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Kilkenny County Childcare Committee  
Comité Cárám Leanaí Chontae Cill Chaloigh

# Kilkenny County Childcare Committee Strategy 2007-2010



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## Executive Summary





Kilkenny County Childcare Committee  
Strategy 2007-2010

Executive Summary

Prepared by John Gilsean, Market Dynamics  
April 2007

# Foreword

This plan sets out the direction for the work of the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee for the period 2006-2010. The plan is framed within the context of national priorities and local needs and provides for the strategic direction of this work in the coming years. The plan is born out of consultation and deliberation with the many local stakeholders within the sector. It attempts to contextualise and distil their views in order to ensure that childcare provision in the county has - at its core - an approach that is quality assured and which enhances the lives of children and their families.

Since its inception in 2002 Kilkenny County Childcare Committee has been involved in a broad range of developmental capacity-building work within the sector and has provided support for a number of large-scale capital grants in various parts of the city and county. This plan seeks to build on all aspects of the work and it identifies priorities that will shape it in the period ahead. We hope that, through this work, the changing childcare needs within the county can be met. The plan has created a shared sense of vision and direction and identified ways in which we can work together to improve the quality of our service.

Kilkenny County Childcare Committee is indebted to its staff and committee members for the service which they have given to the organisation since it began. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, committee members and the many stakeholders who took part in the consultations for the plan. I would also like to thank Market Dynamics for the expertise and professionalism which they brought to the process. It is my hope that as we move into the next phase we can continue to build on what has been achieved and contribute further to the enhancement of the childcare sector in the county.

**Eileen Curtis**  
**Chairperson**



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# 1 What is Kilkenny County Childcare Committee?

Kilkenny County Childcare Committee (KKCCC) is 1 of 33 County/City Childcare Committees (CCCs) that were set up in 2001. CCCs coordinate and support the development of Irish childcare services at a local level, promoting cross-agency cooperation in the process.

KKCCC's mission is:

To facilitate childcare providers to develop appropriate childcare services which respond to and cater for the childcare needs of local parents and their children and meets the objectives of the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010; and to continue to support and work with childcare providers, parents and stakeholders at local level.

## KKCCC VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The following are the key values and underlying principles that have driven KKCCC since 2001; these will continue to guide the Committee into the next phase:

### A Child-Centred Approach

A child-centred approach to planning has at its heart the holistic development of the child. This involves meeting the social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural needs of each individual child.

### Empowerment and a Rights-Based Approach

This recognises the fundamental rights of all children to grow and develop with dignity. It also ensures that each child has access to quality childcare in a secure environment that is free of discrimination and fear.

### Quality

Development and recognition of quality childcare services will set standards for parents, providers and the child. This will help ensure high-quality environments where opportunities for development and enrichment will flourish for children and their adult carers.

## Equal Access and Opportunities

All children should have equal access to quality, affordable childcare in an appropriate setting. This unlocks opportunities for education, training and employment for parents, which enhances the family, economic, social and community life for everybody.

## Diversity

The development and growth of childcare services and practice should reflect an approach that doesn't distinguish children or their families on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, culture or sexual orientation.

## Community Development

This involves actively seeking the involvement of all stakeholders in every aspect of the childcare strategy – from the identification of needs to the evaluation stage.

## Participation, Partnership and Collaboration

The participation of *all* stakeholders is vital. Participation involves actively asking for our stakeholders' views and making sure their voices are central to the development of childcare services. Partnerships between stakeholders can encourage collaborative models of childcare and cooperation across all sectors.

## Capacity Building and Sustainability

The development of a coordinated and integrated childcare sector involves developing the capacity of childcare providers to manage and ensure quality child-centered provision. Positive support and training will enable the sector to grow in a sustainable manner.

## OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

KKCCC recognises that in order to be effective it needs to include the broadest possible representation of stakeholders in childcare. Currently, the committee structure is balanced to include representation from the statutory sector, local development groups, National Voluntary Childcare Organisations and providers of childcare in the county.

<b>Member/Position</b>	<b>Agency Represented</b>
Eileen Curtis (KKCCC Chairperson)	Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee
Anne McDonagh (Vice-Chairperson)	Kilkenny Childcare Network
Bernie Byrne (Treasurer)	Barrow Nore Suir Rural Development
Virginia Bohan	FÁS
Patricia Cleary	Health Service Executive
P.J. Cleere	Disability Federation of Ireland
Mary Coady	National Childcare Voluntary Collaborative
Mary Deevy	Kilkenny County Enterprise Board
Elizabeth Dermody	Kilkenny County Liaison Committee
Bridget Dowling	Private Childcare Providers
Breda McDonald	Farming sector
John Murphy	Local Development Social Inclusion Programme
Mary Ó Drisceoil	National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative
Tony Walsh	Kilkenny Local Authorities

## **SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

In addition to the work of the main committee, there are a number of sub-committees. These are:

### **Infrastructure/PESC**

This sub-committee examines all applications for funding under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP). A member of the Planning section of Kilkenny Local Authorities as well as a representative of the Health Service Executive (HSE) has been co-opted onto this committee.

### **Information/Networking/Quality/Training**

The Information/Networking/Quality/Training sub-committee has co-opted additional members, including the Community Education Facilitator from the Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) and the Chairperson of the Childcare Providers Network.

## Equality/Diversity

For this sub-committee, issues of equality and diversity are of fundamental importance. Members include the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) representative, the Disability Federation of Ireland representative and representation from childcare providers.

## Executive/Finance

The main function of this sub-committee is overall governance, including finance and human resources. Membership includes all three officers – Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer, and two additional Board members.

## Childminding

This sub-committee deals with childminders' issues, and its membership includes the Pre-School Services officer and representation from the childminding sector.

## LINKAGES AND COLLABORATION

A key theme of the KKCCC since its inception has been that of partnership. It has always recognised that other agencies have different skills and expertise which are beneficial to KKCCC and vice versa. Because of this, it has developed linkages and collaborations with a number of organisations that also have a role to play in childcare. KKCCC and these organisations work together in a cooperative spirit to maximise the impact of their individual efforts. In recent years the KKCCC has developed links with:

- The Health Service Executive (HSE).
- The Vocational Education Committee (VEC).
- Area Partnership/Community-based Local Development Groups.
- County Council/County Development Board.
- The County Enterprise Board.
- The Disability Federation.
- FÁS.
- The National Childcare Voluntary Collaborative.
- The Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Almost all of these organisations have representatives on the committee.

In addition, KKCCC is represented on the County Development Board and on the Education and Social Inclusion sub-groups of that board. KKCCC also sits on the Kilkenny Travellers Movement Childcare sub-group, the School Completion Board, the HSE Parent Support programme, Kilkenny Recreational and Sports Partnership, and South Kilkenny Community Development Initiative. In all these settings KKCCC stresses the importance of the role of early childhood care and education in combating disadvantage and promoting social inclusion.

KKCCC also places a lot of value on regional collaboration with other CCCs and, in this regard, has been involved in several successful initiatives over a number of years. In particular, KKCCC would point to strong links with the other CCCs in the South-East Region.



'My Family' by Ben, age 7

## 2 Details of the Kilkenny Area

This chapter describes the current levels of provision and supply of childcare in the Kilkenny area. Co. Kilkenny is situated in the south-east of Ireland and forms part of the area covered by the South Eastern Regional Authority (SERA). Like many other counties, it is dominated to some extent by its primary urban centre, Kilkenny city. Other urban areas of significance are Callan, Thomastown and Castlecomer.

The county is divided into five electoral areas (DEDs): (i) Ballyragget, (ii) Callan, (iii) Kilkenny, (iv) Piltown and (v) Thomastown. As Table 1 below shows, population changes in Kilkenny mirror the growing population witnessed across Ireland in recent years. This increase has been caused by a combination of factors, such as inward migration (mainly from Eastern European countries), a growth in the birth rate among the indigenous population, and the return of emigrants.

**Table 1: Population Profile of Co. Kilkenny**

	<b>1996</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>
Kilkenny	22,559	24,628	26,513
Growth (%)		9	8
Ballyragget	14,071	14,721	15,420
Growth (%)		5	5
Callan	9,294	10,002	11,061
Growth (%)		8	11
Piltown	16,236	16,786	19,087
Growth (%)		3	14
Thomastown	13,176	14,202	15,313
Growth (%)		8	8
<b>Total</b>	75,336	80,339	87,394
<b>Growth (%)</b>		6.6	8.8

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE COUNTY – CHILDREN

Overall, we estimate that the population will grow at a slower rate to 2010, but the proportion of pre-school and school-age children will grow at faster rates. Table 2 gives the estimates for growth in the child population in the area:

**Table 2: Child Population, 2002–2010 (estimates)**

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010 (Estimates)</b>
Population	80,339	87,394	90,944
Growth (%)		8.8	4.1
Pre-school, 0-4 years	5,747	6,251 (est.)	6,544
Growth (%)		8.8	4.7
School age, 5-12 years	9,548	10,384 (est.)	10,835
Growth (%)		8.8	4.3

## CURRENT PROVISION OF CHILDCARE IN KILKENNY

In 2006 there was a total of 86 childcare facilities/organisations in the county, representing an increase of 11 facilities (or 15 per cent) on the 2004 figure. Table 3 shows how these facilities are split by geographic area within the county:

**Table 3: Childcare Facilities, Co. Kilkenny 2004, 2006**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Growth (%)</b>
Kilkenny Environs	31	35	13
Callan	8	6	-25
North-east	9	11	22
Thomastown	9	9	0
Gowran	5	7	40
North-west	4	4	0
South-east	2	4	100
South-west	7	10	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>15</b>

Translating these figures into the *actual* number of childcare places available, it is clear that the picture has improved more quickly. The total of 1,839 is an increase of 325 (or 21 per cent) on the 2004 figure. (By the end of 2006 this figure had grown to 1,904.) Table 4 shows how the 1,839 places were split by geographic area within the county:

**Table 4: Childcare Places, Co. Kilkenny 2004, 2006**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Growth (%)</b>
Kilkenny Environs	709	814	15
Callan	144	134	-7
North-east	191	228	19
Thomastown	160	192	20
Gowran	89	139	56
North-west	77	80	4
South-east	32	77	141
South-west	112	175	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,514</b>	<b>1,839</b>	<b>21</b>

### Current Situation

Childcare availability varies in different areas of the county. Kilkenny Environs has the highest number of pre-school childcare places at 42.9 per 100 pre-school children; the south-east area has the lowest number at 10.6 per 100. The county average for full day care is 8.5 places per 100 pre-school age children; Kilkenny Environs has the highest level in the county at 15.5. The county average for sessional care is 21.4 places per 100 pre-school age children: Thomastown has the highest level (at 30.8). The county average for Montessori care is 7.8 places per 100 pre-school age children, with the south-west registering the highest level at 12.2.

### Childcare Places by Area

Table 5 below shows the number of each type of pre-school childcare place per 100 children in each area of the county. The county average for each type is also shown as KKCCC uses this when setting targets for creating new places by 2010. The areas with the highest ratio for each type of service are also given (e.g. Thomastown: 30.8 sessional places per 100), as these ratios have also been used when setting targets.



**Table 5: Childcare Places per 100 Children, 2006**

Area	Total Pre-school	Full day	Sessional	Montessori
Kilkenny Environs	42.9	15.5	27.5	12.0
Thomastown	32.4	1.5	30.8	2.5
South-west	31.8	2.7	29.1	12.2
North-east	30.8	12.3	18.5	5.4
<b>County average</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Gowran	26.0	7.5	18.5	9.9
North-west	21.2	0.0	21.2	0.0
Callan	18.2	3.7	14.5	8.7
South-east	10.6	6.6	8.4	1.8

Source: Market Dynamics, 2006

## GAPS IN THE PROVISION OF CHILDCARE IN CO. KILKENNY

### South-East

There are also gaps in the provision of childcare in Co. Kilkenny. The areas that need most attention from the KKCCC are outlined here. The south-east area currently offers only 10.6 pre-school places per 100 pre-school age children. This is just over half the level of the next lowest area and one-fifth of the number of places available in the Kilkenny Environs area. This area also has the lowest availability in the county of sessional and Montessori services.

In addition to the overall lack of childcare in the area, there is a large triangular geographic area where there are only two childcare facilities, one in Inistioge and one in Glenmore, although there is another in the nearby Rower. While some of the population of this area may currently be making some use of services in New Ross and Waterford, there are sufficient numbers of people living a good distance from each of these towns to suggest that they are not making up for the overall lack of services in the area.

### Thomastown

Though the Thomastown area is second on the list of overall childcare places, it also shows the biggest discrepancy between the availability of sessional care places

(where it is the leading area), and full day care, which is practically non-existent. The KKCCC needs to work towards getting a private sector supplier of full day care within the Thomastown area, ideally in or around the town itself. The lack of a crèche facility is felt strongly in Thomastown and is putting pressure on facilities in other areas.

### North-west area

The north-west area was in urgent need of full day care facilities. Fortunately, new developments in Freshford and Urlingford will go some way towards meeting this need. KKCCC made it a priority to engage with providers in the area, and, as a result, the places required to bring the area up to the county average have been met.

### Callan

Current facilities in the Callan area are under more pressure to take children than in any other area. Childcare providers in the area believe they could fill 65 per cent more places than are currently available. The Callan area would be higher up the priority list were it not for the fact that a community facility is in the process of being built. This will increase the availability of childcare places considerably when it opens. There is currently only one full day care provider in the area and this has resulted in a supply of less than half the county average of places.

### Gowran

Though just behind the county average for overall childcare places, nonetheless there is a geographical gap in provision in the middle of the Gowran area, with no facility between Paulstown and the Graignamanagh side of Goresbridge. A community facility should be provided in the Gowran area: this would also serve to bring the number of sessional places up to the level of the county average.

Many of the gaps outlined above are being addressed by new and extended facilities opening in 2007 and 2008.

## DEMAND FOR PLACES BASED ON PERCEPTIONS OF EXISTING FACILITIES

A considerable proportion of organisations in the Kilkenny area turn people away on a regular basis because of an inability to accommodate all childcare place requirements. Table 6 shows indicates the total number of extra places that organisations in each area believe they could fill if they had space available.

**Table 6: Demand for Places Based on Perceptions of Existing Facilities**

Area	2006	% As proportion of existing places
Kilkenny Environs	243	30
Callan	87	65
North-east	66	29
Thomastown	25	13
Gowran	55	40
North-west	17	21
South-east	10	15
South-west	23	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>29</b>

Source: Market Dynamics, 2006

## NUMBER OF TARGET CHILDCARE PLACES

This section outlines the number of extra target places that were considered necessary to deal with expected demand in 2010.

**Table 7: Childcare Places and Targets by Area, 2010**

Area	Target Extra Places 2010	% Increase
South-east	151	197
Kilkenny Environs	146	18
North-east	127	29
Callan	104	77
North-west	73	91
Gowran	69	50
Thomastown	56	29
South-west	46	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>42</b>

Source: Market Dynamics, 2006

### Qualifications/Training

When asked about qualifications and training, 77 per cent of childcare staff surveyed said they had accredited qualifications. The proportion is higher in community organisations than in the private sector, and staff are more likely to have accredited qualifications in the larger organisations. However, in many cases, staff in fact hold *non-accredited qualifications*, and, in other cases, they have completed individual modules of an accredited qualification. As a result, the proportion of staff who actually do have accredited qualifications is less than the proportion who claim to.

### What Training is Needed?

The vast majority of respondents, 83 per cent, consider that there is a need for ongoing training to do their jobs effectively. Nearly 80 per cent believe that their formal childcare education and training has prepared them well for their work. A quarter of respondents are currently working on accredited training courses, the most popular being FETAC Level 5 - Certificate in Childcare and FETAC Level 6 - Childcare Supervisor. Just over half of owner/managers were able to list training needs they had identified for their staff - such as First Aid and High Scope. In addition, 83 per cent of childcare practitioners claimed they were interested in further training. Childcare practitioners themselves identified special needs, Montessori and behaviour management as areas where training is needed.

Fifty-five per cent of owner/managers were able to list training needs that they had identified for themselves. Among these were management-specific training such as accounts and management skills.

### Role of Training in Career Development

Owner/managers and childcare practitioners are broadly in agreement that it is important for staff to undertake training to do their jobs effectively. However, there is much less agreement on the level of support provided for staff undergoing training. A much higher proportion of owner/managers than childcare practitioners claim that they provide financial help and/or time off for staff to train. There is, once again, a high level of agreement between owner/managers and childcare practitioners that staff should be fully trained to do their jobs. On the issue of whether career prospects are improved for staff who do more training, a total of 66 per cent of childcare

practitioners agreed this was the case, while a total of 77 per cent of owner/managers did so. However, the difference is one of emphasis rather than disagreement.

In 39 per cent of cases, the trainee funds the training, while the employer pays in 15 per cent of cases. Funding is divided in a further 23 per cent of cases.

Finally, over 80 per cent of respondents believe that a professional association for the childcare industry would be a useful thing.

## EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

### Employment Contracts

What about employment conditions in the childcare industry? Not all workers have an employment contract: only 54 per cent of childcare practitioners claimed to have one.

### Salary Levels

Salary levels are low. Overall, 20 per cent of respondents who work full time claim to earn less than €15,000 a year, while a further 61 per cent earn less than €20,000. Pay rates are better in the community than in the private sector. In the private sector, only 10 per cent of respondents working full time (excluding owner/managers) earn more than €20,000. Part-time workers earn €10 an hour on average.

### Pensions and Trade Unions Membership

Only 7 per cent of respondents pay into an occupational pension scheme. Membership of SIPTU or Impact trade unions is over 20 per cent among staff in the community sector but just 5 per cent in the private sector.

### Reasons for Setting up Childcare Organisation

When asked why they decided to set up a childcare organisation, almost half of owner/managers claimed it was a career development choice. A further 30 per cent said it was prompted by the fact that they had children of their own to look after. When setting up their childcare organisations a total of 30 per cent approached a local business organisation for assistance, while a further 26 per cent approached KKCCC.

### External Support/Networks

Forty-three per cent of workers are members of the IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation. One-third of owner/managers claim to participate in activities of

national organisations such as the IPPA, while only 11 per cent of childcare practitioners do so. The primary benefit of these organisations is meeting people involved in the childcare sector, obtaining information and advice and exchanging ideas.

Just over half of all owner/managers participate in the Kilkenny Childcare Network, though only 18 per cent of childcare practitioners claim to do so. Participation of staff in community organisations is much higher than among those in private organisations.

### Use of KKCCC Facilities and Support

A total of 71 per cent of respondents are familiar with KKCCC; 47 per cent say they have attended at least one in-service training course undertaken by the Committee. Less than half of all respondents (46 per cent) have used the KKCCC's resource centre and 85 per cent of these were 'satisfied' with their experience. A total of 72 per cent said they were satisfied with the services provided by KKCCC overall. A further 20 per cent gave a score of 3 out of 5 ('not fully satisfied'), while 8 per cent are 'dissatisfied'.



## 3 What Role has KKCCC played in the Kilkenny Region?

### WHAT HAS KKCCC ACHIEVED SO FAR?

#### Focus on Childcare

KKCCC has given a focus to and raised the profile of childcare in the county in a variety of ways. It has also developed partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in the county - for example, with the VEC in the area of training. In addition, since 2001, KKCCC has supported significant childcare developments in the north of the county through its work with Castlecomer District Community Development (CDCD) Network.

#### Funding

KKCCC has supported many individuals and groups through the funding process. It has been a key support in the achievement of funding for the county under the Equality Opportunity Childcare Plan (EOCP), which has resulted in the setting-up of many new private and community childcare facilities.

#### Education and Training for Childcare Practitioners

KKCCC has been a major driver of the availability of education and training for childcare staff in the county, both in terms of FETAC Level 4 to 6 and the provision of in-service training. Therefore, there is now a good supply of qualified childcare personnel to work in existing childcare facilities. This has helped directly to improve the quality of service provided by these facilities. In addition, KKCCC has organised a range of short training courses and workshop events, which respond to the identified need within the sector.

#### Providing Information

The Resource Library has grown to be a key benefit for childcare practitioners and students among others. Outreach information-stands in four libraries throughout the county ensure that the public has access to KKCCC resources.

#### Networking

This is an area that KKCCC puts a great deal of emphasis on and will continue to do so. The childminder network, which is the most recent initiative, provides an excellent way for childminders who can feel isolated to get the support they need.

## Equality and Diversity

KKCCC has played a key role in promoting equality and diversity issues and has been central to spearheading some initiatives regionally and nationally. The 'Men in Childcare' initiative is one such project and has resulted in more debate on the issue of gender balance within the sector. KKCCC has also played a key role in other initiatives such as a regional seminar supporting parents with children with additional needs and the Play for All conference.

## WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN FOR KKCCC?

There have clearly been successes in the past five years, but challenges remain. The first two challenges that KKCCC will address concern (i) the sustainability of childcare facilities and (ii) the importance of promoting quality childcare in the county.

### Addressing Sustainability of Childcare Facilities

While funding has helped bring many childcare facilities into existence, more support is needed to ensure that these are sustainable. KKCCC has already begun to address this issue with training programmes, run in conjunction with the Kilkenny County Enterprise Board (KCEB), aimed at providing business training to those running childcare facilities.

### Promoting Quality

Work is still needed to promote the concept of quality childcare to providers, childminders and parents. The lack of choice in available childcare makes it more difficult to promote the quality agenda with parents. Similarly, emphasising quality to providers can prove challenging in some cases, with many thinking that the fact that they have received funding is, of itself, proof of their quality status. In addition, capacity constraints make it difficult to ensure consistent quality across childcare providers.

KKCCC will also meet other challenges in the next five years. These include:

### Addressing Gaps in Childcare Provision

As outlined above, gaps in childcare provision are still evident. The south of the county has the least availability and this issue is being prioritised at present.

## Assisting Childcare Workers and Childminders

KKCCC needs to continue to address the largest group of childcare workers - childminders. With a Childminding Advisory Officer (CMAO) now in place, albeit on a part-time basis, real progress is being made in reaching out to this group, which has previously been hard to connect with.

There is inconsistent training within the sector and ambivalence regarding accreditation. Many staff lack experience, particularly in good-quality environments. In addition, many workers have limited time to access resources and training, for example the Resource Library or other training/professional development.

The early success of the childminders network has shown that childminders have specific needs and require support. The task now is to spread the word further. Although childminding is the largest part of the childcare sector, it remains the one that is hardest to target because childminding has traditionally been part of the informal economy and, as such, harder to engage with. The situation is improving, however, and during the coming years major improvements are anticipated.

## Addressing Funding Issues

Though the availability of funding is welcome, it can have negative connotations since initial funding may mask a challenge of long-term sustainability of facilities, both community and private.

## Facilitating New Regulations and Legislation

New regulations for childcare providers will provide for greater emphasis on child development. There will be more focus on training as currently the minimum requirements for childcare providers are vague. There may also be some changes to the respective roles of the childcare committees and the HSE with regards to childcare - although this is not defined yet. The provision for LEADER groups to come under the umbrella of one organisation may also have an effect. Changes in maternity leave will have an impact: longer leave may result in a reduction in demand for childcare for the under one age-group. Pre-school regulations are very important, but there is frustration that the new regulations do not go far enough. For example, training is still not a requirement to work in the sector.

## Facilitating New Programmes

Up to now, the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) has not run in South Kilkenny where there are gaps in childcare provision. The extension of the LDSIP to the whole county should help communities improve childcare provision.

## Facilitating Social Changes

Given the change in the population profile in Ireland, the issue of ethnic diversity will have to be addressed at a national and local level.

Society's lack of understanding or appreciation of the importance of early childhood care and education is something the committee must continue to work towards challenging.



'A Big Butterfly' by Tom, age 3

## 4 What is KKCCC's focus for 2007-2010?

KKCCC's focus from 2007-2010 will be to implement the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) successfully. The NCIP aims to deliver 50,000 new childcare places nationally. KKCCC's 2006 Strategic Mapping Project showed that there are currently 1,839 childcare places in the county and it sets a target for a further 771 places by 2010.

KKCCC's role in identifying local childcare needs and supporting applicants under the NCIP who can meet these needs will be crucial to achieving this target and to further developing a quality childcare infrastructure for the Kilkenny county area.

### OBJECTIVES

The framework document issued by Pobal to the County Childcare Committees to guide them in setting their strategy for the period 2007-2010 outlined 13 objectives and asked each county to submit an overview of how the strategy will meet these objectives. The objectives are numbered below for identification purposes:

1. Maintain and build the local capacity to establish and sustain childcare places/services across all categories of childcare providers/services.
2. Develop and promote quality standards and targets for childcare in the county.
3. Promote initiatives that enhance the level of appropriate service provision that targets disadvantage and social inclusion issues.
4. Enhance and develop coordination at all levels.
5. Establish, develop and maintain a relevant support strategy for childcare providers at local level.
6. Through the CCC role in the NCIP application process, establish a strategic and proactive approach to childcare development at county level.
7. Identify and promote initiatives targeted at the development and support of school-age childcare in the county.
8. Identify, promote and improve the supply of early childhood care and education services for 3 to 4 year olds.
9. Promote initiatives targeted at the support and inclusion of childminders, including the development of voluntary notification with the local HSE.
10. Enhance childcare networks appropriate to the range of childcare providers and workers in the county.
11. Identify training needs, developing a relevant strategy in consultation and

collaboration with relevant training bodies/agencies.

12. Develop and improve information sharing and learning systems.

13. Attract resources from local, regional and national sources to implement /supplement specific initiatives.

## **KKCCC Priority Objectives for 2007–2010**

### **Management Training for Existing Facilities**

To support facilities that have received capital grants, KKCCC in conjunction with the Kilkenny County Enterprise Board (KCEB) will continue to provide management training for childcare providers to ensure a professional approach to the management of facilities. This will support the sustainability of existing facilities as well as the development of new ones.

### **Ongoing Support for Existing Providers**

Continued support will be given to existing providers and also to new entrants to the sector.

### **More Community Facilities**

KKCCC will continue to target certain community areas to increase the supply of childcare places with a focus on social inclusion in particular.

### **Network Development**

There will be further development of existing networks.

### **Men in Childcare**

KKCCC will also continue to address the issue of attracting men to work in the childcare sector.

### **Ongoing Staff Training/Up-Skilling**

Emphasis will continue on in-service training in order to up-skill existing childcare staff with a focus on quality measures, for example in High Scope.

## Childminder Focus

KKCCC will ensure there is greater emphasis on the importance of childminders in terms of providing childcare places.

## Focus on the South and East of County

KKCCC will also focus on the south and east of the county: the population in these areas has expanded significantly as has the demand for childcare.

## New Premises

The securing of new premises for KKCCC ought to be a priority for the coming period, as the current site is not positioned centrally.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR KKCCC?

There are two areas that KKCCC will be able to look back on in 2010 to assess its progress in the intervening years: (i) the geographic coverage of childcare in the county and (ii) the engagement of childminders with the available supports on offer.

## Focus on the Geographic Coverage of Childcare

The biggest single issue for KKCCC is the geographic coverage of childcare. Availability of childcare is better currently in the north of the county than in the south and east. While KKCCC has always focused the appropriate amount of effort in all parts of the county, for a variety of reasons (for instance, the lack of partner organisations in the south and east), it has not had as much success in that area. In order to address this, it will in the coming years focus proactively on these areas of the county.

## Focus on Childminders

Childminders look after 85 per cent of children in the Kilkenny county areas. However, for a variety of reasons, such as regulation, this group has been slow to engage with targeted supports. The appointment of a Childminding Advisory Officer (CMAO) has already shown results. However, the position is only part time and this presents challenges.

## HOW WILL KKCCC MEET ITS OBJECTIVES?

The following is a list of actions that KKCCC has decided on or already begun to implement to meet its objectives.

### Infrastructure - Actions

- Roll-out, support, administer and manage the NCIP with particular emphasis on social inclusion.
- Proactively target areas for infrastructure building as per the mapping, with emphasis on CLÁR and RAPID areas.
- Raise awareness of what supports are available to enhance capacity.
- Continue with the building support project.
- Document issues around sustainability post-start-up e.g. business and management training requirements.
- Build sustainable models for good practice in infrastructure that promote equality for all children and are diverse and flexible.
- Promote best practice in the design and implementation of child-centred buildings/facilities.
- Continue the development of parent and toddler groups in the most appropriate way.

### Quality - Actions

- Leverage and continue to support the use of models of best practice in quality e.g. High Scope, Listening to Children, Sólta.
- Support providers in the implementation of child-centred practice.
- Promote awareness of quality within the sector.
- Promote the participation of parents as key stakeholders in the provision of quality service.
- Continue and further develop existing training partnerships in line with identified needs.
- Continue to promote and develop awareness of the need for quality within the childminding sector.

## Information - Actions

- Further develop and maintain the resource library.
- Review the location of KKCCC premises with a view to making the offices more accessible.
- Develop targeted information for the south and east leveraging the South Kilkenny Community Development Initiative and the East KCDI.
- Address issues around brand awareness and recognition.
- Continue to disseminate information resources.
- Further develop the role of the information officer with particular emphasis on the south and east.
- Promote the dissemination of information through ICT infrastructures.

## Networking - Actions

- Investigate the possible re-branding of the term 'network' for external use.
- Continue to support and develop existing networks.
- Develop feedback structures for key stakeholders to ensure ongoing consultation with them.
- Investigate the development of links to existing parents' networks and groups.
- Utilise local government structures and other networks to pursue and engage in partnerships with statutory and community agencies.
- Develop local and regional relationships in partnership with other CCCs.

# Glossary

## Childminders

A childminder is a person who, in their own home, single-handedly takes care of not more than 5 pre-school children for at least 2 hours per day. It can be for a full working day or different periods during the day and may include overnight.

## CLÁR

The CLÁR (Ceantar Laga Árd Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme in rural areas and complements the RAPID programme.

## Full day care

A full day care service means a structured service for children for more than 5 hours per day. Nurseries and crèches fall into this category.

## Part time

This service offers structured day care for more than 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours per day. This usually caters for pre-school children under 6 years.

## RAPID

The RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development) programme is a government initiative that targets the most disadvantaged areas in the country. It requires government departments and state agencies to bring about better coordination and closer integration in the delivery of services.

## Sessional service

This offers a planned programme to pre-school children for up to 3.5 hours per session. Services covered may include pre-schools, playgroups, crèches, Montessori, Naoinraí, notifiable childminders or similar services which generally cater for children aged 0-6. Full day care may also provide this service.

## KKCCC Contact Details

You can contact KKCCC by writing to us at:

**Rear Coill Mhuire,  
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Or you can phone or email us at:

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If you would like to find out more about KKCCC, please look at our website at:

**[www.kccc.ie](http://www.kccc.ie)**

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