2002). In this instance, the areas selected followed a rationale. While complementarity was important, diversity is key to ensuring the sample is representative. The sample and rationale for the sample is provided here:

<sup>2</sup> The FRC programme is Ireland's largest family support programme, delivering universal services to families in disadvantaged areas across the country through its established network of 106 centres nationwide (Family Support Agency, 2013b).

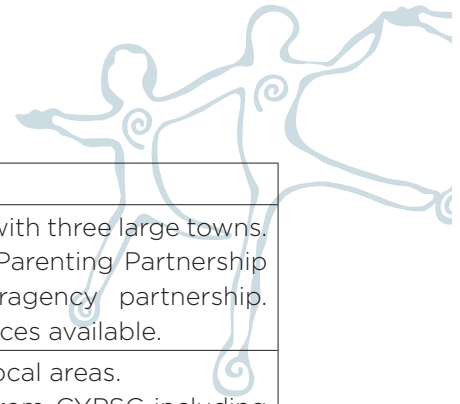


Table 2: Rationale for Areas Chosen

Area	Rationale
Longford/ Westmeath	Combined urban/rural area with three large towns. The Longford/ Westmeath Parenting Partnership (LWPP) is a notable interagency partnership. Recent CYPSC audit of services available.
Dublin City South	Urban area, comprising six local areas. Access to a range of data from CYPSC including deprivation mapping and a directory of services.
Limerick	The Limerick City Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) was established as one of the four pilot CYPSC in 2007. Limerick Assessment of Need System (LANS) project informed the development of Meitheal and Local Area Pathways (LAPs). Both of which are core elements of the Tusla National Service Delivery Framework (NSDF). Parenting and Family Support is one of the priority areas of Limerick CYPSC.
Kerry	Longer-established CYPSC, 2010. Working groups include parenting and family learning. Established research and data available.

To ensure accuracy of information pertaining to the services available in each of the four chosen as areas outlined in table 2, feedback was sought from the relevant CYPSC coordinators. All feedback given at the draft stage of this report is included in this final version.

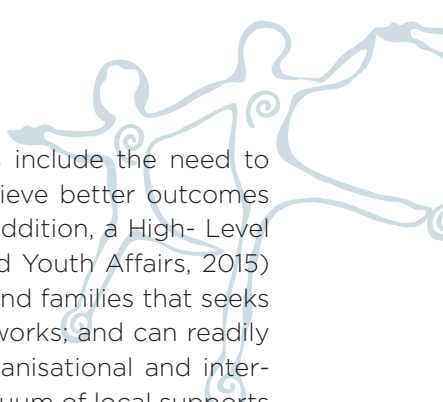
# 2

## 2. The Irish Policy Context

In Ireland, child and family welfare is the responsibility of various ministerial bodies. It is covered by a broad range of strategies, action plans and policies. Since the 1990s, family policy in Ireland has become a policy imperative. In 1998, *Strengthening Families for Life: The Final Report of the Commission on the Family* (Commission on the Family, 1998) recommended a public policy focus on preventive and support measures to strengthen families in carrying out their functions to prevent difficulty. This included provisions for parents, through the development of family support services, including a range of information provision and supports for parents, in addition to an emphasis on collaboration with parents.

In 2000, a ten-year plan was published as a blueprint for improving the lives of children. The *National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives* had three main goals, including that children would have a voice in matters that affect them; that their lives would be better understood and benefit from evaluation and research; and that they would receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development. It is identified as a statement of support to parents, emphasising the 'whole child' perspective and the need to provide appropriate supports to parents. In 2001, the *Family Support Agency Act* emphasised the need to promote information about issues, including parenting. In 2004, the *Family Support in Ireland Definition and Strategic Intent* paper by Pinkerton et al (2004) focused on the strategic implementation of family support as a policy choice. The establishment of the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) within the Department of Health and Children in 2005 was an expression of the government's wish to advance an agenda on children's services, implementing in part the *National Children's Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2007). The *Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook* (Department of Health and Children, 2007) focused on a new way of working with children, their families and their communities, designed as a working tool with reflective elements. Here, the role of family support in preventive services was advocated, with services using prevention and promotion as a model of best practice, as opposed to treatment.

The shift towards a family support approach emphasises a preventive model as opposed to a more treatment- or crisis-intervention-oriented approach. In 2011, the first Minister for Children and Youth Affairs was appointed in Ireland, and a new Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DYCA) established, cementing child welfare as a policy imperative. The work of the Department focuses on key areas of policy and provision for children, young people and families. The remit of the DYCA includes Tusla, the Child and Family Agency; the Adoption Authority of Ireland; and the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. The DCYA commits to a range of activities, including the provision of universal and targeted services for children and families; high-quality arrangements for focused interventions for dealing with child welfare and protection, family support, adoption, school attendance and the reduction of youth crime; and the harmonisation of policy and provision across government and with related providers. *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People* was published in 2014 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014), setting out the government's key commitments to children and young people up to the age of 24. It highlights the importance of parents in a child's life and the benefits of positive parenting, while promoting better support for parents as a priority. The priority will be delivered through commitments made to increase the provision of supports to all parents 'through universal access to good-quality parenting advice and programmes, and access to affordable quality childcare, as well as targeted, evidence-based supports to those parents with greatest needs' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014).



The DCYA also commits to advancing parenting support. High-level objectives include the need to develop, strengthen and align policies, legislation and resources in order to achieve better outcomes for children and young people and provide support for parents and families. In addition, a High- Level Policy Statement on Parenting and Family Support (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015) was formulated, envisaging the development of a system of supporting parents and families that seeks to build on family strengths, wherever possible, and values informal support networks; and can readily deliver supports to children and their families based on inter-agency, cross-organisational and inter-disciplinary working. The Statement promotes the availability of a coherent continuum of local supports to all parents and families which can be accessed easily and in a timely way. It supports the shift of 'Parenting and Family Support' to greatest prominence in Tusla's discharge of its statutory child welfare and protection responsibilities. While the policy framework acknowledges that the majority of families have the capacity to cope with challenges that arise, it emphasises that some families need more help than others. The approach is proactive, preventive, and based on evidence, with parents, children and young people as key actors in the process. The Statement supports Tusla's National Service Delivery Framework (NSDF) and the Meitheal model. In addition, the Statement underlines the significance of the Children and Young Person's Services Committees as a key forum for engagement between providers. Throughout, interagency working and working in partnership with community and voluntary providers is highlighted as important to the policy framework (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015).

# 3

## 3. Delivering Parenting Supports in Ireland

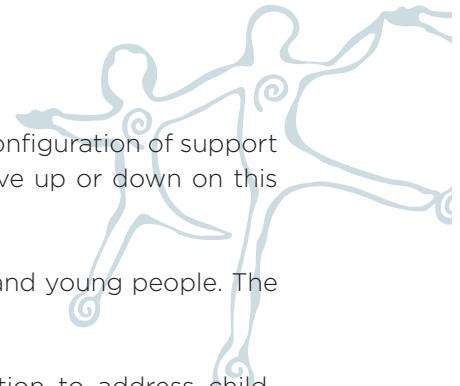
The delivery of parenting supports in an Irish context has traditionally been non-integrated and provided by a range of different agencies, statutory, voluntary and community, serving a range of different population groups. While the role of State services has been increasing, voluntary organisations play an important role in service provision (Clavero, 2001). Supports for parents are funded in a number of ways. Services may be provided at a statutory level by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. Alternatively, Tusla also provides funding through service-level agreements and grant aid agreements to non-statutory services, including community and voluntary agencies. This funding covers a broad range of parenting support services, delivered at national and local levels. In addition, services may be funded by charitable organisations or funded privately. The Department of Education and the Department of Health through the Health Service Executive also provide parenting support services.

Services can support parents directly or indirectly towards better outcomes for their families. Direct supports for parents include actions aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities. These include support to meet particular needs (lone parents, minority parents, teenage parents, parents with a disability) and support for particular parenting relationships (foster parents, separated/divorced parents). Indirect supports for parents include actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.

### **3.1 Tusla, the Child and Family Agency**

The Child and Family Agency Act 2013 has charged Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, with a range of responsibilities for supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families. Tusla's strategy is part of an overall mission to improve outcomes for children and young people in Ireland (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014), ensuring that appropriate and accessible supports and services are available to parents within their community. Tusla's strategy is focused on children and young people up to age 17, reflecting the statutory remit of the Agency (Family Support Agency, 2013b). Tusla's Medium-Term Outcomes and Long-Term Outcomes support enhanced child and family well-being and improved outcomes for children and parents, based on a core commitment to prevention and early intervention.

Tusla's Parenting Support Strategy (Gillen et al., 2013) sets the strategic direction of the Child and Family Agency in its role in supporting parents to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Strategy emphasises the development of a National Service Delivery Framework (NSDF) and Child and Family Support Networks (CFSNs) as an important opportunity to mainstream parenting support. The Strategy emphasises a continuum of support, from universal support, to targeted and specialist services applying a progressive universalist approach: 'In the case of Tusla, parenting and family support is a constituent element in all aspects of its work, including social work activity, early years, community-based youth work, foster care, residential care, special care, Family Resource Centre programmes, educational welfare and school support services, and local services to women in situations of domestic abuse' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015: 8). This can be as simple as signposting to services and information, or alternatively providing more intensive support. Parenting support is understood as being consistent with the style of work in the family support approach, potentially formal, semi-formal or informal. The principle is of minimum intervention and is driven by the needs of the family (Gillen et al., 2013).



The Strategy identifies the Hardiker model (1991) as helpful for reflecting on the configuration of support services. The focus is on services delivered at a level of need. Families may move up or down on this continuum. The levels are identified as follows:

4. Alternative care, where the Agency provides alternative care for children and young people. The need for parenting support is most acute at this point.
3. Supervised parenting, where the Agency carries out its statutory function to address child-protection concerns.
2. 'Top-up' parenting support for families with additional needs - secondary prevention and early intervention.
1. Preventive support to all parents at a universal level (Gillen et al., 2013).

Parenting support is also considered across the lifecourse, from preparing for and becoming a parent; birth to 5 years; 6-12 years; and 13-17 years. The lifecourse and whole child/whole system approach encourages partnership and is underpinned by five national outcomes (Family Support Agency, 2013b): that the child is healthy, both physically and mentally; supported in active learning; safe from accidental and intentional harm, and secure in the immediate and wider physical environment; economically secure; and part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community, and included and participating in society. It is also acknowledged that parents in different contexts may need more support across the lifecourse.

### **3.2 Tusla's Parenting Support Service Structure**

Tusla's activities in parenting are direct, indirect and broad-ranging, from the provision of information to parents, to the provision of services, the promotion of parental participation and the development of a parenting support champion network. Activities support parents in all contexts and across the lifecourse. While some activities are ongoing, others are currently in development. Tusla's core and direct activities in parenting include the provision of parenting information. This ranges from the provision of information flyers and brochures through family support services to support information on the Tusla website. Examples include resources and booklets on different aspects of parenting and the delivery of key messages in parenting. Parenting Positively booklets cover a range of parenting issues, including coping with death, domestic abuse, and separation. They are provided for both parents and children. In addition, a collection of booklets for parents of teens cover teenage well-being, parental separation, bereavement, domestic abuse, and parental alcohol or drug use. Parenting24seven promotes 31 key messages about what is important in parenting across the lifecourse. Seven messages are general to children of all ages, with the remainder specific to different stages of the lifecourse (Child and Family Agency, 2015d). The messages are part of a larger collection of 50 messages. The remaining 19 are related to parenting in different contexts, including lone parenting, parenting of children with additional needs, and parenting where there is a drug or alcohol problem. Tusla's activities in parenting also include the promotion and practice of parental participation, including the development of a Parental Participation Toolkit and training briefings. Tusla will also undertake to establish a Parenting Support Champion Network and a Parenting Learning Community with existing staff from Tusla and partner organisations.

In addition, Tusla provides support for parents as part of its statutory function in a number of ways. Parents are invited to child protection case conferences and family welfare conferences (FWCs). The FWC model of relationship-based practice emphasises the value of the relationship that is established and developed between the FWC coordinator and the family members, the decision-making methods

engaged in by families, and the participatory process (Devaney and Byrne, 2015). More recently, Meitheal has been introduced as a national practice model and standardised approach to assessing the needs of children and families that have come to the attention of practitioners and community members because of a child welfare or safety concern (Child and Family Agency, 2015c). As a way of working, it will be used when a family will benefit from more than one type of support. It will be used to deliver parenting support, drawing on services available at a local level. Tusla also has a statutory responsibility to provide Alternative Care services, including foster care, higher support, special care, residential care and aftercare services.

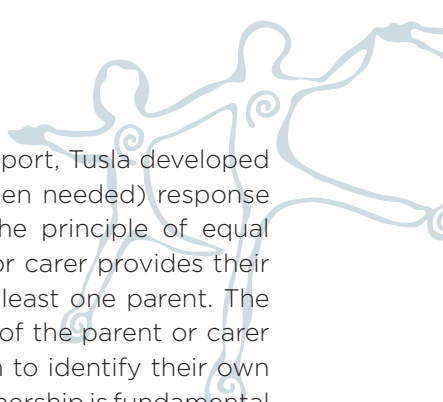
Tusla's remit also includes a range of additional services which may provide additional direct or indirect supports to parents. Tusla's Educational Welfare Officers under the remit of the Educational Welfare Services work nationally with parents and young people in relation to school attendance. While prevention and early intervention is the focus of much of this work, attention is also given to those who are experiencing difficulty with school attendance. In addition, the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) is available in designated Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) areas, with four hundred full-time HSCL coordinators delivering the scheme in five hundred and twenty eight schools nationally. All HSCL work involves the identification of and response to needs, through a set of interventions, in school, home and community, which are evidence based. Tusla also provides supports for home education and education outside recognised schools. Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services are provided by Tusla to individuals in need. Information and support is available on domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, adult survivors of child abuse, crisis accommodation and refuges, and empowerment and women's rights (Child and Family Agency, 2015a).

Tusla also supports 108 communities through the Agency's Family Resource Centre (FRC) programmes. This includes a network of 106 centres nationwide and two outreach centres. The FRC programme delivers universal services to families in disadvantaged areas across the country based on a lifecycle approach. The work is delivered in the context of the Strategic Framework for Family Support (Family Support Agency, 2013b). Inclusive working with individuals, families and communities, along with partnership working between voluntary and statutory agencies, is crucial to the needs-led response approach. The work of the FRCs is both universal and targeted. It ranges from providing information, advice, support and referrals, to delivering education courses (including parenting programmes) and training opportunities, and establishing and maintaining community groups. These may include childcare facilities, after-school clubs and men's groups. Tusla also provides funding through service agreements to non-statutory services, including community and voluntary agencies. This funding covers a broad range of parenting support services, delivered at national and local levels.

### **3.2.1 Tusla Partnership Approach**

Working in partnership is a fundamental aspect of Tusla's strategic and practice approach. Tusla works in partnership with children, young people, families, communities, child and family practitioners and other agencies in the statutory, community and voluntary sector to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Tusla's vision of parenting support going forward maintains that "the Agency must work in partnership with all stakeholders, particularly parents, in relation to the development, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of parenting support services"(Gillen et al, 2013: 16). At the core of the recent High Level Policy Statement on Parenting Support are a number of messages, including 'partnership with children and their parents'. The Statement realises a commitment of Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014), while also flowing from a remit given to Tusla under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (Connolly and Devaney, 2016).





As part of a programme of work involving prevention, partnership and family support, Tusla developed Meitheal – A National Practice Model as an early intervention, multi-agency (when needed) response tailored to the needs of the individual child or young person. Grounded in the principle of equal partnership, Meitheal is voluntary and can only be undertaken when the parent or carer provides their written consent. Convening the meeting is dependent on the involvement of at least one parent. The participatory/partnership approach of the Meitheal process privileges the voices of the parent or carer and child, recognising them as experts in their own situations and assisting them to identify their own needs and ways of meeting them (Child and Family Agency, 2015c). In addition, partnership is fundamental to the delivery of a number of parenting programmes throughout the state for example, Tusla, together with the HSE and a number of voluntary and community sector organisations collaborate to deliver the multi-level universal access parenting programme Triple P to parents with children 15 years of age and younger across Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly. This is an example of a coordinated partnership approach to parenting support. In excess of 18,000 training places have been availed of to date.

A commitment to partnership practice has underpinned all Irish child care policy and legislation, since the Child Care Act (1991) and a central component of Tusla’s mandate is to realise such commitment by embedding a partnership based approach to working with all stakeholders at both a strategic and practice level.

### **3.3 Other Service Providers**

In addition to Tusla, a range of public, private, community and voluntary service providers deliver parent support services in Ireland. These range from dental and paediatric health services to physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. A number are particularly relevant to the parenting context. These include crisis pregnancy services, maternity services, public health nurses, mental health services, childminding, crèches, parenting courses and parenting information. In addition, a number of websites provide information, advice and signposting for parents.

#### **3.3.1 The Health Service Executive (HSE)**

##### *Crisis Pregnancy Programme*

The HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme is the national programme charged with a national strategy to address crisis pregnancy in Ireland. Its aim is to reduce the number of crisis pregnancies in Ireland. While the programme does not provide direct services to the public, it provides funding and training to medical, counselling and crisis-pregnancy support services (Health Service Executive, 2015a). The programme also created the Positive Options brand to promote the State-funded services. The aim of Positive Options is to ‘make women aware of the existence of a range of high-quality, State-funded, crisis pregnancy counselling services that can assist them in finding a resolution to a crisis pregnancy’. While abortion is illegal in Ireland, except where there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the mother, it is permissible for crisis pregnancy counsellors to discuss abortion and provide information about services outside of Ireland (Positive Options, 2015). The HSE and Crisis Pregnancy Programme also funds Treoir, the national federation of services for unmarried parents and their children. Treoir promotes the rights of unmarried parents by providing specialist information, raising awareness on issues affecting unmarried parents, and campaigning for change (Treoir, 2015).

##### *Public Health Nurses*

Public health nurses employed by the HSE provide a range of health care services in the community, covering specific geographic areas. As part of their role they visit newborn infants and their mothers in their homes within six weeks of birth. Home visits continue during the preschool period. The public health



nurse provides advice and guidance on food and diet, including breast feeding, bottle feeding, weaning and immunisations. The school nurse visits all schools and carries out vision and hearing screening for all primary-school-going children (Health Service Executive, 2015d).

#### *General Practitioners*

In Ireland, approximately 2500 General Practitioners (GPs) provide a range of services to patients in practices, primary care centres and health centres. Their role is central to the health care system, with GPs often being the first point of contact for medical advice in the community. GPs may provide treatment or referral to hospital appointments. Most GPs are private practitioners but will additionally provide services to people with medical cards and GP visit cards. GPs may provide home visits to pregnant women through the HSE Maternity and Infant Care Scheme (Health Service Executive, 2015c).

#### *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services*

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are community teams providing free specialist services for young people up to 18 years old with serious emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. Such mental health difficulties include anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, bereavement, relationship difficulties and school-related problems. Children and young people are referred by a health professional, often a GP. Referrals may also come from public health nurses, social workers, speech and language therapists or educational psychologists. The team is made up of health professionals including a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, registrar, clinical psychologist, clinical nurse specialist, social worker, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and administrative staff (Reach Out, 2015). The HSE Annual Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, 2014) found that 2,541 children were on waiting lists, a 24% increase on the previous year. In addition, 28% of teams had a waiting list of more than 50 clients. The Children's Mental Health Coalition has identified the need for more resources to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Children's Mental Health Coalition, 2015).

#### *Early Intervention Teams*

The Early Intervention Team is for children aged 0–6 years with complex developmental needs, and for their families. The team typically comprises different professionals, including an occupational therapist, clinical psychologist, physiotherapist, social worker, and speech and language therapist. While not all professionals will be represented on each team, each team works together with the family (Health Service Executive, 2015b).

### **3.3.2 Childcare and Early Education**

A range of childcare and early-education options are available in Ireland. These include full and sessional day care, childminding services, au pairs and affordable childcare options for lower-income families.

#### *Day Care Services*

Full day-care services such as nurseries and crèches provide care for children from three months to six years. Standards in such settings must meet criteria set out by the Child and Family Agency (Citizens Information, 2015). Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is responsible for inspecting pre-schools, playgroups, nurseries, crèches, day-care and similar services that cater for children aged 0–6, under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 (Child and Family Agency, 2015b). Sessional services include parent and toddler groups, Naíonraí, Montessori groups and playschools. Such services

offer planned programmes of a number of hours, catering for children aged 2-6 (Citizens Information, 2015). Sessional care is also provided to school-age children. This can take the form of breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs and summer camps (Devaney and Dolan, 2015).

#### *Childminding Services*

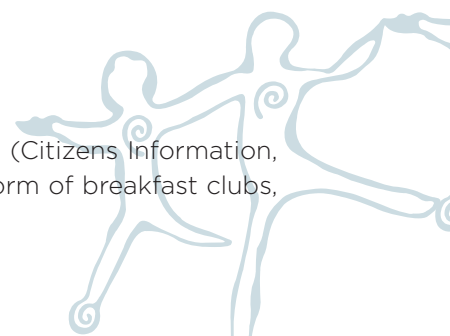
A childminder can care for up to five children, in the childminder's home. They typically care for children at the arrangements of their parents. Childminders in Ireland are required to notify the HSE and be inspected if minding four or more non-related preschool children for a total of more than two hours per day. Childminders are also typically insured, and many are registered with Childminding Ireland, 'the national organisation promoting and supporting quality family home-based childcare and assisting parents in finding it' (Childminding Ireland, 2015). Au pairs are usually employed as a result of an arrangement between host families and foreign students. Au pairs are not professional childminders and not subject to regulation.

#### *Affordable Childcare*

In budget 2017 The Affordable Childcare Scheme (ACS) was introduced. The ACS is a new national scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of their childcare, to replace all targeted childcare subsidisation schemes with a single, streamlined and more user-friendly scheme. The new scheme will provide a system from which both universal and targeted subsidies can be provided towards the cost of childcare. In the case of targeted subsidies, these are payable for children from 6 months of age up to 15 years of age. The level of subsidy will depend on the investment available and on a family's income. Budget 2017 enabled a universal subsidy to be payable for children between the ages of 6 and 36 months (or until the child qualifies for the free pre-school programme if later) who are availing of childcare by a Tusla registered childcare service. The universal subsidy is not means-tested and is available for families at any income level. The new ACS does not replace the current Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme which provides early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age. Children are eligible for the ECCE scheme if they are aged over 3 years and not older than 5 and a half years. The ACS is intended to provide "wraparound care for pre-school and school-age children (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017)." In addition to these schemes there is The Early Start Programme which is a preventive intervention scheme that runs for one year and is offered in designated disadvantaged areas to three and four year-old children (Department of Education and Skills, 2015).

### **3.3.3 Community and Voluntary Sector**

The community and voluntary sector in Ireland provides considerable support for parents at a national and local level. The delivery of supports may have a national remit or be based on the demands of a particular local area. The organisations may be fully or part-funded by Tusla through service agreements, by other organisations (e.g., Pobal), by donations and fundraising, or by a combination of these. Specific details on the range of services will be captured in the area profiles. A number of service providers operating at a national level are described here.



### *Anamcara*

Anamcara is a national organisation providing support to parents after bereavement. Its holistic, all-inclusive and universal approach (Anamcara, 2013) provides support through online and face-to-face peer support services, information and signposting. The service is aimed at any parent or family who have experienced the death of a child, across all communities in Ireland. Services include parent evenings, bereavement information evenings, social and remembrance events, creative events, an information line and a lending library. Anamcara worked with 5,350 parents from 2008 to 2013 (Anamcara, 2013).

### *Barnardos*

Barnardos is a children's charity, working with vulnerable children and their families in Ireland (Barnardos, 2015a). Established in 1962, Barnardos provides services in 40 centres across Ireland. It works directly with children and families, and provides a range of resources for parents of teenagers and young children to help them support their child through difficult times and to support their positive development (Barnardos, 2015a). This work includes the provision of training courses for parents, and a database of parenting courses available in Ireland. In addition, Barnardos provides a range of publications on parenting skills and child development and a range of ebooks for parents to support educational development (Barnardos, 2015b).

### *Cuidiú*

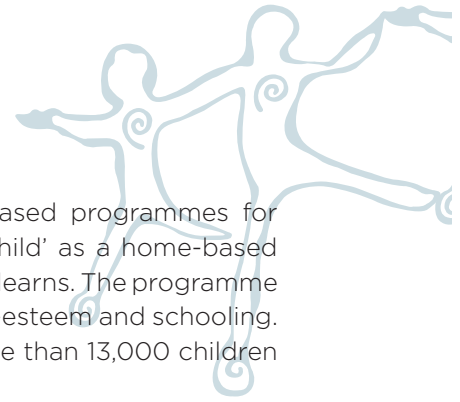
Cuidiú aims to provide support and education for parents, through through all stages of parenthood, from pregnancy to raising children to adulthood. Cuidiú provides childbirth education, postnatal support and breastfeeding support. It also operates a system of experience and resource sharing, which is a list of parents who have or had a particular experience and are willing to talk and share with others about them. Cuidiú has branches nationwide (Cuidiú, 2015).

### *Cura*

Cura is a national organisation providing counselling services to men, women and families in relation to unplanned pregnancy. Cura also provides services to new parents. Services include crisis and unplanned pregnancy support and counselling, counselling and support after abortion, support to mothers and fathers of a new baby, and a schools awareness programme. Cura services are provided by trained volunteer counsellors through 14 dedicated centres in addition to a number of outreach services across Ireland. Cura services are free of charge and are available to all family members. Cura also offer a national helpline service (Cura, 2015).

### *Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)*

The ISPCC provides support and information to parents who may be concerned about a child. Services include parent mentoring, provided by a trained volunteer mentor. The system is one of informal peer support. The ISPCC also provides a helpline for parents or members of the public who may be concerned about the welfare of a child (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2017).



### *Lifestart*

The Lifestart Foundation is an all-Ireland charitable body offering evidence-based programmes for parents, and children up to five years of age. Lifestart delivers 'The Growing Child' as a home-based programme supporting parents in their understanding of how a child develops and learns. The programme supports development in the areas of speech and language, problem-solving, self-esteem and schooling. The programme is delivered on a franchise basis in Ireland, to the parents of more than 13,000 children (Lifestart, 2015).

### *One Family*

One Family Parenting is a service aimed at supporting parents in their roles and increasing parental confidence. The service aims to provide support where parents are experiencing challenges relating to parenting alone, sharing parenting, managing behaviours, conflict and stress. One Family supports a variety of different parenting relationships, including one-parent families, shared parenting families, families in transition or experiencing separation, step-parent families, same-sex families, new siblings and blended families, and parents who have adopted children as a single person or conceived through AHR. Support also includes support with talking to children about absent parents, abusive parents, mental health and addiction. A range of services are provided, including information and signposting, parenting programmes, online parenting programmes, mediated parenting plans for families experiencing separation, and parent mentoring (One Family, 2015).

### *Parentline*

Parentline is an organisation providing a confidential helpline for parents and guardians, funded largely by Tusla. Founded by nurses and healthcare workers in 1980, it was based on a United States model. The Parentline phonenumber was established in 1983. Parentline offers a range of supports, including face-to-face services, parenting courses, talks and seminars, and a post-natal depression helpline. Services are provided by trained facilitators. Service users include parents of newborn babies, toddlers, pre-teens and teenagers. Parentline has seen an increase in calls from fathers, who currently represent 14% of calls to the phonenumber (Parentline, 2015).

### **3.3.4 Private Providers**

Private providers also provide supports for parents in Ireland. Help me to Parent is a limited company launched in 2007, providing parenting courses based on the Parents Plus programmes. Help me to Parent was set up with the guidance of Dr John Sharry, co-developer of the Parents Plus programmes. These include the early-years programme and the parenting-when-separated programme (Parents Plus, 2015). Dr Sharry also provides parenting supports through his website, Solution Talk. Services include information, signposting, talks and seminars (Solution Talk, 2015).

# 4

## 4. The Evidence Base

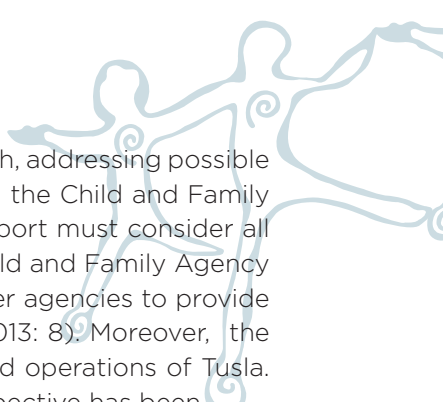
### 4.1 Programmes, Practice and What Works

The types of supports provided to parents include direct supports aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities, and indirect supports aimed at individual parents or families. Supports include advice and support, home-based and individual support, group-based support and parenting education groups, programmes and courses. Service provision can be based on Hardiker's (1991) levels of need, ranging from universal to supports to all parents; top-up support for parents with additional needs; supervised parenting and child protection; and alternative care. A variety of practitioners deliver services in a variety of settings. They range from social workers, social care workers, family mediators, some school liaison officers, education welfare officers, community workers and project workers. In addition, health professionals including general practitioners, psychologists and maternity and public health nurses provide support. Given that families may be accessing a variety of services at any time, the relational skills of staff along with interagency working are acknowledged as crucial in the provision of parenting support services (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015; Molinuevo, 2013: 17).

Group-based parenting programmes have become popular, provided by an expanded workforce of health, education and welfare professionals (Broadhurst, 2009). At the same time, a body of literature documenting the scientific evaluation of parent support programmes has also emerged (Moran et al., 2004). It is acknowledged that parents can benefit from the social aspect of working with peers. Programmes are effective where they are carefully structured, delivered by trained and skilled staff and backed up by good management and support (Moran et al., 2004). Despite their popularity, dropout rates are high, particularly where the programme is aimed at families with multiple difficulties (Centre for Effective Services, 2012). Nevertheless, a review of the evidence shows that the provision of such parenting programmes represents an important pathway to helping parents (Moran et al., 2004).

Identified also as important is individual work undertaken by the practitioner. This can be particularly effective where problems are more complex or parents are not ready or able to work in a group. Additionally, individual work provides one-to-one tailored support (Moran et al., 2004). Broadhurst (2009) identifies the role of the expert as essential in providing advice to parents. Daly also highlights the role of the expert, with parenting practitioners and parenting service commissioners mandatory at a local authority level in England (Daly, 2013). Fives et al. (2014a) identify that parents are often dealing with a complex set of events, with one or more issues presenting at a time, arguing that this cannot be catered for solely by a programmatic approach but 'requires observation, attention, and discreet interventions from key professionals and services' (2014b). The research also emphasises that professionals play a key role in sticking with families, in addition to utilising proven programmes as a key source of support, arguing that programmes are often the focus of attention at the expense of practice.

Fives et al. (2014a) also identify a tension between desire for standardisation of work practices via strict 'programme following' versus a desire for a more organic and flexible model on the part of frontline workers. It is stressed that this tension should not be seen as a threat but rather welcomed, as practice wisdom can complement programme implementation. Further, clients themselves are important determinants of outcome effectiveness (McKeown, 2000), and therefore the focus of attention should



be the family and their definition of their need. This supports an integrated approach, addressing possible fragmentation and rationalising and better integrating services (Daly, 2011). Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (Gillen et al., 2013), recommends that the configuration of parenting support must consider all services, in addition to individual practice and programmatic approaches. The Child and Family Agency places emphasis on the need for partners to work together with parents and other agencies to provide an effective continuum of evidence-informed parenting supports (Gillen et al., 2013: 8). Moreover, the concept and practice of participation is increasingly embedded in the culture and operations of Tusla. Evidence of what works in supporting parental participation from a practice perspective has been addressed in *Working with Families: A review of the Literature on Parental Participation* (Connolly and Devaney, 2016).

It is acknowledged that evidence of what works is vital in the delivery of services to families, and that enhancing the evidence base is an integral part of service arrangements (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015) and there has been considerable research output in the field (Lucas, 2011). The distinction between evidence-based and traditional evidence-informed practice, where knowledge is generated from subjective experience rather than empirically demonstrated outcomes, is identified as significant (Devaney et al., 2013). In part, there is an emphasis on the importance of making a case for how value for money can be attained (Daly, 2011). Approaches based on reliable and robust evidence and the undertaking of high-quality evaluations of local initiatives are vital to ensuring the greatest possible social and economic return and avoiding adverse outcomes and costly investments (Centre for Effective Services, 2012).

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, will increasingly move to deliver services that are based on evidence of effectiveness. Utilising Veerman and van Yperen's (2007) classification of levels of evidence, the Parenting Support Strategy advocates balance between 'the need for evidence-based programmes and evidence-informed interventions, placing an emphasis on the role and skills of the practitioner in working directly with children and parents' (Gillen et al., 2013: 14). Veerman and van Yperen classify evidence in four levels. Level one is descriptive evidence, where the elements of the intervention have been made explicit. Level two is theoretical evidence, where the intervention has a plausible rationale to explain why it should work with whom. Level three is indicative evidence, where it has been demonstrated that the intervention clearly leads to the desired outcomes. Level four is causal evidence, where there is sound and substantial evidence that the outcome is caused by the intervention (Veerman and van Yperen, 2007). Fives et al. (2014a) describe this model as pluralistic, highlighting the value of different types of evidence for different types of questions.<sup>3</sup>

## 4.2 The Evidence Base

This section provides a summary of the evidence base on parenting programmes in Ireland. As illustrated in the Table below, the types of programmes and the modes of delivery vary<sup>4</sup>. Preventive, universal programmes work and are perceived by service providers and parents to be effective (Fives et al., 2014a; Coen et al., 2012). Programmes are provided for parents in different contexts and different parenting relationships. The evidence base highlights positive outcomes for parents in particular contexts, including parents of adolescents (Nitsch et al., 2015), parents at risk of social exclusion and poverty (Belsky et al., 2006), low-income families (Cefai et al., 2010) and immigrant and minority parents (Dolan et al., 2013; Coen and Canavan, 2012). Different parenting relationships can also benefit from supports. For example

<sup>3</sup> See Gillen, A., Tuohy, O., Morrissey, M., Gaynor, J., Canavan, J., Devaney, C., Landy, F. & Coen, L. (2013) Investing in Families: Supporting Parents to Improve Outcomes for Children: Child and Family Agency (Tusla) p.14, for additional detail on the types of research associated with differing levels of evidence.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 3 for description of the four levels of evidence.

programmes supporting separated parents have been proven to be effective (Parents Plus, 2014), as have programmes for teen parents (Riordan, 2002). In addition, indirect supports such as mentoring for young people with complex needs (Devlin et al., 2014) are also deemed effective family supports by parents and service providers.

The provision of such parenting programmes represents an important pathway to helping parents, particularly in cases where programmes are carefully structured, delivered by trained and skilled staff and backed up by good management and support (Moran et al., 2004), such programmes are part of a broader range of services to parents. Measuring the outcomes of programmes provides useful insight into the benefits to those undertaking and completing the programmes. The complete picture should also account for those who are not engaged by programmes, those for whom there are limited programmes, and those who withdraw from programmes and may not therefore be included in longitudinal studies. Often, these are among the most vulnerable parents. It is important that parents are aware of services, with evidence showing that this is not always the case and that parents may not access them until crisis point (Coen et al., 2012). In addition, those who are not engaged by programmes may encounter cultural or language barriers or geographical barriers, may feel stigmatised, or may find that programmes do not meet their needs. For example, there is a limited evidence base of the success of interventions aimed directly at fathers, despite evidence that fathers are increasingly concerned about their roles as parents (Parentline, 2015). In addition, while the evidence shows that programmes are effective in disability settings (Hand et al., 2013), there is limited evidence of their application in such settings. Disability services sit outside the remit of the Child and Family Agency.

Ongoing engagement is also key to the success of programmes. We know that the more sessions of a parenting course that parents attend, the more beneficial the home learning environment (Hayes et al., 2013). Despite this, dropout rates are high, particularly where the programme is aimed at families with multiple difficulties (Centre for Effective Services, 2012). Relationship building and partnership working are key to engagement at this level of service delivery (Connolly, 2015). The importance of the practitioner is acknowledged in programme delivery but also more broadly in the provision of parenting and family support. Similarly, the support must meet the needs of parents at a given point in time. Some families may require support with other aspects of parenting. For instance, it has been found that non-English-speaking migrants in lower-income groups may benefit significantly from provision of affordable childcare options in the Irish context (Ward and Roeder, 2014).

Ultimately, evidence-based outcomes highlight the success of parenting programmes. Evidence of what works is key to service planning. In addition, evidence of what works with seldom-heard parents and those who are not served by current structures requires additional exploration. In this respect, some of the most vulnerable families require additional consideration in research and policy-making. Table 3 below sets out the key messages from evidence based programmes offered in Ireland.





Table 3: The Evidence Base

Name of Programme and Region	Description	Target group and life course	Mode of delivery	Level of Evidence	Level of need	Key messages from evaluations
Community Mothers  <i>Dublin/North Leinster regions East, and Dublin/Mid- Leinster</i>	Trained volunteers visit new mothers in disadvantaged areas to offer support and advice around health and well-being with maintained benefits.  Duration: One visit a month for a child up to 24 months	Parents of 0–2-year-olds	Home-based	4	1-2	Non-professionals can deliver a health promotion programme on child development effectively. Whether they can do so as effectively as professionals requires further study (Fitzpatrick et al., 1997). The Community Mothers programme had sustained beneficial effects on parenting skills and maternal self-esteem 7 years later with benefit extending to subsequent children (Johnson et al., 2000).
Lifestart Growing Child Parenting Programme  <i>Some Counties ROI &amp; NI</i>	Month-by-month curriculum programme aiming to increase parents' knowledge, competence and parenting skills and enhanced well-being and self-esteem.  Duration: Month by month for a child up to 5 years	Parents of 0–5-year-olds	Home-based	4	1+2+3	Home visiting programmes are an effective means of improving parent and child outcomes and the effect sizes in the RCT study have proven to be commensurate with those reported in a number of meta-analyses.  Home visiting programmes such as Lifestart can make an important and positive impact on both parent and child outcomes (Miller et al., 2010).
Childhood Development Initiative (CDI)  <i>Dublin</i>	Each of CDI's programmes has a parental component.  Nine early-years services have a dedicated Parent/Carer Facilitator (PCF), whose sole responsibility is to work with the parents of the children. In addition to other activities, the PCF facilitates Parents Plus.  Duration: Varies by programme	Parents of 2½–5-year-olds	Centre- and home-based	4	1+2	An evaluation of parenting support, including the Parent/Carer Facilitator role, found that parents valued having a person they could go to. In addition, the more sessions of a parenting course that parents attended, the more beneficial the home learning environment (HLE), indicating a positive effect of the formal parenting course on the quality of the HLE.  The evaluation also recommended that parent training should be delivered as part of an integrated Early Years programme, highlighting the importance for parent training programmes of an evidence-based, manualised programme that is strongly supported by a well-trained and accessible mentor (Hayes et al., 2013).

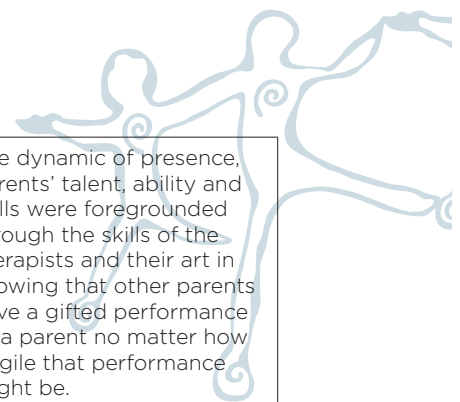


<p>One Family Ireland Parenting Services</p> <p><i>Online Dublin</i></p>	<p>Multiple interventions aimed at one-parent families or shared parenting. Guide to explore children's needs, techniques for handling difficult behaviour and ways to deal with family change.</p> <p>Duration: Varies by programme</p>	<p>Lone parents of 2-10-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>Both parents and trainers evaluated positive impact across all scales tested. Parents indicated most impact, regarding this Positive Parenting intervention, both on self-evaluations around parenting improvements and evaluation of the competencies of trainers.</p> <p>FRC trainers facilitated the course in such a way that had, for the vast majority of parents, a high impact on parenting perceptions, understandings and outcomes.</p> <p>It is through an emphasis on education, health, social services, and professional intervention to support parents and children, that effective scaffolding can be built to support parents and children effectively. One Family's Positive Parenting model is indicated to successfully support the FSA and FRC in driving this agenda home (Family Support Agency, 2013a).</p>
<p>The Incredible Years Parent Training Programmes</p> <p><i>Dublin, Louth, Clare, Limerick, Galway</i></p>	<p>Multi-faceted programme based on a social cognitive approach to child development. Aim to improve teacher and parent practices that will help to encourage productive problem-solving and better discipline in younger children.</p> <p>Duration: Varies by programme</p>	<p>Parents and 0-12-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre- and school-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>Multiple studies, including RCTs and follow-ups, demonstrate positive outcomes. Benefits for parents as a result of taking part in the programmes included improvements in overall well-being, and increased confidence and skills for managing challenging child behaviour. Overall, the strategies and techniques gained by parents from the programmes continued to be of value one year later.</p> <p>Parents were very satisfied with the IY programmes and were more confident in their parenting competencies (McGilloway et al., 2012; O'Sullivan and Morgan, 2014).</p>



<p>Common Sense Parenting</p> <p><i>Mayo</i></p>	<p>Helps parents to learn skills to encourage their children's positive behaviour, discourage negative behaviour, and teach their children alternatives to problem behaviour.</p> <p>Duration: Six 2-hour centre-based sessions over six weeks, including homework.</p>	<p>Parents of 6-16-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>Multiple studies illustrate positive outcomes. Parental reports of child behaviour problems, parent attitudes, and parent problem-solving skills improved significantly from before to after parent training (Thompson et al., 1993). Similarly, an evaluation by the Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, found that parenting skills, young persons' behaviour and well-being scores showed improvement. It has to be noted, however, that families spoke of not accessing the programme until they were almost at crisis point, with some families highlighting that they were not aware of such services until a particular contact put them in touch (Coen et al., 2012).</p>
--	---	----------------------------------	---------------------	----------	------------	--

<p>Triple P Positive Parenting Programme</p> <p><i>Laois</i> <i>Longford</i> <i>Offaly</i> <i>Westmeath</i></p>	<p>Multi-level programme to prevent and remediate existing social, emotional and behavioural problems in children by focusing on establishing effective parenting practices in families and by improving communication between family members.</p>	<p>Parents of 2-15-year-olds.</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1, 2+ 3</p>	<p>In the Longford Westmeath population study of parents of children 3-7 years of age "There was a positive population level impact on children's emotional and behavioural problems, parental distress, parental discipline and parents relationships with their children. There was also a population effect for those with the highest levels of need since there was a significant difference between intervention and comparison areas in the proportion of abnormal and borderline cases of emotional and behavioural problems" (Fives et al, 2014c p.34). In addition, the qualitative data collected as part of the study show the nine partner organisations valued the partnership approach as necessary both to reduce child and family problems and also to reach many segments of the community in non-stigmatising ways.</p> <p>Parents were highly satisfied with the quality of programme delivery; parents spoke with other parents about Triple P and passed on parenting tips, and the evaluation demonstrated the programme as implemented was successful for those who attended, their children, the broader community and the partner organisations. Gains were maintained for the children of the parents who attended workshops (6 month follow up) &amp; for groups (12 month follow up). (Fives et al., 2014a).</p>
---	--	-----------------------------------	---------------------	----------	----------------	---



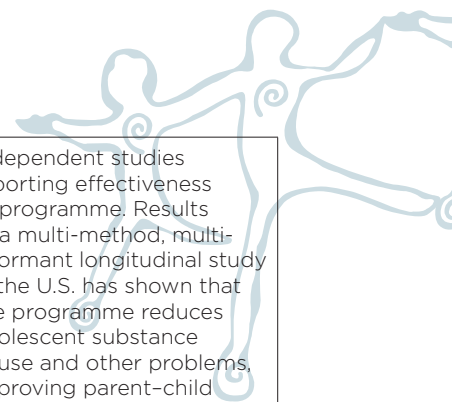
<p>Early Childhood Ireland The Marte Meo Method</p> <p><i>Dublin Cork</i></p>	<p>Specifically designed for both parents and professional caregivers to support their care-giving roles. Use and analysis of video-pictures that record normal daily interaction moments in naturalistic settings.</p>	<p>Parents of 0-18-year-olds</p>	<p>Home-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>The dynamic of presence, parents' talent, ability and skills were foregrounded through the skills of the therapists and their art in showing that other parents have a gifted performance as a parent no matter how fragile that performance might be.</p> <p>In their provision of the Marte Meo Programme, family support services have a model of best practice of how to provide empowering, supportive family interventions (Clarke et al., 2011).</p>
<p>Parenting Northern Ireland Understanding Your Child's Behaviour – Solihull Approach</p> <p><i>Across NI</i></p>	<p>Aims to provide understanding of child and young person's behaviour.</p>	<p>Parents of 0-18-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>In a study of 236 parents of all literacy levels who attended 37 UK-based programmes between 2005 and 2010, 95% of parents reported that they found the group relaxing, 89% found it very effective at helping them make changes to their parenting, and 88% found it very helpful for understanding their children. Qualitative themes demonstrate that the group enables parents to implement the three cornerstone theories of the Solihull Approach: containment, reciprocity and (sensitive) behaviour management in their parenting (Johnson and Wilson, 2012).</p>
<p>Parenting Northern Ireland Odyssey Parenting UR Teen Programme</p> <p><i>Enniskillen Newtownabbey Belfast Armagh</i></p>	<p>Promotion of authoritative parenting. Sessions cover issues such as parenting styles, teen development, self-esteem, rules and consequences, conflict and problem-solving.</p>	<p>Parents of adolescents</p>	<p>Centre- and home-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>The results indicate that Parenting UR Teen had a significant positive impact on parental mental health and stress levels. Positive change was found across all of the family domains, indicating that the programme resulted in a reduction in overall distress, including an improvement in teen perceptions of global distress and conflict with mothers over school-related issues. Overall the findings demonstrate the effectiveness of the Parenting UR Teen Programme as an intervention for parents of adolescents (Higgins et al., 2012).</p>

<p>Parents Plus Early Years</p> <p><i>Almost Nationwide</i></p>	<p>Parenting course with outcomes of a decrease in parental stress and an increase in Positive Attends in parent-child interaction. Reduction of parent-defined problems and gains in parent-defined goals.</p>	<p>Parents of 0-6-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>2+</p>	<p>Study of 30 children, with a range of conduct, attention and developmental problems, whose parents completed the programme. Results showed decreased parental stress as measured by Parent Stress Scale, and significant gains towards parent-defined goals. In addition, before and after video observation of parent-child interaction showed an increase in positive parent-child attention and a decrease in parent-child instructions, as measured by independent observers. Gains were maintained at 5-month follow-up (Sharry et al., 2005).</p>
<p>Parents Plus Children's Programme</p> <p><i>Some Counties</i></p>	<p>A practical and positive course on managing emotional or behavioural problems and promoting children's learning and confidence aged 6 to 11 years.</p>	<p>Parents of 6-11-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>3+4</p>	<p>Clinical Setting: 74 parents of children referred. Significant reductions in total difficulties and conduct problems as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, decreased parental stress, increased parental confidence, and significant improvements in parent-defined problems and goals (Coughlin et al., 2009).  Disability Setting: RCT with parents of children with mild intellectual disabilities in a special school setting. Significant reduction in clinical range scores for treatment group participants. Conversely, clinical range scores for waiting list control group participants increased, or remained elevated (Hand et al., 2012).  Universal Delivery in Schools: RCT with parents and children in primary schools in Ireland. Significant post-treatment improvements were recorded on measures of parenting-related stress, child problem behaviour and parent satisfaction. Treatment group results were maintained at six-month follow-up (Hand et al., 2013).</p>



<p>Parent Plus Adolescent's Programme</p> <p><i>Some Counties</i></p>	<p>A practical and positive course on parenting adolescents (aged 11 to 16) focusing on effective communication, problem solving and building positive relationships.</p>	<p>Parents of 11-16-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>RCT of programme in community school setting, with 126 parents. Post-treatment (between groups) and 6-month follow-up comparisons of study completers (within PPAP group) revealed significant positive effects of the parenting intervention with respect to adolescent behaviour problems and parenting stress. The study provides preliminary evidence that PPAP may be an effective model of parent-training implemented in a community-based setting (Nitsch et al., 2015).</p>
<p>Parents Plus Parenting When Separated Programme</p> <p><i>Almost Nationwide</i></p>	<p>A practical and positive six-week course for parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through a separation or divorce.</p>	<p>Separated Parents</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>RCT undertaken in Ireland and the UK with 161 separated parents who took part. Significant goal attainment, increases in parenting satisfaction, and decreases in child behaviour problems, parental adjustment problems and interparental conflict occurred in the programme group, but not the control group. These results supported the effectiveness of the programme, and demonstrate significant benefits to parents attending (Parents Plus, 2014).</p>
<p>Teen Parents Support Initiative</p> <p><i>Galway Limerick Dublin</i></p>	<p>Enhance and support the well-being of young parents and their children up to age 2, empower young parents in their parenting role and ensure equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>Teenage parents of 0-2-year-olds</p>	<p>Hospital/ community- and home-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>An evaluation by DIT found the programme effective due to non-stigmatisation, strengths focus, flexibility and creativity in its responses to young parents' needs. Participants and professionals identified the personal qualities and characteristics of project staff as a key strength of the Initiative. Young parents suggested that staff working with young parents need to be friendly, easy to talk to and good listeners, down-to-earth, non-judgemental, helpful, with a wide range of knowledge on relevant topics, and trustworthy (Riordan, 2002).</p>

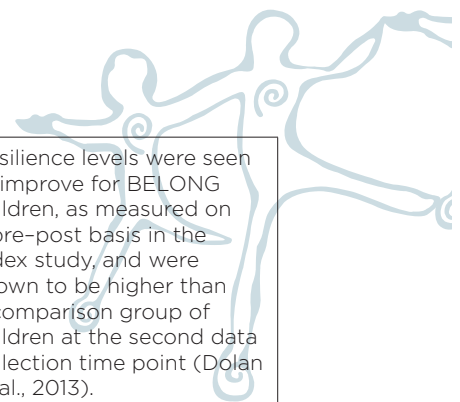
Sure Start (United Kingdom and Northern Ireland)  <i>Across NI</i>	Aims to improve outcomes for children at risk of social exclusion through poverty by providing childcare for all children, improving health and emotional well-being of children and supporting parents.	Parents of 0-5 yr olds	Centre-based	4	1+2	A national study undertaken in the UK revealed mothers of children aged 9 months reporting less household chaos, and mothers of children aged 36 months showed greater parental acceptance. Non-teenage mothers of children aged 36 months reported less negative parenting (Belsky et al., 2006).
Springboard Family Support Initiative (Ireland)  <i>Nationwide</i>	Assessment of particular needs with responsive intervention. Facilities for advice or information.	Parents of 0-18-year-olds	Community-based	3	3+4	The evaluation has shown that parents and children experienced considerable improvements in well-being while attending Springboard. Virtually every parent and child attributed their improved well-being to the intervention of Springboard (McKeown et al., 2001).
Early Years Eager and Able to Learn  <i>Across NI</i>	Early care and education programme.	Parents & 2-3-year-olds	Centre/home-based	4	1+2	Evaluation found that children's social and emotional development was positively affected by the programme. Practitioners were much less likely to adopt 'harsh and controlling' interaction styles and more likely to explain the reasons for things in order to encourage the children to think for themselves. Parents also reported playing with their children in different types of ways, using different materials (Mc Guinness et al., 2012). A fidelity and implementation study found improved child, practitioner and parent outcomes (Geraghty et al., 2012)
Early Years Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Differences  <i>Across NI Some ROI: Louth Roscommon</i>	Media programme on diversity to promote positive attitudes to differences.	Parents & 3-5-year-olds	Home-based	4	1+2	Evidence of positive effects in relation to socio-emotional development outcomes. Potentially encouraging signs of positive change found among parents and practitioners in relation to increases in their awareness of the need to undertake diversity work with young children (Connolly et al., 2010).



<p>Strengthening Families (Parental Component)</p> <p><i>Dublin Galway Midlands Kerry</i></p>	<p>Designed to reduce multiple risk factors for later alcohol and drug use, mental health problems and criminal behaviour by increasing family strengths, teens'/ children's social competencies, and improving positive parenting skills</p>	<p>Parents of 10-14-year-olds</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>Independent studies reporting effectiveness of programme. Results of a multi-method, multi-informant longitudinal study in the U.S. has shown that the programme reduces adolescent substance abuse and other problems, improving parent-child relationships, and building parenting skills (Molgaard et al., 2000). Evaluation in the Western Regional Drugs Task Force (WRDTF) region found that programme inputs are predicted to strengthen family processes and structures, positively impacting on young people's values, self-esteem, relationships and behaviour as well as preventing substance use. The findings of this research indicate that it may be more appropriate to position the programme as a more general prevention programme, of which substance use is an integral component, as opposed to a specific substance use prevention programme (Keane, 2012: 335).</p>
---	---	-----------------------------------	---------------------	----------	------------	--



<p>Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) (Ireland, USA)</p> <p><i>Almost Nationwide</i></p>	<p>Mentoring Service for 6 months, 24/7, to facilitate young people's reintegration after incarceration.</p>	<p>Parents of 8-18-year-olds</p>	<p>Community-based</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3+4</p>	<p>Independent evaluations have found benefits of the programme. Outcomes illustrated improvements in factors which enhance well-being. Resilience and the maintenance of well-being in the presence of adversity have been linked to self-esteem and leisure interests, a sense of belonging and a pro-social peer group, but also attachment to community networks and access to support services (Devlin et al., 2014). It is argued that the programme is most effective when it is developed with the involvement of stakeholders such as youth justice, child welfare and education officials, judges, consumer advocates and other community providers (Fleischer et al., 2006).</p>
<p>Parenting Wisely (Ireland, France, Australia, UK, Canada)</p> <p><i>Wexford</i></p>	<p>Interactive CD-ROM for low-income families whose children have behavioural problems.</p>	<p>Parents of 6-18-year-olds</p>	<p>Web-based</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>3+4</p>	<p>Studies found that gains in parenting sense of competence were maintained after 3 months for parents who completed individual format of the programme, but not for group-format participants. This suggests a self-administered programme may have a stronger impact on self-competence than practitioner-directed interventions. Completion of PW was effective in enhancing parenting knowledge, increasing use of effective parenting skills, and improving child behaviour irrespective of existing levels of self-efficacy (Cefai et al., 2010).</p>
<p>All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents</p> <p><i>Nationwide</i></p>	<p>Support for parents in parenting role and professionals working with them.</p>	<p>Immigrant parents</p>	<p>Centre/home-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>Evaluation of the programme content found that over 85% of participants rated the Cultural Competence section very helpful or helpful. Over 81% rated the Parenting Styles and Expectations section very helpful or helpful. The sections on Parenting Styles and Parenting in a Diverse Society are used most. The majority of respondents do not use the DVD (Coen and Canavan, 2012).</p>



<p>BELONG</p> <p><i>Ni</i></p>	<p>Fostering sense of belonging by increase of cultural confidence and participation.</p>	<p>Ethnic minority families</p>	<p>Community-based</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>1+2</p>	<p>Resilience levels were seen to improve for BELONG children, as measured on a pre-post basis in the Index study, and were shown to be higher than a comparison group of children at the second data collection time point (Dolan et al., 2013).</p>
<p>Time 4 Us</p> <p><i>Galway</i></p>	<p>Physical space and support for non-resident parents in separated families.</p>	<p>Separated families</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2+</p>	<p>Findings suggest improved bonding and a better relationship between child and parent; reduced conflict, improved trust and improved communication between them; increased access time: weekend visits often extend to after-school visits during the week; improved behaviour in children and better performance at school. The Centre also provides a gateway to services like family support and mediation (Time 4 US, 2012). In an evaluation by the Child and Family Research Centre at NUI Galway, consensus among both resident and non-resident parents was found in terms of the benefits of the service and its impact on their families. Notable benefits included: increased happiness levels among children, and increased amounts of access between children and non-resident parents as a result of using Time4Us. Both resident and non-resident parents report less conflict in their relationship since using the service (Coen and Kearns, 2008).</p>
<p>The Da Project (Barnardos)</p> <p><i>Dublin</i></p>	<p>Engagement and involvement of fathers in provision of support services.</p>	<p>Fathers</p>	<p>Centre-based</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1+</p>	<p>An evaluation by "Working With Men" on behalf of Barnardos demonstrated that children can benefit from active involvement of fathers in their care and upbringing. A good relationship between fathers and their children, particularly in their early and pre-teenage years, is associated with a range of social, educational and psychological benefits (Working With Men, 2006).</p>

# 5

## 5. Profile of Selected Areas

The case study approach to profiling activity in a small number of areas provides additional insight, highlighting the similarities and diversity across areas in providing parenting support. This case study approach involves the concentration on a small number of cases in their own right, context and setting. (Robson, 2002). Here, the cases are presented in table form, with supplementary narrative for each area. The data is drawn largely from CYPSC plans. Profiles are based on the best available data and are not intended as exhaustive. One of the commitments in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures states that one of the roles of CYPSC will be to 'ensure planning and co-ordination of parenting supports at local level through Children's Services Committees (now CYPSC)' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014: 45). CYPSC plans provide detail on the area's activities in parenting support.

### 5.1 Longford/Westmeath Profile

A combined profile for Longford/Westmeath draws on the CYPSC area boundaries. This boundary draws on the joint working of the voluntary and statutory agencies in Longford and Westmeath in delivering services to young people and families. Westmeath and Longford differ in compositions, with Westmeath's population notably larger. Drawing on Census data for 2011, brief profiles are provided here.

Table 4: Longford Census Profile<sup>5</sup>

<b>LONGFORD</b>	
Population	In April 2011 Longford had a population of 39,000, consisting of 19,649 males and 19,351 females.
Relationships	Of the 29,955 persons aged 15 years and over, 11,507 were single, 14,718 were married, 1,138 were separated, 766 were divorced and 1,826 were widowed.
Households	There were 14,453 private households in Longford in April 2011, of which 3,786 were single-person households. Of the 10,161 families in the area, 2,881 were couples with no children.
Children	The average number of children per family was 1.5, compared with 1.4 nationally.
Labour Force	There were 18,433 persons aged 15 years and over in the labour force, and of these, 75.3 per cent (13,871 persons) were at work. The unemployment rate for this area was 24.7 per cent, compared with a national average rate of 19.0 per cent.
Diversity	Non-Irish nationals accounted for 14.1 per cent of the population of Longford, compared with a national average figure of 12.0 per cent. Polish (1,628 persons) were the largest group, followed by UK nationals (1,155 persons).
Language	4,897 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home, and of these, 1,312 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home, with 1,618 speakers.
Disability	5,404 persons had a disability in April 2011, of whom 1,858, representing 34.4 per cent of the total, were aged 65 years or over.

<sup>5</sup> Central Statistics Office (2012) This is Ireland: Highlights from Census 2011 Part 1 [online], available: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census,2011,Highlights,Part,1,web,72dpi.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2015].

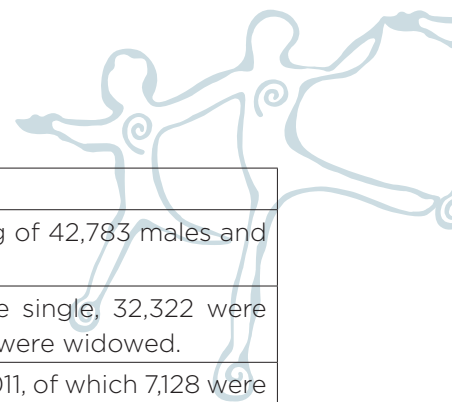


Table 5: Westmeath Census Profile<sup>6</sup>

<b>WESTMEATH</b>	
Population	In April 2011 Westmeath had a population of 86,164, consisting of 42,783 males and 43,381 females.
Relationships	Of the 66,724 persons aged 15 years and over, 26,808 were single, 32,322 were married, 2,364 were separated, 1,659 were divorced and 3,571 were widowed.
Households	There were 30,739 private households in Westmeath in April 2011, of which 7,128 were single-person households. Of the 22,274 families in the area, 6,352 were couples with no children.
Children	The average number of children per family was 1.4, compared with 1.4 nationally.
Labour Force	There were 40,956 persons aged 15 years and over in the labour force, and of these, 78.9 per cent (32,319 persons) were at work. The unemployment rate for this area was 21.1 per cent, compared with a national average rate of 19.0 per cent.
Diversity	Non-Irish nationals accounted for 11.9 per cent of the population of Westmeath, compared with a national average figure of 12.0 per cent. Polish (2,345 persons) were the largest group, followed by UK nationals (1,929 persons).
Language	4,897 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home, and of these, 1,312 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home, with 1,618 speakers.
	9,782 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home, and of these, 1,923 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home, with 2,290 speakers.
Disability	11,303 persons had a disability in April 2011, of whom 3,762, representing 33.3 per cent of the total, were aged 65 years or over.

According to Trutz Haase (2011), the Midlands region is the third most deprived region of Ireland. While County Westmeath is the most affluent local authority area in the region, Longford is the most deprived. Both were significantly affected by the economic downturn, with the absolute deprivation score in Westmeath dropping from -1.3 in 2006 to -8.8 in 2011 and Longford dropping from -4.9 in 2006 to -12.1 in 2011. While there exists a degree of variation within County Westmeath, overall the county is not characterised by particular extremes of either affluence or deprivation. In Longford, 44 of the 54 Electoral Divisions (EDs) are marginally below average, with the entire eastern part of the county below average in terms of deprivation rates, and some local areas falling into the disadvantaged spectrum (Trutz Haase, 2011).

Under the Longford/Westmeath CYPSC boundary, a number of initiatives have emerged, including:

- **The Gateway Project.** The purpose is to 'Encourage young people to complete their education so that they can face the working world with ability and confidence'. The project has three strands: Youth, Education, and Family, and is a multiagency collaboration.
- **National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) Consortium.** Established in 2011 with multi-agency representatives from approximately 10 organisations to promote the development and sustainability of childcare provision in Longford and Westmeath.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

- Longford/Westmeath Parenting Project.** The Longford/Westmeath Parenting Partnership (LWPP) is an interagency partnership established in 2010 comprising statutory and non-statutory organisations with the purpose of delivering evidence based supports to parents living in Longford and westmeath. The LWPP delivered Triple P, an evidence based parenting knowledge and skills programme, initially to parents aged 3-7 in Longford westmeath. Delivery has expanded into Laois Offaly and to parents with children 2-15 years of age. The core team of practitioners are from both TUSLA and the HSE. Evidence of population-wide benefit for parents and children has emerged from an evaluation of this initiative. The approach taken is population-based, with a view to reducing prevalence rates for childhood emotional and behavioural problems, decrease parental stress, anxiety and depression, while also increasing parental confidence and competence and reducing barriers that prevent people from availing of services and making advice and skills more accessible in the community (Longford Westmeath Children’s Services Committee, 2011).

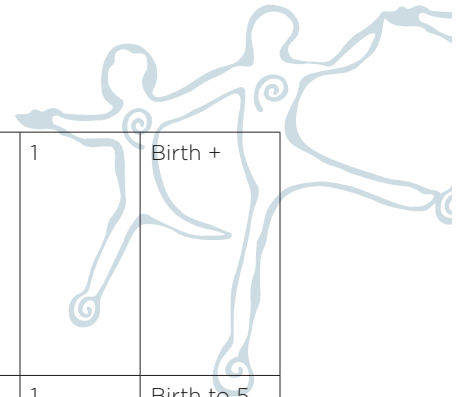
### 5.1.1 Longford/Westmeath Parenting Support Profile

This section provides a detailed profile of parenting supports in the Longford/Westmeath CYPSC area. The data is divided into Direct Supports, including actions aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities, and Indirect Supports, including actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.

Table 6: Longford/Westmeath Parenting Support Profile

Service	Advice & Information	Individual/ Home-Based	Group-Based	Parent Education & Programmes	Hardiker Level <sup>7</sup>	Lifecourse
<b>Direct Supports</b>						
Family Resource Centres	The provision of family support, information and advice at local level.	Provide individual and home-based support.	Centres in Ballymahon, Granard, Athlone and Ballinacarrigy. Use of shared facilities for the provision of services. Childcare facilities for those attending courses. After-School Clubs.	Practical assistance to community groups, such as education courses, training & information advice. Supports for lone parents, young mothers and young families.	1	Lifecourse
Barnardos Service Centres	Provides direct Family Support Services, responding to the needs of individual children, families and communities.	Provide individual and home-based support.	Barnardos offer a range of group-based supports, including breakfast clubs and friendship groups. Barnardos also host family welfare conferences.	Teen Parent Programmes work closely with teenage parents and their children to promote and nurture their educational, emotional and social well-being.	1	Lifecourse
Early Years Services/ Voluntary Notification of Childminders		Childminding Services	Preschool & Montessori; Private (Sessional, Full Day Care and After-School), Community (Sessional, Full Day Care and After-School), Voluntary Notified Childminders.		1	Birth to 5

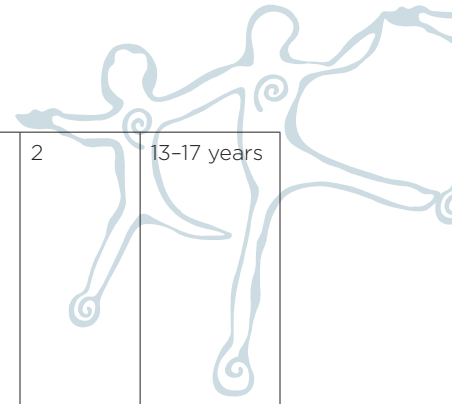
<sup>7</sup> Hardiker levels are based on available descriptions of services and interpretation of data



Breastfeeding Groups	The HSE, Cuidiú and La Leche League offer a range of support groups for new mothers across Longford/ Westmeath.	Individual Support is available to new mothers.	Group-based support is available to new mothers.		1	Birth +
Westmeath County Childcare Committee/ Longford County Childcare Committee	Website: Search for Childcare Services, Information on Free Preschool Year, Parent and Toddler Groups. Information for Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs.	Childminding Services	Parent and Toddler Groups		1	Birth to 5 Years
Longford Westmeath Community Mothers	Website: Advice and Service Information	Community Mother home visits	Baby Groups, Mullingar & Longford; Baby Café, Longford.	Training Services for Community Mothers	1,2	Birth to 17 years
Longford Westmeath Parenting Partnership	Website: Service description, contact information, related materials including research, calendar for courses, booking facility and pod casts.			Triple-P Positive Parenting Programme for children 0-7 years in Longford and Westmeath post evaluation expanded into 4 counties and to parents with children 2-15 years of age.	1,2 & 3	Birth to 7 years
Midlands Regional Youth Service	Advice and Information. Referrals to other state agencies.	One-to-One Mentoring	Youth Groups Youth Summer Camps. Work with Schools - Halloween Safety Talks, Bullying Programme.		1,2,3	13-17 years
Longford Community Resources Ltd.	Website: Information, News & Events LCRL /Acorn Drop-In Centre: Information and Referrals.	LCRL / Acorn Drop-In Centre: One-to-one addiction counselling.	Tus Project, Westmeath Traveller Project, Rural Social Scheme (RSS), Youth Service and more. LCRL /Acorn Drop-In Centre: builds the capacity of residents associations to provide local initiatives including child care and after-school programmes.	LCRL/Acorn Drop-In Centre: Project provides training, support and capacity building for family members of substance misusers.	1,2	Lifecourse
Community Awareness of Drugs	Advice and information available.		Drug Education Programme for Parents.		1	Lifecourse

Midlands Regional Drugs Taskforce (Athlone Drug Awareness Group, County Longford Drugs Forum)	Awareness-Raising, Advice, Service Information.	Counselling and Treatment Services.	Range of services provided, including Family Support and Harm Reduction Service, Rehabilitation and Aftercare.	Strengthening Families Programme Midlands Region: Parent skills training, Teen skills training and Family life skills training.	1,2	Lifecourse
Westmeath Community Development Ltd.	Website: Information Events: Information on Projects and Programmes Westmeath Traveller Project: Information on Services, Referrals.		Tus Project, Westmeath Traveller Project, Training for Employment Projects and more. After-School Services in Rapid Areas in Athlone.		1,2	Lifecourse
Le Cheile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services	Information and support for families engaged with the Probation Services.	Individual support is available.	Group support is available.	Parental and Youth mentoring Service, Restorative Justice Programmes through referral from Probation Services.	3,4	12-18
Women's Community Projects Mullingar	Provides temporary accommodation for women and children and support and information. 24-hour helpline available. Referrals available.	Counselling services available.	Temporary refuge accommodation available.		3	Lifecourse
Irish Association of Relationship Mentors Programmes	Advice and Support.	One-to-one work available.	Group work available.	Effective Parenting of Self and Children, The Teenage Years: Sometimes Wild, Always Wise.	1	Lifecourse
Geraldine's Training and Development Services	Advice and Support.	Individual work and home visiting available.		Promoting Positive Behaviour, Promoting Positive Parenting, Substance Misuse.	1	Lifecourse
<b>Indirect Supports<sup>8</sup></b>						
Mullingar Community Counselling Service	Advice and information.	One-to-one counselling support.			1	Lifecourse

<sup>8</sup> Indirect supports for parents include actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.



Garda Youth Diversion Project			After-schools opportunities in education, employment training, sport, art and music.  LEAP in Longford supports good relations between the Gardaí and the community to help children at risk.	Parents Groups in some local areas.	2	13-17 years
Foróige	Website: Information on services, news and blog, events calendar.	Mentoring - Big Brother Big Sister.	Foróige Clubs Youth Citizenship Programme. Midlands Drug Education Programme. Youth Cafés LEAP Project (as in GYDP).	Strengthening Families programme offered.	1,2 2,3 BBBS	10-18 years
Longford Women's Link Service	Focus on marginalised groups. Access to information and services through direct support.	Direct individual support.	Group-based support available. Childcare Services. Summer camps.	Education and training supports for women.	2	2+
Family Mediation Services	Mediation is a service to help couples in Ireland who have decided to separate or divorce, or who have already separated, to negotiate their own terms of agreement, while addressing the needs and interests of all involved. Mediation allows people to make their own decisions.	Mediation encourages the separating couple to cooperate with each other in working out mutually acceptable arrangements including parenting the children.			1,2	1
Athlone Community Services Council			Crèche Facilities, Playschools, House Refuge (Domestic Abuse), After-School Programmes.		2,3	1+



Youth Advocate Programme (YAP)		Individual, home-based mentoring.	Group work available.	Intensive support programmes for young people and families, using strength-based, family-focused approach for young people with complex needs.	3,4	Young people
SPY Project	Special out-of-school projects for disadvantaged young people. Priority is given to projects in the spheres of special youth work initiatives, young homeless people, young substance abusers and young Travellers. SPY also provides support & information.		Grants are allocated to organisations and groups for specific projects. The SPY project also engages and works with parents, schools, and other local agencies and volunteers. SPY provides a safe space for young people to meet and be themselves. There are three projects under this scheme in Longford, Mullingar and Athlone.		2	2+

## 5.2 Dublin City South Profile

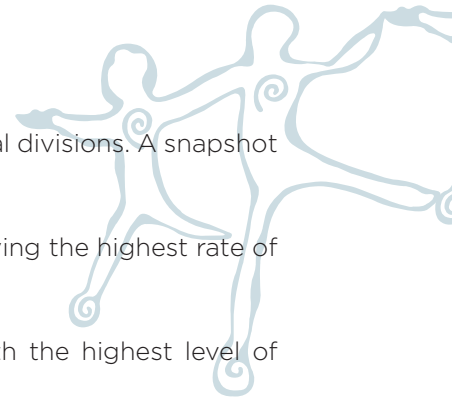
In light of the scale of Dublin City and the boundary differences between member agencies, it was agreed in 2014 to reconfigure the committee organisation from one citywide committee to two area committees: Dublin City North CYPSC and Dublin City South CYPSC. These two committees mirror each other, both being chaired by an area manager from Tusla and having Dublin City Council's assistant chief executive officer as deputy chairperson. A profile for the Dublin City South CYPSC area activities in parenting support is presented here. As Dublin City South is not covered in the CSO area profiles, the data provided here differs from the other areas and is based on the best available data for this area.

Table 7: Dublin City South Census Profile<sup>9</sup>

<b>DUBLIN CITY SOUTH</b>	
Population	In April 2011 the total Dublin City South area population was 220,130, which was 42% of the total Dublin city population (525,383).
Demographics	The Dublin City South population of children and young people aged 0–24 years was 61,589, or 28% of the total area population. The number of young people aged over 15 and under 24 was 31,877.
Households	There were 86,891 private households in Dublin City South, of which 26,649 were single-person households. 8,495 households comprised a lone mother with children.
Labour Force	Of the population of 220,130, 102,171 were employed, with 18,444 unemployed having lost or given up a previous job, and 1,970 unemployed and looking for a first regular job.
Disability	There were 3,986 people under the age of 24 with a disability.

Dublin City South is divided into six local areas: Ballyfermot, Islandbridge, South West Inner City, Crumlin/Drimnagh/Walkinstown, South East Inner City, and Pembroke/Rathmines. The areas are quite diverse.

<sup>9</sup> Central Statistics Office (2012) This is Ireland: Highlights from Census 2011 Part 1 [online], available: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census.2011.Highlights.Part.1.web.72dpi.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2015].



Deprivation rates vary considerably across the local areas and among the electoral divisions. A snapshot is provided here:

- The Ballyfermot area is made up of 7 electoral divisions, with Kylemore having the highest rate of deprivation.
- The South West Inner City area is made up of 12 electoral divisions, with the highest level of deprivation in Ushers E.
- The South East Inner City area is made up of 11 electoral divisions. In this area the highest level of deprivation is Wood Quay A, with the highest level of affluence in Mansion House.
- The Islandbridge area is made up of 5 electoral divisions. The highest level of deprivation is in Inchicore and the highest level of affluence is Kilmainham B.
- The Crumlin/Drimnagh/Walkinstown area is made up of 13 electoral divisions. The highest level of deprivation is Kimmage A and the highest level of affluence is Kimmage E.
- The Pembroke Rathmines area is made up of 19 electoral divisions. The highest level of deprivation is Terenure B and the highest level of affluence is Pembroke East E, 2017. (Children & Young People's Services Committee, 2015).

As defined in Towards 2016 Partnership Agreement, the Children's Services Committees will aim to deliver the National Children's Strategy objectives and the Lifecycle Framework objectives of the Towards 2016 Agreement (South and Children & Young People's Services Committee, 2015). Successes achieved under a work plan for five subgroups of Childcare, Literacy and Numeracy, Healthy Living, Safety, and Interagency Collaboration include:

- The report of the Childcare Sub-Group was the foundation for a successful National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) application and subsequent interagency programme. The 'Parent and Child Hub' universal preventive family support service delivery initiative, open to all parents of children aged from 0-6 years living in the Dublin South West Inner City area.
- Rialto Demonstration Model.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Sub-Group delivered a Language and Literacy Project.
- Collaboration between Speech and Language Therapy (HSE) and Teaching (St. Brigids The Coombe National School).

A key success of Dublin City CSC was its members' commitment to interagency cooperation, and accordingly members drafted a 'Statement of Commitment to Interagency Co-operation' that member organisations signed up to. This statement commits signatories to working together to help achieve the national vision for children in Ireland as identified in Towards 2016 (South and Children & Young People's Services Committee, 2015).

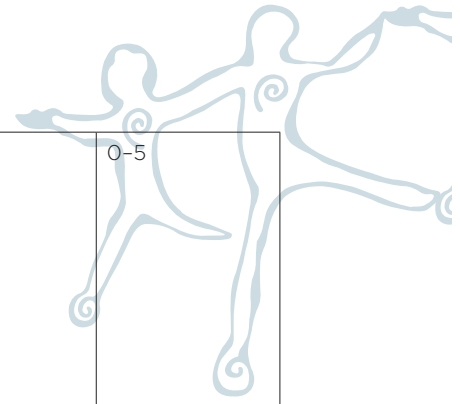
## 5.2.1 Dublin City South Parenting Support Profile

This section provides a detailed profile of parenting supports in the Dublin City South CYPSC area. The data is divided into Direct Supports, including actions aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities, and Indirect Supports, including actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.

Table 8: Dublin City South Parenting Support Profile

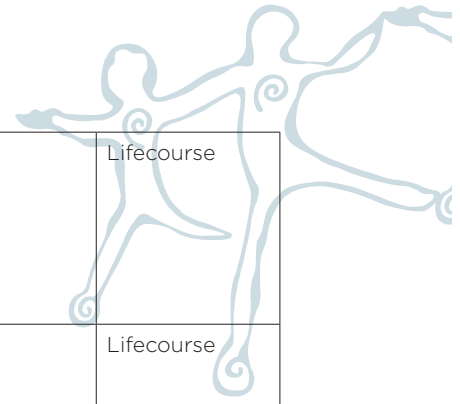
Service	Advice and Information	Individual/ Home-Based	Group-Based	Parent Education & Programmes	Hardiker Level <sup>10</sup>	Lifecourse
<b>Direct Supports</b>						
Barnardos Service Centre	Provide direct Family Support Services, responding to the needs of individual children, families and communities.	Provide individual and home-based support.	Barnardos offers a range of group-based supports, including breakfast clubs and friendship groups. Barnardos also hosts family welfare conferences. Family support project in Ballyfermot.	Teen Parent Programmes work closely with teenage parents and their children to promote and nurture their educational, emotional and social well-being. The service is available to both teen mothers and teen fathers. Barnardos has three Teen Parent Programmes, including two in Dublin.	1	Lifecourse
Family Resource Centres	The provision of family support, information and advice at local level.	Provide individual and home-based support.	Centres in Ballyfermot, Pimlico, Dolphin's Barn. Facilities for the provision of services Childcare facilities for those attending courses. After-School Clubs.	Practical assistance to community groups, such as education courses, training & information advice.	1	Lifecourse
The Irish Foster Care Association	Rights-based, child-centred organisation which promotes family-based solutions for children and young people in out-of-home care. Branches in South Dublin.	Counselling Helpline is provided to those who have taken out IFCA insurance, trained counsellors.		The Foundation for Fostering training programme is for prospective foster carers and their families.	2	Lifecourse

<sup>10</sup> Hardiker Levels are based on available descriptions of services and interpretation of data.



Early Years Services/ Voluntary Notification of Childminders		Childminding Services	Preschool & Montessori; Private (Sessional, Full Day Care and After-School), Community (Sessional, Full Day Care and After-School), Voluntary Notified Childminders.		1	0-5
Parent and Toddler Groups			Range of community parent and toddler groups available across Dublin City South. (Intercultural Parent/ Toddler Group Inchicore).		1	0-3 years
Mercy Family Centre	Support for disadvantaged families.	Support for disadvantaged families.	After-school services available.	Adult education services provided.	2	Lifecourse
Rialto Springboard Project	Community-based family support project offering advice and information.	Individual one-to-one support for parents provided.	Whole family and parent group activities.		2	0-18
Community Mothers	Website: Advice and Service Information.	Community Mothers home visits.	Baby Groups, Mullingar & Longford; Baby Café, Longford.	Training Services for Community Mothers.	1,2	Birth to 17 years
Gingerbread	Provides legal information and advice.	Provides emotional support.	Provides counselling and peer-group support, events and outings for families and parents.		2	Lifecourse
Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services	Information and support for families engaged with the Probation Services.	Individual support is available.	Group support is available.	Parental and Youth Mentoring Service, Restorative Justice Programmes through referral from Probation Services.	3,4	12-18

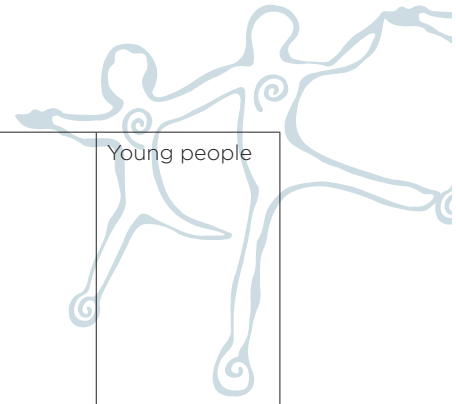
AIM Family Service	AIM provides a free legal information drop-in centre. Family law information is available.	Counselling for couples and families.	Counselling for couples and families.		2	Lifecourse
Aoibhneas Women and Children's Refuge	24-hour helpline is also available. Information, advocacy and signposting are available.	Childcare workers available to residents, and length of stay depends on support needed. Drop-in and outreach services are available, including practical help and support.	Refuge accommodation available for women with children.		3,4	Women and children 0-18 years
Bray Women's Refuge HSE (catchment)	24-hour helpline is available. Information, advocacy and signposting is available.	Outreach services available to women.	Refuge accommodation available.		3,4	Women and children 0-18 years
Rathmines Women's Refuge HSE	Refuge for women and their children. Access to crisis counsellor, free legal advice, child care workers, GP, public health nurse, etc.	Support is provided through compulsory key worker system, with daily meetings initially. Individual care plan is drawn up. Crisis counsellor available.	Refuge accommodation available.		3,4	Women and children 0-18 years
Saoirse Women's Refuge	Practical information and emotional support.		On-site playroom with child care staff. Short-term refuge accommodation available.		3,4	Women and children 0-18 years
Housing Association Ltd. - Viva House	Information and help with housing applications, legal information and referrals.	Key working system in place. Needs assessment and support planning approach for women and children.	Short-term refuge accommodation available.		3,4	Women and children 0-18 years
Sonas	General information and signposting available.	Court accompaniment available.			3,4	Women and children 0-18 years



South Dublin City Childcare Committee	Provides information for parents on childcare and early education, signposting.				1	Lifecourse
Community Awareness of Drugs	Advice and information available.			The Family Focus programme is a six-session education programme for parents, grandparents, guardians, carers and other adults.	1	Lifecourse
Merchants Quay Drug Project	Advice and information available, as part of a suite of services including day programmes, aftercare and family support.	Counselling services available.	Family support services available.		3	Lifecourse
Merchants Quay Drug Project	Advice and information available, as part of a suite of services including day programmes, aftercare and family support.	Counselling services available.	Family support services available.		3	Lifecourse
Exchange House	Advice and information on welfare rights available.	Individual counselling.	Parent Plus programme is provided, Alcoholics Anonymous services available, Education programmes and modules.		2	Lifecourse
Breastfeeding Groups	The HSE, Cuidiú and La Leche League offer a range of information and support groups for new mothers across South Dublin City.	Individual support is available to new mothers.	Group-based support is available to new mothers.		1	Birth +

<b>Indirect Support<sup>11</sup></b>						
Indirect Support	Advice and information available.	Services are provided to individual families.			1,2	1
Ana Liffey Drug Project (City Centre)	Information and advice available.	Key work and case management available.	Group work, family therapy available.		3	Lifecourse
Drugs Taskforce and Addiction Response Crumlin (ARC)	Support and education provided.	Counselling and Support Available.	Family Support Services available.	Adult education aftercare and rehabilitation programme.	3	
Garda Youth Diversion Project		Individual work available.	After-schools opportunities in education, employment training, sport, art and music.		2	13-17 years
Vincentian Refugee Centre	Advice and information on issues available.	Advocacy work for service users.	Housing service for asylum seekers and refugees.		3,4	Lifecourse
Crosscare Migrant Project	Information and referral for migrants in vulnerable situations.	Advocacy work for service users.			2	Lifecourse
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)	MRCI free and confidential information, support and advocacy to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.	Casework available.			2	Lifecourse
City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB)	Grant aid youth projects and drugs task force projects. Ensure efficiency assists projects, implement frameworks and roll out standards. Develop and disseminate resource packs.			See website for programmes.	2	Young people

<sup>11</sup> Indirect supports for parents include actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.



Youth Advocate Programme (YAP)		Individual, home-based mentoring.	Group work available.	Intensive support programmes for young people and families, using strength-based, family-focused approach for young people with complex needs.	3,4	Young people
Foróige	Website: Information on services, news and blog, events calendar.	Mentoring – Big Brother Big Sister.	Foróige Clubs.		1,2 2,3 BBBS	10–18 years

### 5.3 Limerick Profile

The Limerick Children and Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC) was established as one of the four pilot CYPSC in 2007. This coincided with the establishment of the Limerick Regeneration Agency, and the work of the CYPSC was closely aligned with that of the Regeneration Agency in its first phase of development. The focus on the areas prioritised under Regeneration continued, but the CYPSC had a city-wide remit. The Limerick City and County Local Authorities amalgamated in 2014, and the CYPSC, in line with this, will prioritise extending its remit to become county-wide in the next phase of work. Early priorities for Limerick CYPSC included:

- A research programme to establish a baseline of needs for children and families in the city. “How are Our Kids?” Experiences and Needs of Children and Families in Limerick with a Particular Emphasis on Limerick’s Regeneration Areas’ in 2012”, was undertaken.
- The Limerick Assessment of Need System (LANS) and Restorative Practices were developed. The LANS Project informed the development nationally of the Local Area Pathways and Meitheal- a National Practice Model.
- The Limerick CYPSC has also prioritised Early Intervention and Prevention in the Early Years. The PAUL Partnership, on behalf of the Limerick CYPSC, secured funding under the National Early Years Access Initiative to develop the Start Right Programme, with additional funding coming from the Limerick Regeneration Agency and the Programme Innovation Development Fund.
- In 2012, the Limerick CYPSC was selected as a key strategic partnership to receive funding under the Programme Innovation Development Fund (PIDF). This funding allowed the development of three key initiatives: Restorative Practices, a Parenting Support Programme (including Parenting Limerick and the Homemaker Family Support Service) and a Quality Assurance Framework.

While the above programmes continue to be priorities for the Limerick CYPSC, more recent priorities include:

- The development of ABC Start Right Limerick, which stemmed from the Start Right Programme, is an early intervention and prevention initiative focusing on the ante-natal to 6 years age-group in the city centre and north side of Limerick city. The programme is jointly funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) and is nationally managed by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) and Pobal. The programme aims to enhance child



development and well-being, provide capacity-building supports to parents, and tackle educational disadvantage using evidence-informed approaches and interventions.

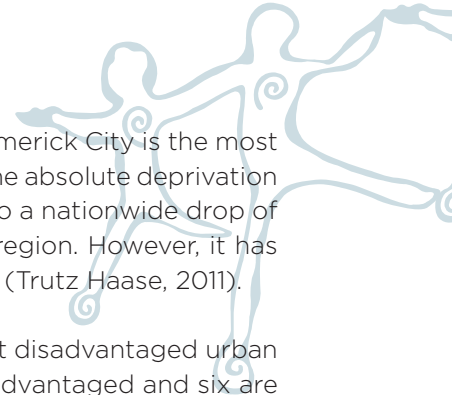
- Led by ABC Start Right Limerick and the Parenting Limerick Network, ABC Start Right designed a population approach to parenting campaign, including a public education campaign and a successful website, Love Parenting.ie.<sup>12</sup>
- Additional priorities are to develop Limerick City and County as a Child-Friendly Region, this will involve ensuring that the voice of the child and the family is captured and meaningfully informs all plans that have an impact on children, that the region is developed in a way that meets the needs of children and families and that all children in the region have access to the services and supports they need to grow and develop to their full potential.
- Extend the remit of the Limerick City CYPSC to become a county-wide structure in line with the amalgamated Local Authority.
- Support the transition from Limerick Assessment of Need System (LANS) to Local Area Pathways (LAPS).
- Continue to support and develop Early Intervention and Prevention Programmes in the Early Years.
- Continue to support, develop and coordinate parenting and family supports across all levels of need.
- Continue to develop Restorative Practices across Limerick.
- Develop key initiatives in priority areas of need, including Youth Mental Health, Child Health, High Needs Young People and Active Learning.
- Develop and implement high-quality, evidence-informed programmes that are responsive to identified needs, outcomes-focused and informed by regular review and evaluation (Children & Young People's Services Committee, 2015).

Table 9: Limerick Demographic Profile<sup>13</sup>

<b>LIMERICK CITY &amp; COUNTY</b>	
Population	In April 2011, Limerick had a population of 226,157, consisting of 112,843 males and 113,314 females.
Relationships	Of the 180,174 persons aged 15 years and over, 79,372 were single, 81,864 were married, 5,627 were separated, 3,870 were divorced and 9,414 were widowed.
Households	There were 81,515 private households in Limerick in April 2011, of which 19,577 were single-person households. Of the 56,643 families in the area, 16,682 were couples with no children.
Children	The average number of children per family was 1.4, compared with 1.4 nationally.
Labour Force	There were 105,908 aged 15 years and over in the labour force, and of these, 80.0 per cent (84,734 persons) were at work. The unemployment rate for this area was 21.0 per cent, compared with a national average rate of 19.0 per cent.
Diversity	Non-Irish nationals accounted for 11.0 per cent of the population of Limerick, compared with a national average figure of 12.0 per cent. Polish (8,061 persons) were the largest group, followed by UK nationals (4,028 persons).
Language	24,466 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home, and of these, 4,636 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home, with 7,935 speakers.
Disability	31,069 persons had a disability in April 2011, of whom 10,105, representing 33.0 per cent of the total, were aged 65 years or over.

<sup>12</sup> Website available at: [www.loveparenting.ie](http://www.loveparenting.ie).

<sup>13</sup> Central Statistics Office (2012) This is Ireland: Highlights from Census 2011 Part 1 [online], available: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census,2011,Highlights,Part,1,web,72dpi.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2015].



Overall, the Mid-West Region is the fourth most deprived region of Ireland, and Limerick City is the most disadvantaged local authority area in the region. Limerick City has seen a drop in the absolute deprivation score, from -7.4 in 2006 to -13.7 in 2011. This represents a drop of 6.3, compared to a nationwide drop of 6.5. In contrast, County Limerick is the most affluent local authority area in the region. However, it has also seen a drop in the absolute deprivation score, from 1.6 in 2006 to -6.1 in 2011 (Trutz Haase, 2011).

Limerick City is characterised by particular extremes, including the country's most disadvantaged urban areas. Of the 38 EDs in Limerick City, 12 are marginally below average, 12 are disadvantaged and six are very disadvantaged. The North and South Quadrants are the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland (Trutz Haase, 2011). Limerick County is less characterised by extremes. Of the 135 EDs in County Limerick, most (75) are marginally below average, while 56 are marginally above average. The more disadvantaged areas in County Limerick are the rural areas in the west of the county.

The Limerick CYPSC undertook a baseline profile of children in Limerick City, with a particular focus on children residing in the regeneration communities (Humphreys, 2012). The research was undertaken in 2010–2011. In all, 418 parents or carers were interviewed, along with 128 children. In addition, 15 focus groups were run. The research paints a picture of a much poorer quality of life, poorer experiences of childhood and worse outcomes for children living in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city. The research identified a number of key areas for attention, including:

1. Improving levels of parental education for those with low levels of educational attainment.
2. Improving the emotional health and well-being of parents, including support with conflict resolution, and promoting better quality of (adult) relationships.
3. Support with access to relevant training and employment opportunities and on-going support to promote retention and progression in education, training and employment.
4. Services to support improved parental mental health.
5. Multi-faceted interventions to improve the physical and social environment and safety issues in the neighbourhood.
6. Ongoing support to encourage parenting styles and strategies associated with the best outcomes for children (Humphreys, 2012).

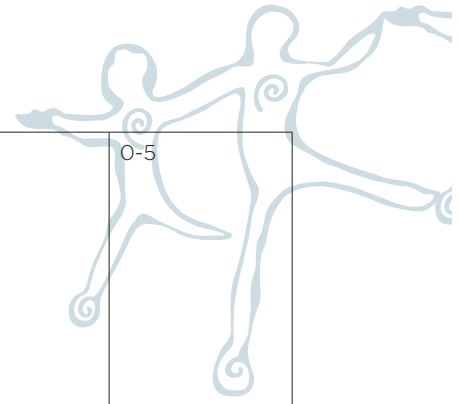
### **5.3.1 Limerick Parenting Support Profile**

This section provides a detailed profile of parenting supports in the Limerick CYPSC area. The data is divided into Direct Supports, including actions aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities, and Indirect Supports, including actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.

Table 10: Limerick Parenting Support Profile

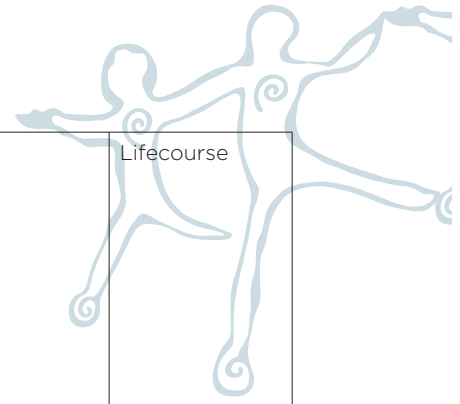
Service	Advice and Information	Individual/ Home-Based	Group-Based	Parent Education & Programmes	Hardiker Level <sup>14</sup>	Lifecourse
<b>Direct Supports</b>						
Barnardos Service Centre  <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Barnardos Family Support Service focuses on improving parenting skills and child/parent relationships in order to reduce subsequent difficulties with children. It works in partnership with other agencies to develop targeted programmes for highly at risk older children and for children involved in anti-social behaviour.	Specific attention is given to those families where child protection concerns exist, to families with ongoing health and welfare problems and/or families in once off or occasional crisis situations. The Homemaker Family Support Service provides practical, home-based support to families that are struggling, working in partnership with families at key periods during the day.	Barnardos offer a range of group-based supports including breakfast clubs and friendship groups. Barnardos also host family welfare conferences. Group work programmes are available to referred families and also the wider community. These include elements such as: parenting classes, programmes for adolescents, after school groups, women's groups and men's groups.	Barnardos Limerick offer a range of parenting courses that cover the lifecourse from birth to adolescence to parenting in challenging circumstances.	1,2,3	Lifecourse
Family Resource Centres in Southill, Northside, Hospital and Croom. Provide a range of different services depending on the Centre.  <i>Tusla Funding</i>	The provision of family support, information and advice at local level. Support and advocacy provided.	Provide individual and home-based support for parents, children, young people and older people.	A range of group based supports offered including; childcare, older peoples services, youth work, men's groups, women's groups and community garden and environment.	Practical assistance to community groups, such as education courses, training & information advice. Courses delivered include a wide range of programmes that respond to the needs of local children and their families including; Dads programme, the IY series, Parents Plus, Family Caring Trust and Strengthening Families.	1,2,3	Lifecourse

<sup>14</sup> Hardiker Levels are based on available descriptions of services and interpretation of data.



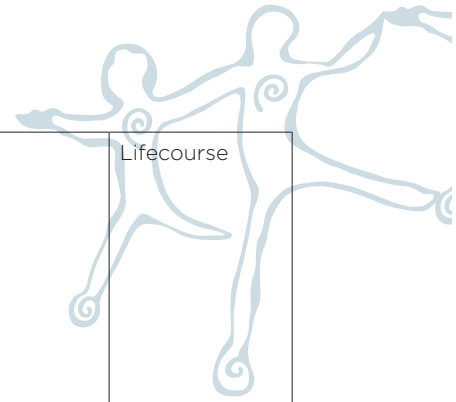
Early Years Services Limerick		Childminding Services	Preschool & Montessori; Private (Sessional, Full Day Care and After School), Community (Sessional, Full Day Care and After School), Voluntary Notified Childminders.		1	0-5
Baby/Toddler and Parent Groups <i>Tusla Funding</i>			Range of community parent and toddler groups available across Limerick.		1	0-3 years
Breastfeeding Groups	The HSE, Ciudú and La Leche League offer a range of support groups for new mothers across Limerick.	Individual support is available to new mothers.	Group based support is available to new mothers. Experience and resource sharing available (Ciudú).		1	Birth +
Ciudú	The aim of Ciudú is to support parents through all the stages of parenthood whether you are the parents of a newborn baby or parents of school-going children.	Individual support available. Parent to parent support. Breast feeding (as above), antenatal support, post-natal depression.	Group support available. Parent support mornings. Toddler groups.	Experience and resource sharing. Parent to parent events which are informational and educational.	1	Birth +

<p>Paul Partnership <i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>PAUL Partnership is a local, area-based, multi-sectoral partnership company, based in Limerick City, website offers information on activities.</p>	<p>Under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) the PAUL Partnership offers a range of; employment supports, enterprise and self-employment supports. One-to-one advice and support is provided in relation to accessing education and lifelong learning opportunities in Limerick.</p>	<p>Provide a range Community Development supports to groups serving local communities.</p>	<p>Runs Incredible Years early intervention programme targeting children ranging in age from young infants to twelve years old who are exhibiting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Runs ABC Start Right Limerick; an early intervention and prevention initiative focusing on the ante-natal to 6 years age-group. The programme aims to enhance child development and well-being, provide capacity-building supports to parents, and tackle educational disadvantage using evidence-informed approaches and interventions.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>	<p>Lifecourse</p>
<p>Le Cheile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services <i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Information and support for families engaged with the Probation Services.</p>	<p>Individual support is available.</p>	<p>Group support is available. Parents Plus and Non-Violent Resistance Training.</p>	<p>Parental and Youth mentoring Service, Restorative Justice Programmes through referral from Probation Services.</p>	<p>3, 4</p>	<p>12-18</p>



Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, HSE	Drug and Alcohol Counselling and Information Service.	Adult and adolescent counselling available. Medical support available.		Education and Prevention. Let's Learn About Drugs Together pilot programme aimed at engaging parents and pupils in a shared learning experience about substance use.	1,2,3	Lifecourse
Community Substance Misuse Team	Information, support and advocacy dealing with substance misuse.	Work with young people and families.		Runs Strengthening Families, a skills based programme for the whole family targeted at parents/carers and young people ages 12-16.	2	Lifecourse
Limerick Social Service Centre (LSSC) <i>Tusla Funding</i>	The LSSC provides a number of services to families in Limerick. Information, counselling, support, crèche, pre-school, parenting support (see below), referrals and advocacy for parents and families. Family welfare conferences.	The family advocacy service, counselling, parenting supports and the family welfare conferences all provide some form of one-to-one support.	The family advocacy service, peer support groups and parent groups. Family welfare conferences, Teen Parent Support programme and Community Mothers, all provide some form of group supports. A large number of voluntary organisations run group support programmes from the centre.	Parenting Support and Sexual Health and Education Programme for parents of teenagers and teenagers around issues of parenting, relationships, sexual health and communication.	1, 2, 3	Lifecourse
Community Mothers Limerick Social Services Centre (LSSC) <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Support, advice and information.	Community Mother home visits. One to one support, parenting support, advice and information.	Parent and baby/toddler groups.		1,2	0-3 years

<p>Parent Support Programme Limerick (Limerick Social Services Centre LSSC)</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Information and Support covers, where possible, all issues relevant to parenting. This service is available to all parents of children of all ages.</p>	<p>Phone contact, parent facilitation, information provision. Advocacy services. Counselling services. Teen parents support programme one to one support. The Teen Parents Support Programme Limerick is a confidential support programme for young people who are pregnant or who are parents. Support is offered in all areas of the young person's life. Support is also available to the young person's partner and members of their extended families. Community Mothers one to one support.</p>	<p>and parent groups. Family Welfare Conferences. Teen Parent Support programme group support. Community Mothers group support.</p>			
<p>Child and Family Agency Parenting Support Programme</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>TUSLA Parent Support provides support and advice in the delivery of parent/ toddler groups, information on existing groups and supports the development of new groups. Delivers a broad range of parent programmes.</p>		<p>Parenting programmes offered to groups.</p>	<p>Delivers a range of programmes including Incredible Years, Strengthening Families and Parents Plus in partnership with community programmes.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>	<p>Lifecourse</p>

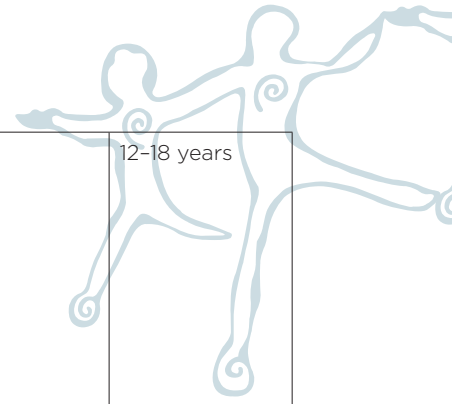


<p>Sophia Housing Family Support</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Provides support, advocacy and information.</p>	<p>Outreach, family and single persons support. Supports around areas of; Home management, budgeting, parenting, school attendance, training/ education, good neighbours and social networks.</p>		<p>Provides a programme that is designed and aimed at supporting families and single people to be able to live in their own home with short/long term supports.</p>	1,2,3	Lifecourse
<p>Bedford Row Family Support</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Provides support and counselling to families, provides information, referral and advocacy, aimed at families in the justice system.</p>	<p>Provides support and counselling to families.</p>	<p>Group work including Bedford Row Support Groups for Parents.</p>	<p>Organising courses based on outcomes of focus group research and needs of those present.</p>	3,4	Lifecourse
<p>Bedford Row Support Group for Parents</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Helpline available for parents and members of the public.</p>		<p>Life skills and other formal and non-formal groups that focus on family responsibilities at the core of which is 'good enough' parenting.</p>		1,2	Lifecourse
<p>ISPCC Family Support</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Helpline available for parents and members of the public.</p>	<p>Parent mentoring provided to increase parents confidence. More formal support can also be accessed for children and parents who need it.</p>			2	Lifecourse
<p>Focus Ireland Family Support Service</p> <p><i>Tusla Funding</i></p>	<p>Offers individuals and families advice, support and information on education and housing welfare rights and entitlements. Provides Information on child development and parenting skills.</p>	<p>One-to-one support, parenting support, activities, services and supports.</p>		<p>Education, training and employment.</p>	1,2,3	Lifecourse



ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Advice and information available.	One to one support.	Support Groups Refuge Accommodation.		3	Lifecourse
Family Advocacy Service	A confidential support service for parents and families whose children are in care. Information and advice available.	Supports parents and families to continue their involvement with their children while they are in care. Provides advocacy, referral and one on one support.	Group support also available.		4	Lifecourse
West Limerick Resources (WLR) <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Provides information and supports to parents, children and families through a range of programmes.	One to one parenting support and information. Supports for employment, education and training under the SICAP programme. Rural Employment and Education Service. Referrals.	Group activities, workshops and support for parent and toddler groups. Jobs club. Rural Social Scheme. Tuas Programme. Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers.	Education and training depending on individual circumstances.	1,2,3	Lifecourse
<b>Indirect Supports<sup>15</sup></b>						
Youth Advocate Programme (YAP) <i>Tusla Funding</i>		Individual, home-based mentoring.	Group work available.	Intensive support programmes for young people and families, using strength based family focused approach for young people with complex needs.	3,4	Young people

<sup>15</sup> Indirect supports for parents include actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.



Family Mediation Services	Mediation is a service to help couples in Ireland who have decided to separate or divorce, or who have already separated, to negotiate their own terms of agreement, while addressing the needs and interests of all involved. Mediation allows people to make their own decisions.	Mediation encourages the separating couple to co-operate with each other in working out mutually acceptable arrangements including parenting the children.			1,2	12-18 years
Special Projects for Youth (SPY)	Special out-of-school projects for disadvantaged young people. Priority is given to projects in the spheres of special youth work initiatives, young homeless people, young substance abusers and young Travellers. SPY also provides support & information.		Grants are allocated to organisations and groups for specific projects. The SPY project also engages and works with parents, schools, and other local agencies and volunteers. Run by Limerick Youth Service.		2	2+
Garda Youth Diversion Project			After schools opportunities in education, employment training, sport, art and music.		2	13-17 years
Foróige <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Website: Information on services, news and blog, events calendar	Mentoring- Big Brother Big Sister	Foroige Clubs Youth Citizenship Programme Midlands Drug Education Programme Youth Cafés LEAP Project (as in GYDP)		2	13-17 years

The Northstar Family Support Project <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Information and support provided	Provides non-judgemental, confidential support to families who are affected by, and trying to cope with, a family member's addiction to drugs and alcohol.			1, 2, 3	Lifecourse
Novas Intensive Family Support Service <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Information and advice available	Assessment and comprehensive support plans with clients in order to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies.			1,2,3	Lifecourse
Ballyhoura Development <i>Tusla Funding</i>	Provides a range of supports to parents and families. Information and advice available.	Provides supports to individuals seeking training and back to work supports. Support on personal development.	Provides support to community groups and small businesses. Parenting programmes such as incredible Years. Women's groups. Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) groups.	Run domestic abuse awareness campaigns.	1,2,3	Lifecourse

#### 5.4 Kerry Profile

The Kerry Children and Young People's Services Committee was established in 2010, and reports to the Kerry Local Community Development Committee. The Committee has completed a work plan for 2014-2017. The CYPSC established the following working groups to address issues that have a significant impact on children, young people and families in the area. An action plan has been prepared for each of the working group areas. The areas include Child and Youth Mental Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Intervention and Disability Services; Parenting and Family Learning; Preventions, Partnership and Family Support; Youth Participation; and Research and Information. Kerry CYPSC has produced a number of publications, including well-being reports, directories of services, and information leaflets and fact sheets. Kerry's Parenting and Family Learning subgroup supports the co-ordination of Parenting and Family Learning Programmes for parents in Kerry. A number of actions and initiatives are underway to support children to be 'school ready' and parents to be 'child ready'. In addition, Kerry CYPSC has:

- Supported the reconfiguration of disability services in the county
- Mapped volunteer-led youth clubs in Kerry
- Worked very closely with Kerry Comhairle na nÓg (Children & Young People's Services Committee, 2015)

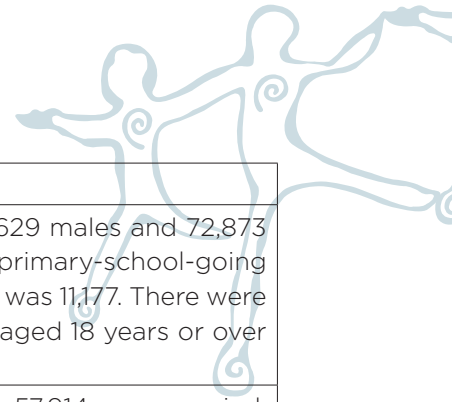


Table 11: Kerry Demographic Profile<sup>16</sup>

<b>KERRY</b>	
Population	In April 2011 Kerry had a population of 145,502, consisting of 72,629 males and 72,873 females. The population of preschool age (0–4) was 10,025, of primary-school-going age (5–12) was 15,326, and of secondary-school-going age (13–18) was 11,177. There were 20,988 persons aged 65 years and over. The number of persons aged 18 years or over was 110,562.
Relationships	Of the 116,150 persons aged 15 years and over, 44,862 were single, 57,914 were married, 3,377 were separated, 2,866 were divorced and 7,131 were widowed.
Households	There were 53,306 private households in Kerry in April 2011, of which 14,038 were single-person households.
Children	Of the 37,248 families in the area, 11,153 were couples with no children. The average number of children per family was 1.4, compared with 1.4 nationally.
Labour Force	The unemployment rate for this area was 19.5 per cent, compared with a national average rate of 19.0 per cent.
Diversity	Non-Irish nationals accounted for 11.2 per cent of the population of Kerry, compared with a national average figure of 12.0 per cent. UK nationals (5,191 persons) were the largest group, followed by Polish (4,048 persons).
Language	13,109 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home, and of these, 2,507 could not speak English well or at all.
Disability	19,168 persons had a disability in April 2011, of whom 7,392, representing 38.6 per cent of the total, were aged 65 years or over.

Drawing on area deprivation indices, it can be reported that overall, the South West Region is the third most affluent in Ireland. Kerry was also affected by the economic downturn, reflected in the drop in the absolute deprivation score from -2.1 in 2006 to -8.9 in 2011, slightly above the national average. Variation exists within the county, but no extremes are recorded in either affluence or deprivation. The most affluent parts are located around Killarney, while the most disadvantaged parts are further north and on the Iveragh peninsula (Trutz Haase, 2011).

#### **5.4.1 Kerry Parenting Support Profile**

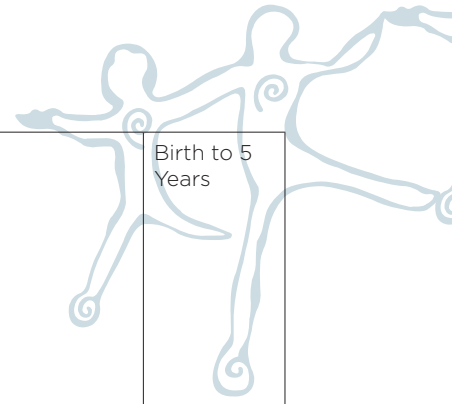
This section provides a detailed profile of parenting supports in the Kerry CYPSC area. The data is divided into Direct Supports, including actions aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities, and Indirect Supports, including actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.

<sup>16</sup> Central Statistics Office (2012) This is Ireland: Highlights from Census 2011 Part 1 [online], available: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census,2011,Highlights,Part,1,web,72dpi.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2015].

Table 12: Kerry Parenting Support Profile

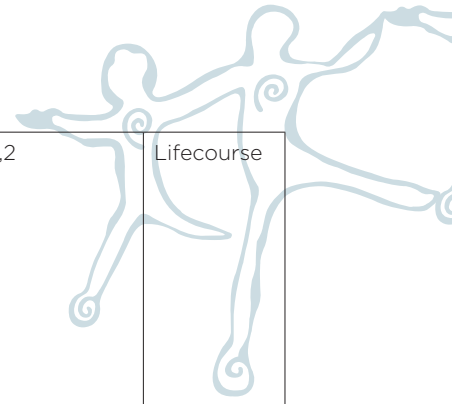
Service	Advice & Information	Individual/ Home-Based	Group-Based	Parent Education & Programmes	Hardiker Level <sup>17</sup>	Lifecourse
<b>Direct Supports</b>						
Family Resource Centres	The provision of family support, information and advice at local level. Support and advocacy provided.	Provide individual and home-based support.	16 centres across county Kerry.	Courses delivered include a wide range of programmes that respond to the needs of local children and their families. Programmes in Kerry include; Parenting programmes such as; Parents Plus (early years and adolescents), Parents First, Incredible Years, Strengthening Families, Non Violent Resistance. Disability support groups, Women's Groups, Creative Parenting Programme, Parenting Skills for Families, Conflict Resolution, Family Communication, Art Therapy, Low cost Counselling supports and Play Therapy. Childcare and Afterschool Services. Antenatal classes. Postnatal Depression Support Group.	1	Lifecourse
The Irish Foster Care Association	Rights-based, child-centred organisation which promotes family-based solutions for children and young people in out-of-home care.	Counselling Helpline is provided to those who have taken out IFCA insurance, trained counsellors.		The Foundation for Fostering training programme is for prospective foster carers and their families.	2	Lifecourse

<sup>17</sup> Hardiker Levels are based on available descriptions of services and interpretation of data.



Early Years Services/ Voluntary Notification of Childminders		Childminding Services.	Preschool & Montessori; Private (Sessional, Full Day Care and After-School), Community (Sessional, Full Day Care and After-School), Voluntary Notified Childminders.		1	Birth to 5 Years
Breastfeeding Groups	The HSE, Cuidiú and La Leche League offer a range of support groups.	Individual Support is available to new mothers.	Group-based support is available to new mothers.		1	Birth +
Lactation consultant support	Lactation Support available across the county from a certified Lactation consultant (PHN).	Individual Support.			1	Birth +
Parent & Toddler Groups	Peer support for parents/childminders/carers of toddlers.		48 groups across county Kerry.	Peer support for parents and play/learning resources for babies and toddlers.	1	0-3
Baby and Us Programme. Listowel.	Provides support and education to new mothers around speech and language, physiotherapy, nutrition, immunisations, first aid and massage.		Group based		1	Birth +
Meet a Mum Groups	Information on new baby's early development organised by PHN and local communities.		Workshops which provide group-based support and professional advice.	Workshops provided by Speech and Language therapists, dietitians, Red Cross, psychotherapy, etc.	1,2	Birth +
HSE Community Parents	Support and information for first and second-time parents.		Home-based support is available.	Community parents are trained as peer mentors. Aim is to enhance parental capacity and improve child well-being. Information on healthcare, nutrition, development and other aspects of parenting.	1	Lifecourse

Le Cheile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services	Information and support for families engaged with the Probation Services.	Individual support is available.	Group support is available.	Parental and Youth mentoring Service, Restorative Justice Programmes through referral from Probation Services.	3,4	12-18
Language & Play Programme	Information and ideas on interacting with babies/children.		Group support is available.	Parenting programme aims to offer rhymes, song and story to assist in the interaction with the child both at home and when out and about.	1	0-3
Dyslexia & Dyspraxia North Kerry Parent Support	Support and information in relation to dyslexia and dyspraxia.	Individual support is available.	Group support is available.	Support programme enabling parents to voice and discuss concerns relating to dyslexia and dyspraxia.	2	Lifecourse
Parent First	Information and support in the development of parenting skills.	Individual support is available.	Group support is available.	The programme considers how parents connect with and build good relationships with their child. Through use of role-play, facilitator input, guided discussions the course aims to teach parents the skills of effective communication and conflict resolution.	1	Lifecourse
Family Learning	Advice and Support provided by Kerry Education Service.		Group-based activities.	Special courses for parents to help them to support their child's learning.	1	Lifecourse



Kerry County Childcare Committee	KCCC provide a range practical and information supports in Kerry. Including; Supports and Grants for parent and toddler groups. Directory of Services; information on all childcare services, parent and toddler groups, Childcare Funding Schemes. In addition they provide a webpage detailing information that may be of interest to parents.	Telephone support available.	Group support available.		1,2	Lifecourse
<b>Indirect Supports<sup>18</sup></b>						
Youth Advocate Programme (YAP)		Individual, home-based mentoring.	Group work available.	Intensive support programmes for young people and families, using strength-based, family-focused approach for young people with complex needs.	3,4	Young people
Foróige	Website: Information on services, news and blog, events calendar.	Mentoring – Big Brother Big Sister.	Foróige Clubs. Youth Citizenship Programme. Midlands Drug Education Programme. Youth Cafés LEAP Project (as in GYDP).		1,2 2,3 BBBS	10-18 years
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service	Information and support for the needs of young people.		8 centres across county Kerry with engagement to Youth Café, Drop-in Service & Band Projects.	Programmes deliver activities relating to general well-being with focus on personal and social development, capacity building ,self-esteem, decision making, sexual health, drug and alcohol awareness, also mental health and healthy eating.	1	0-18

<sup>18</sup> Indirect supports for parents include actions aimed at individual parents or families where the nature of the work supports parents or individual family members in improving their own life trajectory.



Community-Based Drugs Initiative	Support and information on drug abuse.	One-on-one support which can be ongoing.	Three different locations catering for different ages.	Initiative provides continuous support and information to families and concerned persons.	3	12-25
Arbour House Addiction Treatment Centre	Assessment, treatment and counselling for people with alcohol, drug or gambling problems.	Individual support available.	Community Services serve Cork and Kerry.	Access to service by individual or family member/ concerned person. Parental consent necessary if under 18.	3	Lifecourse
Adolescent Treatment Centres. Provided by (1) Aislinn and (2) Cara Lodge serving Cork and Kerry	Open referral policy/ referrals from counsellors, treatment Services, probation and Welfare Officers, social workers.	Individual support provided.		(1) Family-oriented residential treatment programme for young people with drug/alcohol and gambling addictions. (2) Multidisciplinary therapeutic environment providing residential treatment programme.	3	14-21
Kerry Adolescent Counselling Service	Professional counselling service specialising in working with adolescents.	Individual and one-to-one counselling and psychotherapy.			1	12-18
Killorglin Neighbourhood Youth Project (Mid-Kerry area)	Support for young people and families in partnership with other agencies. Referrals from parents, schools. Social workers and juvenile liaison officers.	One-on-one support is available.	Group work and family support.	Ensuring integration of services delivery to young people and their families.	2	12-18
KDYS Youth Information Service	Youth information service.	Individual support can be provided.	Service location: Tralee and Killarney.	Service acts as a first point of contact for a young person. It will identify where help can be found and will support the young person in availing of that help.	1	11-18

# 6



## 6. Conclusion and Key Messages.

It is clear that the experiences and circumstances of parents in Ireland vary considerably. While some families may require universal supports, others may have more complex needs and require more tailored interventions. While vulnerable families may require interventions based on their level of need, in other cases it may be more important to consider the type of service user and parenting relationship. This study provides a mapping of parenting support service provision in Ireland. It outlines the policy context, the existing evidence base and is informed by the best available data. It details the delivery of services in specific geographical areas to provide additional insight, highlighting the similarities and diversity across areas in providing parenting support.

A set of key messages have emerged:

- Parenting support itself is a broad concept, it includes direct supports and actions aimed exclusively at improving parental skills and capacities, and indirect parent and family supports aimed at improving outcomes for families.
- The delivery of parenting supports in Ireland is multi-faceted. At a national level, a number of government departments are responsible for the delivery of a range of supports in different contexts. At a local level, the delivery of services varies from area to area.
- Indirect supports for parents and families are fundamental to the delivery of parenting support. They may be aimed at families in particular contexts or families with particular needs. Such services indirectly support parents to improve outcomes for their families.
- Interagency working at a national and local level is an important element in the delivery of services. While a variety of stakeholders and service providers are committed to delivering a broad range of services for parents and families, the emphasis on working together has proved successful.
- A progressive universal approach to the provision of parenting support ensures that parents in particular contexts are provided with appropriate services, contributing to positive outcomes for their families.
- While the success of evidence-based, programmatic parenting courses are evident in the areas profiled, such programmes are complemented by a range of local-level family supports and one-to-one initiatives which are also effective in delivering supports to parents.
- It is important that parents are aware of available services, however evidence shows that this is not always the case.
- Non-engagement and dropout rates are significant barriers to successful outcomes. The reasons behind these issues need further exploration in programme evaluation and research.

- Ongoing assessment of need is key to the planning of services. For example, responding to the needs of parents who do not speak English as a first language.
- Parent's emotional well-being is essential to improving outcomes for children and families. An emphasis on 'coping' in the strategic direction of parent support service planning would support positive outcomes for children and families.
- Despite an emphasis on inclusivity there remains a possibility that all parents may not access the supports available to them. Providing opportunities for all parents to engage with existing services is important and should be reflected in service planning.

While the data presented here is the best available, challenges arose in collecting and compiling sufficient adequate data for this mapping. Additional data on capacity and uptake across programmes and practice could contribute to measuring the effectiveness of parenting support in an Irish context.

This detailed mapping study indicates that needs vary considerably, and that needs analysis at a population and local level is imperative to the planning and delivery of services to parents and families. This study is illustrative of existing structures and mechanisms in parenting support in the Irish context.



## References

- Anamcara (2013) *Anamcara Annual Report* [online], available: <https://anamcara.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Anam-Cara-Annual-Report-2013.pdf> [accessed 27 January 2017].
- Barnardos (2015a) *Barnardos: What We Do* [online], available: <http://www.barnardos.ie/what-we-do.html> [accessed 12 October 2015].
- Barnardos (2015b) *Parents: Resources and Advice for Parents* [online], available: <http://www.barnardos.ie/resources-advice/parents.html> [accessed 30 July 2015].
- Belsky, J., Melhuish, E., Barnes, J., Leyland, A. H. and Romaniuk, H. (2006) 'Effects of Sure Start local programmes on children and families: early findings from a quasi-experimental, cross sectional study', *British Medical Journal*, 332(7556), 1476.
- Broadhurst, K. (2009) 'Safeguarding children through parenting support: how does every parent matter?', *Critical Perspectives on Safeguarding Children*, 111-130.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press.
- Cefai, J., Smith, D. and Pushak, R. E. (2010) 'Parenting wisely: Parent training via CD-ROM with an Australian sample', *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 32(1), 17-33.
- Central Statistics Office (2012) *This is Ireland: Highlights from Census 2011 Part 1* [online], available: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census,2011,Highlights,Part,1,web,72dpi.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2015].
- Centre for Effective Services (2012) *Prevention & Early Intervention in Children and Young People's Services: Parenting Briefing Paper*, Dublin: Centre for Effective Services.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (2014) *Fifth Annual Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report*, Dublin: Child and Adult Mental Health Services.
- Child and Family Agency (2015a) *Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence Services* [online], available: <http://www.tusla.ie/services/domestic-sexual-gender-based-violence/> [accessed 12 September 2015].
- Child and Family Agency (2015b) *Early Years (Pre-School) Inspectorate* [online], available: <http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services> [accessed 12 July 2015].
- Child and Family Agency (2015c) *Meitheal Toolkit*, Dublin: Child and Family Agency.
- Child and Family Agency (2015d) *Parenting Support: Why Support Parents* [online], available: <http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/parenting-information/positive-parenting/> [accessed 7 September 2015].
- Childminding Ireland (2015) *The National Childminding Association of Ireland: About Us* [online], available: <http://www.childminding.ie/about-us/> [accessed 6 August 2015].
- Children's Mental Health Coalition (2015) *Meeting the Mental Health Support Needs of Children and Adolescents*, Dublin: Children's Mental Health Coalition.

Children & Young People's Services Committee (2015) *Your County CYPSC* [online], available: <http://www.cypsc.ie/your-county-cypsc.169.html> [accessed 12 December 2015].

Citizens Information (2015) *Your Childcare Options* [online], available: [http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre\\_school\\_education\\_and\\_childcare/your\\_childcare\\_options.html](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre_school_education_and_childcare/your_childcare_options.html) [accessed 3 October 2015].

Clarke, J., Corcoran, Y. and Duffy, M. (2011) *The dynamics of sharing professional knowledge and lay knowledge: A study of parents and professionals experiences of childhood interventions within a Marte Meo framework*, Dublin: Dublin City University.

Clavero, S. (2001) *Parenting Support: An International Overview*, Belfast: Queen's University of Belfast.

Coen, L. and Canavan, J. (2012) *Globe: All-Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents. Final Evaluation Report*, Galway: Child and Family Research Centre.

Coen, L., Canavan, J. and Brennan, M. (2012) *Mol an Óige/Family Preservation Final Evaluation Report: Executive Summary*, Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre.

Coen, L. and Kearns, N. (2008) *Time 4 Us Evaluation Report*, Galway: Child and Family Research Centre.

Commission on the Family (1998) *Strengthening Families: The Final Report of the Commission on the Family*, Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

Connolly, N., Devaney C., (2016) *Working with Families: A Review of the Literature on Parental Participation Galway* : The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Connolly, P., Miller, S. and Eakin, A. (2010) 'A cluster randomised trial evaluation of the media initiative for children: Respecting difference programme', Belfast: Centre for Effective Education.

Coughlin, M., Sharry, J., Fitzpatrick, C., Guerin, S. and Drumm, M. (2009) 'A Controlled Clinical Evaluation of the Parents Plus Children's Programme: A Video-based Programme for Parents of Children Aged 6 to 11 with Behavioural and Developmental Problems', *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 14(4), 541-558.

Cuidiú (2015) *Cuidiú Caring Support for Parenthood: What We Do* [online], available: [http://www.cuidiu-ict.ie/whycuidiu\\_WhatWeDo](http://www.cuidiu-ict.ie/whycuidiu_WhatWeDo) [accessed 11 October 2015].

Cura (2015) *Cura Cares: About Our Services* [online] available: <http://www.cura.ie/about> [accessed 27 November 2015].

Daly, M. (2011) *Building a Coordinated Strategy for Parenting Support*, Paris: European Commission: Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Daly, M. (2013) 'Parenting support: Another gender-related policy illusion in Europe?', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Elsevier, 223-230.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2014) *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*, Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) *High-Level Policy Statement on Supporting Parents and Families ('Parenting and Family Support')*, Dublin.



Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2017) *Government clears way for Childcare legislation "Laws underpinning radical new approach to be prioritised"* Statement by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone [online], available:<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=4098> [accessed 26 January 2017].

Department of Education and Skills (2015) *Early Start Programme* [online], available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Grants-and-Additional-Support/Early-Start-Programme/> [accessed 12 October 2015].

Department of Health and Children (2007) *The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook*, Dublin: Office of the Minister for Children.

Devaney, C. and Byrne, P. (2015) 'The Value of Family Welfare Conferencing within the Child Protection and Welfare System', *Child Care in Practice*, (ahead of print), 1-17.

Devaney, C., Canavan, J., Landy, F. and Gillen, A. (2013) *What Works in Family Support*, Dublin: Child and Family Agency.

Devaney, C. and Dolan, P. (2015) *High-Level Policy Statement on Parenting Support*, Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs [online], available: <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20150413HighLevPolicyStatonFamilySupportParentsandFamENGLISH.pdf> [accessed 2 May 2016].

Devaney, C. and Kearns, N. (2010) 'Family Support Now: Reflecting on Contemporary Challenges', *Administration*, 58(2), 1-14.

Devlin, M., Connolly, N., McGarry, K. and McMahon, B. (2014) *Longitudinal Evaluation of Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland*, Dublin: YAP Ireland.

Dolan, P., Canavan, J., Mc Garry, O., Forkan, F., Coen, L., Fives, A., Robins, L. and O'Sullivan, P. (2013) *The BELONG Programme-Final Evaluation Report*, Galway: Child and Family Research Centre.

Family Support Agency (2013a) *Building Strategic Frameworks for Family Support: Evaluation of One Family's Positive Parenting: Building Strong Relationships and Managing Difficult Behaviour as Best Practice Model for Family Resource Centres*, Dublin: Family Support Agency.

Family Support Agency (2013b) *Strategic Framework for Family Support within the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme*, Dublin: Child and Family Agency.

Fitzpatrick, P., Molloy, B. and Johnson, Z. (1997) 'Community mothers' programme: extension to the travelling community in Ireland', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 51(3), 299-303.

Fives, A., Pursell, L., Heary, C., Nic Gabhainn, S. and Canavan, J. (2014c) *Parenting support for every parent: A population-level evaluation of Triple P in Longford Westmeath. Summary Report. Athlone: Longford Westmeath Parenting Partnership (LWPP)*.

Fives, Pursell, L., Heary, C., Nic Gabhainn, S. and Canavan, J. (2014a) *Parenting Support for Every Parent: A Population-Level Evaluation of Triple P in Longford Westmeath. Final Report*, Athlone, Ireland.

Fives, A., Canavan, J. and Dolan, P. (2014b) *Evaluation Study Design: A Pluralist Approach to Evidence*, Galway: National University of Ireland, Galway.

- Fleischer, J., Warner, J., McCulty, C. and Marks, M. B. (2006) 'Youth advocacy: programming justice-focused family support intervention', *Family support as reflective practice*, 118-133.
- Geraghty, T., Molyneaux, F. and Dunne, C. (2012) *A Fidelity and Implementation Study of the Eager and Able to Learn Programme*, Belfast.
- Gillen, A., Tuohy, O., Morrissey, M., Gaynor, J., Canavan, J., Devaney, C., Landy, F. & Coen, L. (2013) *Investing in Families: Supporting Parents to Improve Outcomes for Children: Child and Family Agency* (Tusla).
- Hand, A., McDonnell, E., Honari, B. and Sharry, J. (2013) 'A community-led approach to delivery of the Parents Plus Children's Programme for the parents of children aged 6-11', *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 13(2), 87-90.
- Hand, A., Raghallaigh, C. N., Cuppage, J., Coyle, S. and Sharry, J. (2012) 'A controlled clinical evaluation of the Parents Plus Children's Programme for parents of children aged 6-12 with mild intellectual disability in a school setting', *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 1359104512460861.
- Hardiker, P., Exton, K. and Barker, M. (1991) 'The social policy contexts of prevention in child care', *British Journal of Social Work*, 21(4), 341-359.
- Hayes, N., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Keegan, S. and Goulding, E. (2013) *Evaluation of the 'Early Years' Programme of the Childhood Development Initiative*, Dublin: Childhood Development Initiative.
- Health Service Executive (2015a) *Crisis Pregnancy Service: Overview* [online], available: <http://www.crisispregnancy.ie/media-info/overview/> [accessed 10 October 2015].
- Health Service Executive (2015b) *Early Intervention Team* [online], available: <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/PrimaryCare/pcteams/dublinsouthpcts/dunlaoghaireglathulepct/eit.html> [accessed 12 March 2016].
- Health Service Executive (2015c) *General Practitioners or Family Doctors* [online], available: <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/gp/> [accessed 12 October 2015].
- Health Service Executive (2015d) *Public Health Nurses* [online], available: [http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/LHO/CavanMonaghan/Public\\_Health\\_Nurse/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/LHO/CavanMonaghan/Public_Health_Nurse/) [accessed 11 October 2015].
- Higgins, K., Macdonald, G., McLaughlin, K., O'Hara, L., McCann, M. and Moriarty, J. (2012) *Parenting UR Teen: A Randomised Trial of Implementation and Effectiveness*, Belfast.
- Humphreys, E. (2012) *How Are Our Kids? Experiences and Needs of Children and Families in Limerick Regeneration Areas*, Limerick: IKOS Limited.
- Johnson, R. and Wilson, H. (2012) 'Parents' evaluation of "Understanding Your Child's Behaviour", a parenting group based on the Solihull Approach', *Community Practitioner*, 85(5), 29-33.
- Johnson, Z., Molloy, B., Scallan, E., Fitzpatrick, P., Rooney, B., Keegan, T. and Byrne, P. (2000) 'Community mothers programme: seven-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial of non-professional intervention in parenting', *Journal of Public Health Medicine*, 22(3), 337-342.
- Keane, M. (2012) 'Evaluating the Strengthening Families Programme', *Drugnet Ireland*, 18-19.



Lifestart (2015) *The Programme for Parents: About Us* [online], available: <http://www.lifestartfoundation.org/> [accessed 27 November 2015].

Longford Westmeath Children's Services Committee (2011) *Longford Westmeath Children Services Committee: Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2013* [online], available: [http://www.cypsc.ie/\\_fileupload/Documents/Resources/CYPP/Longford%20Westmeath%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%E2%80%99s%20Plan%202011%20to%202013.pdf](http://www.cypsc.ie/_fileupload/Documents/Resources/CYPP/Longford%20Westmeath%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%E2%80%99s%20Plan%202011%20to%202013.pdf) [accessed 20 December 2015].

Lucas, P. J. (2011) 'Some reflections on the rhetoric of parenting programmes: evidence, theory, and social policy', *Journal of Family Therapy*, 33, 181-198.

Mc Guinness, C., Eakin, C. and Connolly, P. (2012) *An Evaluation of the Effects of the Eager and Able to Learn Programme on Outcomes for 2-3 Year Olds in Early Years Settings*, Belfast: Centre for Effective Education.

McGilloway, S., Ní Mháile, G., Furlong, M., Hyland, L., Leckey, Y., Kelly, P., Bywater, T., Comiskey, C., Lodge, A., O'Neill, D. and Donnelly, M. (2012) *The Incredible Years Ireland Study: Parents, Teachers and Early Childhood Intervention. Long Term Outcomes of the Incredible Years Parent and Teacher Classroom Management Training Programmes*, Dublin: Archways.

McKeown, K. (2000) 'A guide to what works in family support services for vulnerable families', Dublin: Stationery Office.

McKeown, K., Haasse, T. and Pratschke, J. (2001) *Springboard: Promoting Family Wellbeing Through Family Support Services*, Dublin: Department of Health and Children.

Millar, M., Coen, L., Bradley, C. and Rau, H. (2012) "'Doing the job as a parent": Parenting alone, work, and family policy in Ireland', *Journal of Family Issues*, 33(1), 29-51.

Miller, S., Sneddon, H., Dunne, L., Adams, H., Millen, S. and McLaughlin, A. (2010) *A Randomised Control Trial Evaluation of the Lifestart Parenting Programme: Interim Report*, Londonderry: Lifestart.

Molgaard, V. K., Spoth, R. L. and Redmond, C. (2000) *Competency Training: The Strengthening Families Program, for Parents and Youth 10-14*, Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Molinuevo, D. (2013) *Parenting Support in Europe*, Dublin: Eurofound.

Moran, P., Ghate, D. and Van Der Merwe, A. (2004) *What Works in Parenting Support? A Review of the International Evidence*, Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills Policy Research Bureau.

One Family (2015) *One Family Ireland: About Us* [online], available: <https://onefamily.ie/about-us/> [accessed 20 November 2015].

O'Sullivan, C. and Morgan, M. (2014) *Learning Together: The Incredible Years A Report on the Progress of the Incredible Years Project in Limerick City*. Limerick: PAUL Partnership.

Nitsch, E., Hannon, G., Rickard, E., Houghton, S. and Sharry, J. (2015) 'Positive parenting: a randomised controlled trial evaluation of the Parents Plus Adolescent Programme in schools', *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 9(1), 1-12.



Parentline (2015) *Parentline Guiding Parents Supporting Families: About Us* [online], available: <http://www.parentline.ie/about/> [accessed 11 October 2015].

Parents Plus (2014) *Parenting When Separated Programme: Research* [online], available: <http://www.parentsplus.ie/programmes-about/parenting-when-separated/> [accessed 30 September 2015].

Parents Plus (2015) *Parents Plus Empowering Professionals to Support Families: About* [online], available: <http://www.parentsplus.ie/about/> [accessed 11 October 2015].

Pinkerton, J., Dolan, P. and Canavan, J. (2004) 'Family support in Ireland: definition and strategic intent', *Department of health and children. Dublin: Stationery Office*.

Positive Options (2015) *About Positive Options* [online], available: <http://www.positiveoptions.ie/about-positive-options/> [accessed 11 October 2015].

Reach Out (2015) *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services* [online], available: <http://ie.reachout.com/getting-help/face-to-face-help/services-explained/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services/> [accessed 9 October 2015].

Riordan, S. (2002) *Final Evaluation Report of the Teen Parents Support Initiative*, Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology.

Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Rochford, S., Doherty, N. and Owens, S. (2014) *Prevention and Early Intervention in Children and Young People's Services: Ten years of Learning, Dublin: Centre for Effective Services* [online], available: [http://www.effectiveservices.org/images/uploads/PEII\\_10\\_Years\\_of\\_Learning\\_Report.pdf](http://www.effectiveservices.org/images/uploads/PEII_10_Years_of_Learning_Report.pdf) [accessed 12 March 2015].

Sharry, J., Guerin, S., Griffin, C. and Drumm, M. (2005) 'An evaluation of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme: A video-based early intervention for parents of pre-school children with behavioural and developmental difficulties', *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 10(3), 319-336.

Shulruf, B., O'Loughlin, C. and Tolley, H. (2009) 'Parenting education and support policies and their consequences in selected OECD countries', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 526-532.

Solution Talk (2015) *Solution Talk: About* [online], available: <http://www.solutiontalk.ie/about/> [accessed 20 November 2015].

South, D. C. and Children & Young People's Services Committee (2015) *Directory of Services*, Dublin.

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (2017) *ISPCC: What We Do* [online], available: <http://www.ispcc.ie/about-us/what-we-do/40> [accessed 27 January 2017].

Thompson, R. W., Grow, C. R., Ruma, P. R., Daly, D. L. and Burke, R. V. (1993) 'Evaluation of a Practical Parenting Program with Middle- and Low-Income Families', *Family Relations*, 42(1), 21-25.

Time 4 Us (2012) *How We Help Families* [online], available: <http://www.time4us.ie/how-we-help-families/> [accessed 7 October 2015].

Treoir (2015) *About Treoir: The National Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children* [online], available: <http://www.treoir.ie/about.php> [accessed 20 November 2015].

Trutz Haase (2011) *Trutz Haase Deprivation Index Area Profiles* [online], available: <http://trutzhaase.eu/deprivation-index/area-profiles/> [accessed 12 December 2015].

Veerman, J. W. and van Yperen, T. A. (2007) 'Degrees of freedom and degrees of certainty: A developmental model for the establishment of evidence-based youth care', *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 30(2), 212-221.

Ward, M. and Roeder, A. (2014) 'New Irish Families: A Profile of Second Generation Children and their Families', Dublin: Trinity College Dublin.

Working With Men (2006) *An Evaluation of The Da Project*, Dublin: Barnardos Cherry Orchard Family Support Project.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Stakeholder Scoping Interviews

A number of stakeholders were contacted as part of the scoping activity for this research. This activity took the form of meetings and email correspondence, providing provisional insight into the structure of parenting support services at a local and national level.

- Susan Forde, Family Support Services Manager, Galway
- Morgan Mee, Development and Support Manager, West Training
- Paul Butler, Research Consultant, Nexus Consulting
- Orla Curran, Project Leader, Westside Family Services
- Marie Gibbons, Researcher, Tusla, Galway and Roscommon Children and Young People's Services Committee



## Appendix 2: Family Resource Centre SPEAK data<sup>19</sup>

Tusla supports 108 communities through the Community Agency's Family Resource Centre (FRC) programmes. This includes a network of 106 centres nationwide and two outreach centres. The FRC programme delivers universal services to families in disadvantaged areas across the country based on a lifecycle approach. The works are delivered in the context of the Strategic Framework for Family Support (Family Support Agency, 2013b). Inclusive working with individuals, families and communities, along with partnership working between voluntary and statutory agencies, are crucial to the needs-led response approach. The work of the FRCs is both universal and targeted. It ranges from the provision of information, advice, support and referrals, to delivering education courses (including parenting programmes) and training opportunities, and establishing and maintaining community groups. These may include childcare facilities, after-school clubs and men's groups.

This report presents data entered information given by 104 Family Resource Centres who contributed data to the SPEAK FRC National Programme Database, 2014. This data was entered into the SPEAK FRC system by each FRC on a quarterly basis. Engagement with SPEAK FRC does not constitute an external evaluation. SPEAK FRC is a tool for data collection and self-evaluation; its strength lies in promoting critical thinking to inform practice within FRCs.<sup>20</sup>

Data for this report determining what constitutes a support for parents was provided by the FRCs. Outputs concerning actions aimed exclusively at parents fulfilling their parenting role (e.g. parenting courses or parent support groups) are included in this report. These include:

- Outputs concerning actions aimed exclusively at parents and their children where the nature of the work focuses on the parenting relationship (e.g. Parent and Toddler Groups, Baby Bonding initiatives), and
- Outputs concerning actions aimed at the family are included where the nature of the work focuses on the parenting relationship (e.g. facilitating child contact meetings, child conferencing sessions, etc.).

Some outputs have not been included. These include services targeted primarily at children but which provide respite to parents or enable access to employment or education; and initiatives targeted at improving the domestic environment. Also omitted are services and opportunities delivered at a community level which do not relate directly to the parenting role but which, when accessed by parents, may improve the functioning of the family unit. For example, information and referrals to mainstream service providers, community-based services such as rural transport initiatives and community laundry services, or personal development opportunities such as vocational or community education.

### **1. Programmed Parenting Courses**

Based on the FRC definitional documents, programmed activities are typically based on a programme of activity that is believed, or known, to be helpful to those who participate. These programmed activities are usually evidence-based, targeted at parents, children or both, which have been shown to be effective in other settings (Family Support Agency, 2013b). The following programmed parenting courses took place during 2014:

<sup>19</sup> The work of Morgan Mee of Westside training is acknowledged in compiling report data for this section of the baseline study.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on SPEAK FRC, please contact Tusla, the Child and Family Agency

### 1.1 Strengthening Families Programme

The Strengthening Families programme offers support and training to families and is used widely but not exclusively with families who have issues of drugs and alcohol abuse. The entire family must commit to a 14-week programme based on learning skills that will lead to responsible decision-making on issues such as drugs, alcohol and addressing conflict in the home (Family Support Agency, 2013b: 52; Keane, 2012). During 2014, 19 Family Resource Centres contributed to this work.

Table A1: Strengthening Families

<b>Strengthening Families, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	24
Number of Families Participating	243
Number of Parents Completing	263
Number of Children Completing	284

### 1.2 Common Sense Parenting Programme

Common Sense Parenting is a six-week, skills-based programme in which parents develop practical and effective ways to enhance their parenting skills and strengthen their children's potential and quality of life. Common Sense Parenting is an evidence-based service rated as 'promising' on the registry of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs Guide (USA) and by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (Coen et al., 2012). During 2014, eight Family Resource Centres contributed to this work.

Table A2: Common Sense Parenting

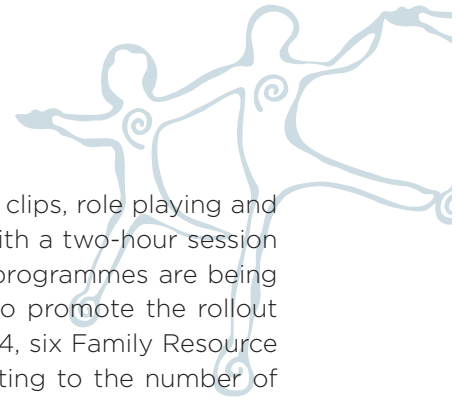
<b>Common Sense Parenting, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	15
Number of Families Participating	139
Number of Parents Completing	26
Number of Children Completing	113

### 1.3 Community Mothers Programme

The Community Mothers Programme aims to support the development of parenting skills, and enhance parents' confidence and self-esteem for parents of children aged 2 years or younger. It is delivered by non-professional volunteer mothers, known as 'community mothers', who are recruited, trained and supported by public health nurses. Community mothers visit parents once a month in their own homes, providing information in a non-directive way to foster parenting skills and parental self-esteem (Johnson et al., 2000). During 2014, two Family Resource Centres contributed to this work.

Table A3: Community Mothers

<b>Community Mothers, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	4
Number of Mothers Completing	36
Number of Children Completing	47
Number of Children Completing	113



### 1.4 Incredible Years Programme

The Incredible Years Programme aims to improve parenting skills by using video clips, role playing and discussion. The Basic Parent training curriculum is delivered over 12-14 weeks with a two-hour session per week. There are also separate programmes for children and teachers. The programmes are being delivered in Ireland by Archways. Archways was established in January 2007 to promote the rollout and evaluation of the programme in Ireland (McGilloway et al., 2012). During 2014, six Family Resource Centres contributed to this work. However, it should be noted that figures relating to the number of children aged 2-7 years completing and number of children aged 5-12 years completing were inputted by two Family Resource Centres only.

Table A4: Incredible Years Programme

<b>Incredible Years Programme, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	19
Number of Parents Completing	115
Number of Children Completing (2-7 years)	69
Number of Children Completing (5-12 years)	48

### 1.5 Parents Plus Programme

Parents Plus was developed by the Mater Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. It consists of three age-related programmes. The focus is to build on parents' strengths and help them to solve discipline problems but also to have more enjoyable and satisfying relationships with their children. The programme includes educational DVDs, a leader's manual, and participant handouts. Homework for the participants is also included in the packs, as well as a textbook and a parents' book (Hand et al., 2013). During 2014, 25 Family Resource Centre contributed to this work.

Table A5: Parents Plus Programme

<b>Parents Plus Programme, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	50
Number of Parents Completing	439

### 1.6 Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P)

Triple P is a parenting and family support strategy that aims to prevent or re-mediate social, emotional and behavioural problems in children and decrease parental stress anxiety and depression by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. The seminars are 1hr long (choice of 3), the workshops are 2hrs long (choice of 4) and the group programme lasts eight weeks; the first four weeks are face-to-face sessions, the next three weeks are support phone calls, and the final week is certification. Trainers must be accredited to deliver Triple P (Fives et al., 2014). During 2014, 17 Family Resource Centre contributed to this work.

Table A6: Positive Parents Programme

<b>Positive Parents Programme, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	29
Number of Parents Completing	234

## 1.7 Functional Family Therapy

FFT is an evidence-based intervention developed in the US. The programme works with the whole family for this therapy, or with as many family members as possible. During 2014, one Family Resource Centre contributed to this work.

Table A7: Functional Family Therapy

<b>Functional Family Therapy, 2014</b>	
Number of Programmes	26
Number of Parents Completing	42
Number of Families Participating	26
Number of Children Completing (5-12 years)	42

## 1.8 Parent & Toddler Groups

Parent and toddler groups provide an opportunity for parents to meet and share experiences in a supportive environment while their children play and socialise. During 2014, 3025 participants directly benefited from Parent and Toddler Groups operated by 85 Family Resource Centres.

## 1.9 Home-based Family Support Programmes

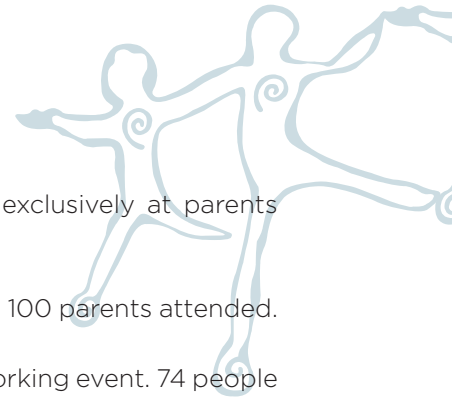
The provision of flexible, practical supports within the family home. The nature of supports provided is needs-driven. Sligo FRC provided home-based family supports that directly benefitted 110 adults and 75 children during 2014.

## 1.10 Other Groups

The FRCs run further parenting support groups, for which data is not available.

Table A8: Other FRC Groups

Group	Description
Parent and Baby Bonding Groups	Parent & baby bonding groups aimed at enhancing the early bond relationship between parents and their babies.
Fathers' Groups	Fathers' groups can be peer-led or led by a professional. They may provide emotional and/or practical support to fathers.
Fathers and Sons Groups	Fathers and sons groups can be peer-led or led by a professional. Groups aim to strengthen the bonds between fathers and sons and promote positive behaviours.
Lone Parent Groups	Lone parent groups can be peer-led or led by a professional. They may provide emotional and/or practical support to members of those parenting independently.
Mothers' Groups	Mothers' groups can be peer-led or led by a professional. They may provide emotional and/or practical support to new mothers.
Parent Support Groups	Parent support groups can be peer-led or led by a professional. They may provide emotional and/or practical support to parents. Parent support groups are often aimed at new parents.
Community-based Services	Family Resource Centres (FRCs) develop and deliver a range of community-based services aimed at children, their parents and the broader community. These often have a particular focus on those experiencing poverty or social exclusion.



### **1.11 Parenting Information Initiatives**

The FRCs also undertake information dissemination initiatives. Those focused exclusively at parents during 2014 included:

- Hospital FRC provided an information day for parents of preschool children. 100 parents attended.
- St. Johnston & Carrigans FRC hosted a 'Baby and Me' information and networking event. 74 people attended.
- Gort FRC held a Lone Parent Information event. 12 people attended.
- Focus FRC ran a workshop for parents on how to use iPads. Six people attended.
- South West Kerry FRC hosted a 3-hour information event on Internet Safety for Parents. 14 parents attended.
- Ballyspillane FRC delivered a cyberbullying workshop for parents. 11 parents attended.
- Hospital FRC delivered a Social Media for Parents workshop attended by three parents.

Tusla support 108 communities through the Community Agency's Family Resource Centre (FRC) programmes, delivering universal services to families in disadvantaged areas across the country based on a lifecycle approach. This includes a range of direct and indirect parenting supports, as outlined here. These activities range from information provision to dedicated groups and community-based services. The data here provides a snapshot of this activity in 2014, informing the practice within FRCs.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For more information on SPEAK FRC, please contact Family Support Services Unit, Tusla.



## Appendix 3: Levels of Evidence

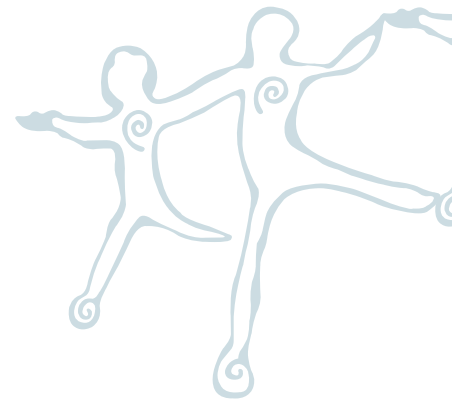
Veerman and van Yperen's (2007) developmental model for establishing an evidence base is adapted here to clarify the levels of evidence associated with the programmes identified in this mapping study, in addition to the parameters and types of research.

*Table A9: Levels of Evidence*

<b>Level of Evidence</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Types of Research</b>
1. Descriptive	The essential elements of the intervention (e.g., goals, target group, methods and activities, requirements) have been made explicit.	Descriptive studies Observational studies Analysis of documents
2. Theoretical	The intervention has a plausible rationale (i.e., a programme theory) to explain why it should work with whom.	Reviews Meta-analyses Expert knowledge studies
3. Indicative	It has been demonstrated that the intervention clearly leads to the desired outcomes.	Quasi-experimental studies Theory of Change studies Service-user satisfaction studies
4. Causal	There is sound and substantial evidence that the outcome is caused by the intervention, or clear evidence showing which ingredients of the intervention are responsible for the outcome.	Randomised Control Trials Repeated case studies









UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre  
Institute for Lifecourse and Society  
Dangan, Upper Newcastle Road  
National University of Ireland  
Galway, Ireland

T. +353 91 495398  
E. [cfrc@nuigalway.ie](mailto:cfrc@nuigalway.ie)  
Twitter: @UNESCO\_CFRC  
Facebook: [ucfrc.nuig](https://www.facebook.com/ucfrc.nuig)  
W: [www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch](http://www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch)



**TUSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

**Tusla – Child and Family Agency**  
Floors 2-5  
Brunel Building  
Heuston South Quarter  
Dublin 8  
T. +353 1 7718500  
E. [info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)  
W: [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)