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# 'In The Loop'

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DESSA

DISABILITY EQUALITY  
SPECIALIST SUPPORT AGENCY

## CIP Policy Briefing

### A FOND FAREWELL

The Childcare Inclusion Programme is a pilot initiative, funded up to 31st December 2007. As we have not been able to secure further funding, the Programme is now drawing to a close. The CIP team would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in the work of the Programme.

We have thoroughly enjoyed meeting childcare workers, managers, parents, children and the range of groups and organisations who we have worked with, through our research, consultations, training, networking and workshops. We feel that much has been achieved through the Childcare Inclusion Programme and there is now a new energy and commitment, to offering more inclusive services to disabled children and their families, within their own communities. DESSA hopes that the Include Us Network and discussion forum on our website will offer a means of continuing to support and promote the process of inclusion in childcare and play.



Senator Maria Corrigan chairing CIP's breakfast briefing

On 6<sup>th</sup> November, DESSA invited a number of key representatives from government departments and statutory and voluntary agencies to a breakfast briefing on the outcomes and recommendations from the Childcare Inclusion Programme. The event was held in Fire Restaurant, Mansion House from 8.30am to 11am. Senator Maria Corrigan chaired the event, displaying her excellent knowledge and understanding of the importance of inclusion, the challenges and the need for positive progression. Jacqui Browne, chairperson of DESSA, presented an overview of policy

outcomes and recommendations from CIP, showing the huge amount of work achieved by the programme and highlighting the work remaining to be done at all levels, to promote the inclusion of disabled children. Other speakers included Ita Hulton and Cheryl Greer, both parents of a disabled child. Ita spoke about her experiences and understanding of inclusion, while Cheryl, having completed the inclusive play training and the parents workshops, spoke about the benefits of being involved with CIP and how the inclusive play training has benefited her in running 'All Sorts', an inclusive social club for children and in accessing services for her own child. Following the presentations, each table was asked to discuss 'What can you do in your area of work, to ensure or influence the inclusion of disabled children?' and their input was fed back to the main group.

## Launch of CIP Reports

Following the policy briefing, the Childcare Inclusion Programme reports were formally launched. These are: **The Profile of Inclusion:** research carried out to assess the level of inclusion of disabled children in mainstream childcare and play settings; **Inclusive Play Training and Network:** A report on the innovative training courses and policy seminars, which also outlines the original consultation with providers and the development of the Inclusion Network.

**Workshops for Parents and Children:** Describes the consultation event with parents and children and a pioneering two day workshop for parents of disabled children; **'Manual of Best Practice':** A practical guide to implementing inclusive policy and practice in childcare and play settings.

If you would like a copy of the manual of best practice, please contact the office (01 4163548). Other reports are available on request from the DESSA office and can now be downloaded from [www.dessa.ie](http://www.dessa.ie).

## 5 WAYS Workshop



A two-day workshop for parents was held in the Clarion Hotel, IFSC on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2007. This was facilitated by Di Murray and Alison John, who have been involved with CIP since the programme began in 2006. Input on legal and policy

issues was given by the CIP manager, Emma Byrne-MacNamee. The workshop explored 'five ways to empower your disabled children through your actions' with reference to: The Social Model of Disability, Language and Terminology, Inclusion, Barriers to Inclusion and Children's Rights. Nine parents attended the workshop and over two days, they were invited and supported to explore each of these areas in a participative way through games and activities. The key focus was in how to apply the learning which would lead to the greater inclusion of their children in every day life. At the close of the workshop, each participant commented on how it had impacted on them and how they intended to empower themselves and their children in the future. Parents found the information on children's rights and legislation particularly helpful and really valued the opportunity to define their disabled children as individuals, rather than 'by their disability'.

## 'Include Us' Network

The 'Include Us' platform network meeting took place in the Sanctuary, Stanhope Street on Wednesday, 28th November. The meeting was well attended from a range of participants who had completed the CIP training, policy seminars and parents workshops. The focus of the platform meeting was to finalise details for the Include Us network meetings, for 2008. Three planning meetings had been held back in June to discuss what peoples expectations were for the network and how they would like it to operate. There was a huge amount of interesting ideas generated at all three planning sessions and these were all presented at the platform meeting. Primarily, people had expressed that they would like to organise themselves into area based subgroups, meeting a number of times a year, with the three groups coming together on an annual basis for a skills development day. This idea was accepted at the platform meeting and the three groups were formed, based in North Dublin, the Tallaght area and the City Centre. These subgroups spent an hour working together organising their groups and planning their first meetings. The most important aim identified by all three groups was to provide support and information to each other. Members also expressed an interest in inviting more parents to become members of the network.

To finish up the morning, certificates were presented by Di Murray to those participants who had completed the inclusive play training in 2007 and also to the parents who had completed the 5 Ways workshops. A big congratulations to all who received certificates and to all those who have participated in training with CIP throughout the programme.

### NEW CIP DISCUSSION FORUM GOES LIVE!

The Childcare Inclusion Programme's Discussion forum is now live and can be accessed from the DESSA website. While the discussion forum was originally set up for CIP training participants to stay in contact with each other, the forum is open to anyone looking for support or information around the inclusion of disabled children.

To register log onto:  
[www.dessa.ie/caint/index.php](http://www.dessa.ie/caint/index.php)

These Kids agree that 'Inclusive PLAY is the Only Way'

