



THE CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Prevention and Early Intervention in Tallaght West

1. WHAT POLITICIANS AND PARTIES CAN DO

CDI is seeking political understanding of its prevention and early intervention work in Tallaght West and clear commitment to continued Government support after 2016. CDI is calling for a statement of commitment from Political Parties, and national and independent voices in Election Manifestos.

Specifically CDI is seeking political commitment to:

- The continuation of Government supported prevention and early intervention programmes in Tallaght West after 2016 through a specific national programme
- A commitment to applying what has been learned about prevention and early intervention to date by supporting approaches which have been proven to improve outcomes and phasing out programmes which do not have sufficient evidence to support them.

2. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Prevention and early intervention means targeting evidence based social, educational, behavioural and health programmes at vulnerable children and families at an early stage before difficulties become entrenched. Approaches typically focus on children's social, literacy and behaviour skills; achieving developmental milestones; parent's skills and broader health and safety in the community.

3. GOVERNMENT ABC PROGRAMME

There are 13 Government supported prevention and early intervention geographic areas under the *Area Based Childhood Programme* (ABC), which has €30m in funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies up to 2016.

4. CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Tallaght West is one of the 13 ABC areas and work in the community is co-ordinated by the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). CDI has been allocated €4m to deliver programmes in Tallaght West up to 2016.

From 2007-2013, CDI was part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) (along with two other sites in Dublin) to pioneer, and rigorously evaluate, prevention and early intervention approaches in Ireland. During this time, CDI designed and co-ordinated seven programmes in Tallaght West worth €16m which targeted 5,000 children and families.

These programmes were evaluated by Universities and provide a comprehensive body of evidence and learning on how we can best intervene in disadvantaged areas to improve outcomes for children. CDI's current approach and work is informed by these evaluations.



5. CURRENT PROGRAMMES

Doodle Den

Doodle Den is an after-school literacy programme for Senior Infant children which promotes literacy learning through games, art, drama and PE activities. It is being delivered in nine schools in Tallaght West. Doodle Den has also been replicated in six schools in Limerick and with groups in Carlow, Ballyfermot and Dublin City Centre.

The evaluation of the programme by Queen's University Belfast found that it improved word recognition, sentence structure and word choice among the children. It also led to improved concentration, reduced problem behaviours in school, an increase in the child's reading at home and greater family use of the library.

Parental Support in Early Years

The *Parental Support in Early Years* service works with parents to provide additional parenting supports. It identifies needs and works to promote children's achievement of developmental milestones.

The evaluation of the service by the Dublin Institute of Technology and University of London identified benefits to parents which led to an improved Home Learning Environment and also demonstrated improved behaviour and social skills among their children.

Speech and Language Therapy

The CDI *Early Intervention Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Model* provides onsite speech and language support to young children with identified need in early years services and primary schools. It also provides support and training to parents and staff in early years services and schools.

The evaluation of the SLT service by the Dublin Institute of Technology found a high degree of community need for an additional SLT service. 18% of children enrolled in the SLT programme were brought to normal speech and language levels within six weeks, removing a major social and educational barrier.

Restorative Practices

The *Restorative Practices Programme* trains approximately 150 people (children and adults) per year in Tallaght West in the skills of restorative practice, helping to reduce conflict and improve relationships in the community.

The evaluation of the Restorative Practice Programme by the National University of Ireland Galway found improvements in participants' ability to manage conflict (87%), a reduction in disputes (43%) and improved relationships (61%).

Healthy Schools

The *Healthy Schools Programme* took place in Tallaght West between 2008 and 2011 to improve health and wellbeing in schools. The programme is not currently active, but discussions are ongoing with the HSE and schools about how positive elements of the programme can be further utilised.

A follow up study of the Healthy Schools Programme in 2013 by Trinity College Dublin found that the level of child obesity was 9% lower in the intervention schools and that levels of peer relations and support were significantly higher.

Evaluation Reports and Policy Briefs for each of these programmes are available on the CDI website at: <http://twcdi.ie/our-programmes/overview>

6. NEW PROGRAMMES

CDI is currently developing or delivering three new prevention and early intervention programmes which are:

The Antenatal to Three Initiative (ATTI)

This Initiative is working with parents and local providers to improve how different services and information for 0-3 year olds in Tallaght West are clustered and coordinated, based around the needs of the child. In particular, it will improve linkages between GP's, maternity hospitals and local supports.

Doodle Families

This is a follow up programme to Doodle Den to provide continued literacy progress for children and families who need additional support after completing the initial programme.

The Family Imprisonment Parenting Programme (FIPP)

This programme draws on the experience of supporting parents in the community and has received additional funding from the Katherine Howard Foundation and the Community Foundation of Ireland. Working with the Irish Prison Service, FIPP will work with prisoners and their families to develop improved parenting and relationship skills.



The ABC Based Childhood Programme 2013 -2016

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