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1. CDI Board and Team look to the future

The Team and Board of CDI recently spent time together to plan our next phase of work. We have been working on the aspects and models which will characterise CDI over the coming period. There is a great deal of thinking to be done in terms of timelines, resources required, and importantly, how CDI can retain it’s roots in the community of Tallaght.

The Implementation Support Group (ISG) has been helping us in thinking this through, and members of the CDI team also spent a morning with our colleagues from Young Ballymun and Preparing for Life.

Now that all three of the original Prevention and Early Intervention Programmes have been included in the Area-Based Childhood Initiative (ABC), we found it very helpful to share our work to date, common challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

2. Obesity 9% lower in Health Programme schools

Childhood obesity has been found to be 9% lower in the schools which took part in CDI’s Healthy Schools Programme in Tallaght.

The study carried out by Trinity College Dublin found that 16% of children in schools which had taken part in the Healthy Schools Programme were obese compared to 25% in comparable control group schools – a difference of 9% in the level of obesity.

Furthermore, 10% of children in the intervention schools were overweight compared to 16% of children in the control schools. Overall 73% in the intervention schools were within normal weight for their age compared to 58% in the control schools.

The Healthy Schools Programme was co-ordinated by CDI in seven primary schools in Tallaght from 2009–2011. The programme aimed to improve both children and teachers’ understanding and practice relating to diet, exercise and mental health and was delivered over a period of three years in the intervention schools.

Click here to read more.

3. Model being developed for 0-3 year olds intervention

Consultations have been held with parents and agencies – both local and national on the development of new intervention for 0–3 year olds in Tallaght West.
The next step is to develop a Logic Model to decide on the outcomes and the actions needed to meet those outcomes. This will involve a small focus group of decision makers who will help shape the direction of this initiative.

All going well, we would like to think that there will be movement by early April.

We are trying to think of an appropriate name for it. The focus is from Antenatal to three years... so, if have any suggestions, we would be delighted. If you’ve had a spark, please email Grainne Smith at grainne@twcdi.ie

4. Approach to be identified for Doodle Den booster

At the end of 2013, we conducted an extensive consultation process to help us to identify a booster programme for Doodle Den. The need for such a programme was raised by many local school principals who felt that children could benefit from additional support after Doodle Den.

The next phase will involve commissioning a piece of research to further investigate evidence informed programmes that might work to meet the needs of the target group. This will in turn help us to develop the logic model and begin to look at implementation.

– See new video on Doodle Den from Management Consultant, Jane Clarke.

5. New Websites to commence build phase

CDI is making good progress on the development of two new website resources to support children and parents.

The first is the development of a website based around Doodle Den, enabling children to engage with the Doodle Den learning outside of the classroom. A contract with a development company is about to be signed and work to build the site is beginning.

CDI is also working with the Child and Family Agency using videos and animation to develop online information to support parents in ‘positive parenting’. Work to build this resource is also about to begin.
6. **Final CDI 'Phase 1' report to be launched in March**

A final overall report from Phase 1 of CDI’s work from 2007–2013 is to be launched in March.

The report *Leading Community Change: Delivering Better Outcomes in an Irish Community* is finalised and we are awaiting a date from the Office of the Minister for Children to set a launch date.

The report will gather together all of the learning from across all seven of CDI’s evaluations about ‘how to’ structure, organise and manage community development work.

7. **New Restorative Practice Trainers in Tallaght**

**CDI’s RP Programme** reached a major milestone recently with the graduation of our locally based Restorative Practices Trainers. The Mayor of South Dublin, Dermot Looney, attended and awarded Certificates to the 12 new Restorative Practice Trainers.

Mayor Looney commended the successful trainers, all of whom live or work in Tallaght, for their leadership in the community.

“I am delighted to present certificates to these people who have achieved accreditation as Restorative Practice trainers. Each person has demonstrated incredible energy, creativity and an ability to motivate others to take on this way of working.”

During the coming year, CDI aims to provide support to 500 parents, staff and young people to help embed Restorative Practice in Tallaght.

8. **Upcoming Workshops**

**Quality Services, Better Outcomes**
Dates are available for our Quality Services / Better Outcomes workshop:

- Tuesday, April 8th and
- Wednesday, May 14th.

Flyers with all relevant information will be sent out in due course. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Gráinne or Anne-Marie at: grainne@twcdi.ie and AnneMarie@twcdi.ie

Tailored Workshops

Gráinne Smith recently did work with the Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB) on developing their Logic Model. This was a great opportunity with both LMETB and Gráinne learning more about each other’s areas of work.

Meanwhile Anne-Marie Reid is currently working with Kildare County Childcare Committee.

So, if you would like a tailored piece of work based on Logic Modelling; Capacity Building; Leadership; Reflective Practice or Organisational Change, then please email Gráinne Smith or Anne-Maire Reid.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

9. Interview with Niamh Flavin - Respond!

1. Introduction to Respond! and the work you do…..

Respond! is Ireland’s leading housing association, established in 1982. Respond! believes in delivering housing for social investment rather than for financial profit and provides housing for almost 20,000 residents around Ireland. Homes are provided for individuals, families, the elderly, people who are living with a disability and also for some of the most vulnerable groups in society including those who have lived for long periods in hostels, temporary and insecure accommodation.

I am a Family Support Worker for Respond! Housing Association. One of the National Outcomes for parents and children which I aim to encourage is ‘to support people in active learning’. As part of my work I must identify
needs / gaps and then seek programmes support for these needs.

2. *How did you hear about Doodle Den?*

There was an identified need on our two estates in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford for literacy support for families. I decided to search online for an evidence based programme that may match this need. I came across the Doodle Den Programme with the CDI.

3. *Why were you interested in it for your target group?*

The reason why I became immediately interested in the Doodle Den programme was the fact that there were three components to the programme, a Child, Parent and Family component.

I particularly liked the emphasis that was put on the parent / family and their role in encouraging literacy with their children. In our programme the parents are aware that they are the first and primary educators of their child. As family support worker I am constantly trying to engage parents in parenting programmes etc. As part of the Doodle Den programme most parents automatically attend and enjoy the sessions as they are practical. They see it as helping their child in the Doodle Den.

One of the main reasons why we also became interested was there was a large number of resident children in second infants aged 5–6 yrs living on our estates so it was a perfect ‘fit’ for the target group we were aiming it at. Some of the target group families may not have had a positive experience with education so we were interested to develop an interest in lifelong learning among this group.

4. *How has Doodle Den been working?*

There have been many challenges, but CDI has been very supportive along the way. There is a very clear manual to follow for the 32 week child component. The planned activities are easy to follow, give clear instructions on how to run each day and the activities are short to avoid any time for the children to get bored, frustrated etc.

I think the reason that Doodle Den works is because children don’t feel like they are in school, they are constantly learning but they don’t even know it. All activities are literacy focused but are done in a fun, interactive way. We know it’s working because children continue to come!!

5. *What benefits have you seen?*

The staff can see many positive changes in the children that attend the Doodle Den programme. The children have improved immensely with their literacy skills, reading, writing, language, oral communication, phonics, sight vocabulary etc.
We can see children who are more confident in themselves, socialising with others, decrease in poor conduct, more willing to try. Children are bringing in copies from home showing us the writing they practiced at home or the book they read last night.

Teachers are commenting to staff and parents about the overall improvement of the child in their school-work, conduct, confidence etc. since starting in the Doodle Den. Parents are feeling more equipped to help their children with their literacy.

6. **What would you say to other groups thinking about using Doodle Den?**

If you are thinking about Doodle Den I would highly recommend it. It is a fantastic opportunity for children in senior infants to get support with their literacy. We are seeing many children leaving primary school with extremely poor literacy, we need to break this cycle by entering into an early intervention literacy programme, the younger a child starts to feel confidence and wants to attend school regularly the better outcomes they will have in the future.

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10. **Latest blog - RCT's in Community Settings**

*Read our latest blog from the Centre for Effective Education, Queen’s University Belfast*

**Working with you to find out what works: Conducting RCTs in community settings**

Over the past 6 years the Centre for Effective Education (CEE) at Queen’s University Belfast has been developing expertise in the use of randomised control trials (RCT) in the evaluation of educational programmes. CEE evaluated two programmes using this methodology for CDI – [Doodle Den](#) and [Mate Tricks](#).

Although RCTs may be more familiar to you in a medical context (e.g. drug trials) their use with educational programmes has a long history, in fact, the first educational trials can be traced back to the 1920’s. As an evaluation approach experimental methods increasingly fell out of fashion among the educational research community from around the 1960’s.

[Read more](#)