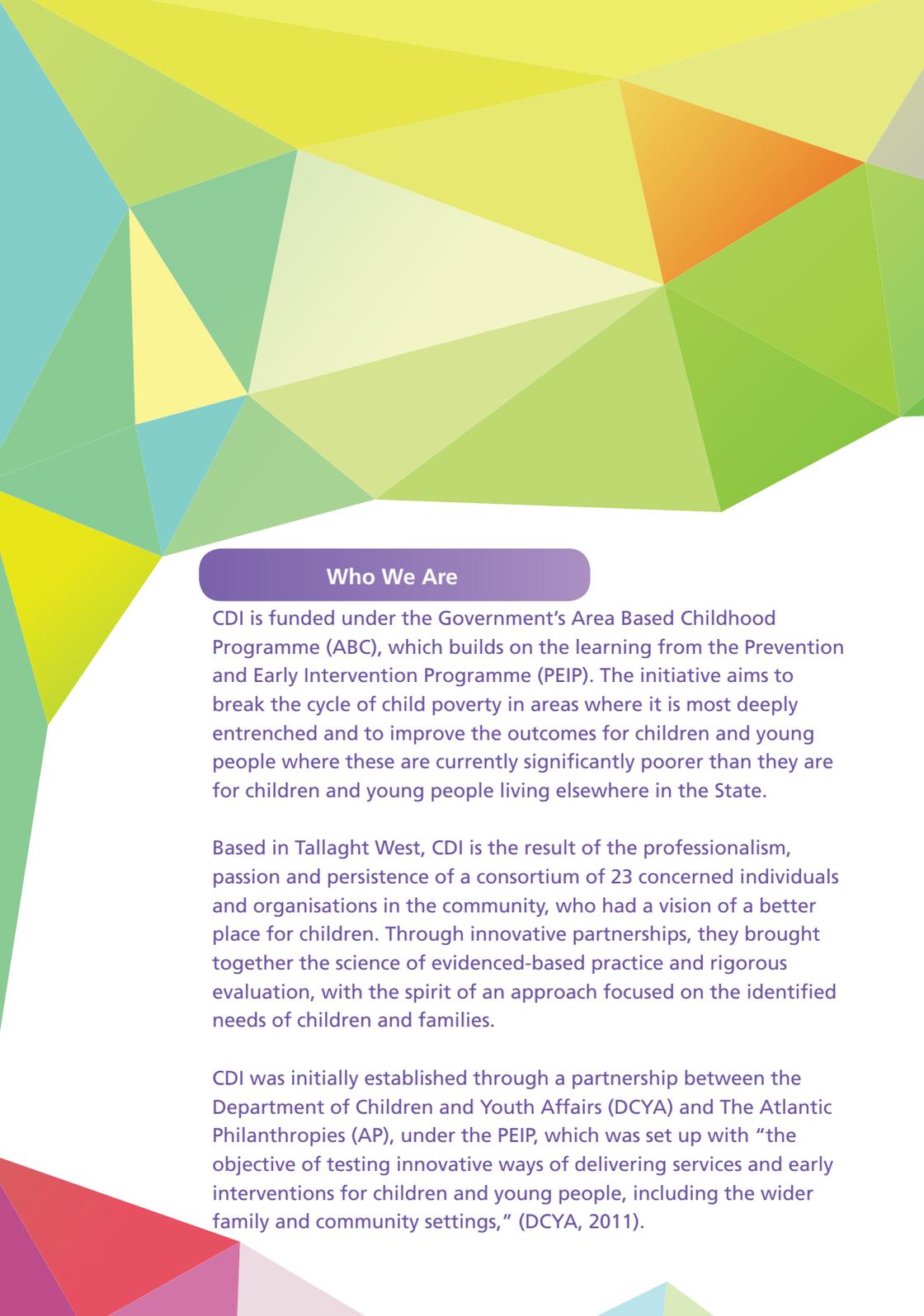


# The Childhood Development Initiative

## Benefits and Outcomes





## Who We Are

CDI is funded under the Government's Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC), which builds on the learning from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP). The initiative aims to break the cycle of child poverty in areas where it is most deeply entrenched and to improve the outcomes for children and young people where these are currently significantly poorer than they are for children and young people living elsewhere in the State.

Based in Tallaght West, CDI is the result of the professionalism, passion and persistence of a consortium of 23 concerned individuals and organisations in the community, who had a vision of a better place for children. Through innovative partnerships, they brought together the science of evidenced-based practice and rigorous evaluation, with the spirit of an approach focused on the identified needs of children and families.

CDI was initially established through a partnership between the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP), under the PEIP, which was set up with "the objective of testing innovative ways of delivering services and early interventions for children and young people, including the wider family and community settings," (DCYA, 2011).

## What We've Done: 2007 – 2013

CDI designed, delivered and evaluated seven programmes across a spectrum of local needs including language, literacy, health, early years, conflict management and community safety. All programmes are evidence-informed and manualised, were independently evaluated and delivered through existing structures and services. During this work €16m was invested in Tallaght West and 5,000 children and families were targeted.

Reports and policy papers are available on our website, and the key findings from the independent evaluations are summarised below.

## What We Have Found

### Doodle Den

The evaluation found improvements in children's overall literacy ability including word recognition, sentence structure and word choice. This overall gain increased when combined with their teacher's assessments within the school environment.

It also found that *Doodle Den* led to improved concentration and reduced problem behaviours in school, an increase in family library activity, and in the child's reading at home. Teachers observed greater classroom participation amongst the children receiving the *Doodle Den* programme.

### Early Years Programme

Children demonstrated improved attendance, behaviour and social skills, and improved speech and language on entry to school in comparison with the control group children.

The quality of activities planned and implemented in CDI's *Early Years Service* were significantly better than in the control group.

The more sessions of a parenting course that parents attended, the more beneficial the home learning environment, i.e. parents were better able to create an environment supportive of their child's development.

The logo for CDI (Community Development Initiative) consists of the letters 'CDI' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a dark purple background.

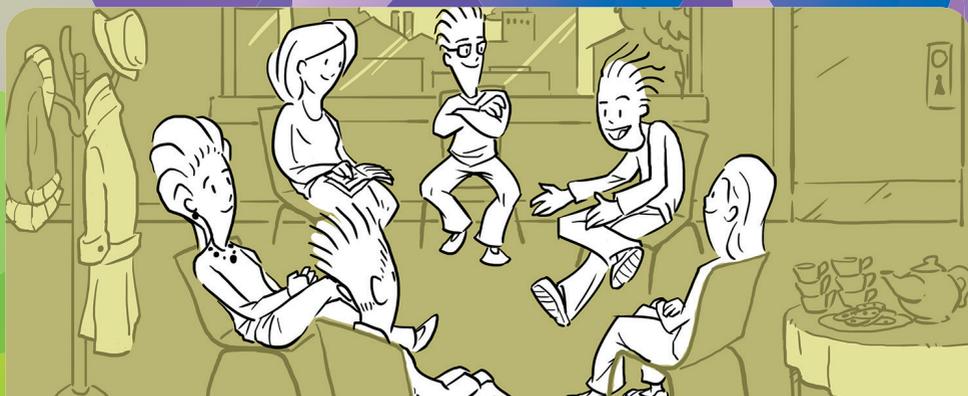
#### Programmes 2007-2013

- Doodle Den
- Early Years Programme
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Restorative Practices
- Healthy Schools Programme
- Community Safety Initiative
- Quality Enhancement Programme

### Early Intervention Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Service

This service saw children at a significantly younger age than other services and with a shorter waiting time than any other service apart from inpatient services.





Also:

- Up to 60% of children had not previously been referred to SLT
- 18% of children were discharged from the service having reached normal limits
- Children were referred to other services for specialist assessments
- Parents found the on-site delivery suited them and was less disruptive for children than clinic based services
- Staff reported a change in their practice as a result of the training they received.

### Restorative Practice

87% of those trained in restorative practice said that they felt better able to manage conflict. 43% said they experienced a reduction in disputes, with the greatest gain being in the workplace.

Improvements in relationships were also identified, with 47% reporting improved relationships with colleagues and an equal number stating family relationships

improved. 30% said they were more willing to report a crime or anti-social behaviour.

### Healthy Schools Programme

No significant differences were found between the intervention and comparison schools during the intervention with both groups on average being within international range in terms of health and wellbeing.

However, a follow-up study four years later showed statistically significant improvements in Body Mass Index (73% were of normal weight compared to 58% among the control group), social support and peer relations among children who took part in the programme.

### Community Safety Initiative

An important lesson from the Community Safety Initiative was that creating trusting, effective working relationships takes time. Engagement between local residents and statutory providers can be particularly challenging.



This process is supported by creating a regular space for discussion, and ensuring that this is managed fairly so that everyone's voice is heard.

Securing small, regular wins for the community is the way to gain credibility – it is not necessary to wait for a specific big change.

## Quality Enhancement Programme

- There is real value in bringing people together from different disciplines, sectors and backgrounds to participate in training together, in terms of the connections made, experiences shared and assumptions challenged

- Ongoing opportunities to revisit new practices, reflect on personal capacity and receive support are essential to maximise the impact of training
- On site mentoring, communities of practice and enabling managers to provide effective support to their staff are also central mechanisms to effecting practice changes.

### What We're Doing Now: 2013 – 2016

CDI currently coordinates seven intervention programmes. These are mainly in Tallaght, but now also in other communities across the country. Six of the programmes are part of the ABC



programme and one is resourced via a separate funding stream.

## Doodle Den

The programme remains in delivery in Primary Schools across Tallaght and has expanded to new communities in Dublin and Limerick.

## Doodle Families

This is a new programme, at piloting phase, which provides a second year of literacy support as a follow on to Doodle Den, particularly focusing on developing parent's capacity.

this is a refined version of that service and is in delivery across early years services and Primary Schools in Tallaght West.

## Restorative Practices

CDI continues to train children and adults in restorative practices and is playing a lead role in the development of restorative practices nationally.

## Antenatal to Three Initiative (ATTI)

This new area of work has developed following an audit of community needs in Tallaght. It is working to improve interagency working across services for 0-3 year olds.

# CDI



Programmes 2013-2016

Doodle Den  
Doodle Families  
Parental Support in Early Years  
Chit Chat  
Restorative Practices  
Antenatal to Three Initiative  
Family Links



## Parental Support in Early Years

The programme includes dedicated Parent / Carer Facilitators (PCFs) working with parents of children attending nine early year's services in Tallaght West. It is specifically focused on parents as this is where the greatest impact was identified during the PEIP.

## Chit Chat

Taking learning from the evaluation of the Speech and Language Therapy Service

## Family Links

This is a new programme providing comprehensive parenting support for prisoners, their partners and families, Currently being piloted in Limerick prison, it is funded and administered separately to the ABC programme.



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Responding To Needs, Driving Change

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