



## Annual Report 2020

**Charity Number** 17557

**Charities Regulatory Authority Number** 20065577

**Company Number** 433654

**CDI Vision:**

Every child in Ireland is thriving, healthy, happy, and free from poverty.



**Area Based Childhood**  
Programme



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

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## **Reference and Administrative Information**

### **Directors**

Isabel Aust (Appointed 3 November 2020)  
John Paul Byrne  
Mary Corcoran  
Brendan Cremen  
James Dolan  
Suzanne Guerin (Resigned 29 May 2020)  
Helen Johnston  
Madeline Mulrennan  
Paul Murphy  
John Murray  
Elizabeth Nixon

**Company Secretary** Philip Zambra (Appointed 12 February 2020)

**Marian Quinn** (Resigned 12 February 2020)

### **Registered Office and Principal Address**

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### **Auditors**

Crowleys DFK Unlimited Company  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm  
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### **Bankers**

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Dublin 24

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### **Solicitors**

Adrian Burke & Associates  
51/52 Fitzwilliam Square  
Dublin 2

### CDI Mission:

We will improve outcomes for children by delivering quality, integrated, evidence-informed services and workforce development through partnership and innovation.

### CDI Values:

We work in partnership with people, taking a strengths-based, family- and child-centred approach focused on children's rights, responding to needs and driving change.

We use evidence, innovation, and prevention and early intervention approaches to underpin our work.

Tallaght is our home, and we prioritise the needs of this community. We are also committed to transparently sharing our learning to inform policy and practice nationally and internationally.

We are respectful, inclusive, collaborative, relationship-focused and believe in having fun while we work hard.

## Chairpersons Foreword

There is no doubt that for all organisations, our outcomes, achievements and activities in 2020 will be overshadowed by the impact of the global pandemic and our need to 'pivot', adapt and innovate. Our Annual Report 2020 attempts to reflect these necessary changes whilst also demonstrating how the organisation continued to consolidate effective services, ensure solid governance, enhance high quality delivery and respond to new and emerging needs.

Whilst it was anticipated by many that Covid-19 would impact most on those in greatest need, there was initially a strong rhetoric that this disease was a 'leveller', that it knew no boundaries, and was not influenced by race, class or creed. We now know this is not the case. We know that there are higher levels of obesity - a known Covid risk factor - amongst poor communities than affluent. We also know that Covid impacts differently, and seemingly more seriously on some ethnic groups, many of whom are overrepresented amongst the most disadvantaged populations. We now know that living with lockdown and finding ways to manage the restrictions was harder on those who are most vulnerable; there is evidence of a national increase in domestic violence, whilst mental health services are struggling to respond to ever growing demand. And we also know that for those living in poverty, the many families and communities who at the best of times are clinging on by their fingertips, lockdown cut off critical, fundamental supports, the absence of which decimated their remaining resources. If we were unsure prior to the pandemic, we now know with certainty that providing meals for children in school is not only about giving them an additional social outlet; rather, it is to ensure that they aren't hungry all day. We now know that not all households have access to laptops or tablets, and that many young people and children have lost out on critical engagement as a result. We have yet to discover the long-term effects of Covid-19 and the accompanying social restrictions, on our health, well-being and economy, but we can safely assume that poor communities will experience the worst of these.

Like so many communities, the residents of and services in Tallaght responded to the urgent needs that presented themselves quickly, efficiently and quietly. CDI played an important role in this response.

Unsurprisingly, the CDI team demonstrated creativity, enthusiasm and good humour as they rapidly moved services online. They were innovative in finding new ways to engage families and children; they were collaborative in both sharing resources and reaching out for help from colleagues; they were persistent in their efforts to engage under-served families, and to remind us all of their needs wherever possible; and they were professional, continuing to keep accurate records, maintaining a focus on the evidence underpinning their work, and consistently reflecting on how they could improve.

The Board of Management of CDI likewise continued to deliver on its responsibilities throughout this period and was cognisant of its duty of care to our staff. This took, and indeed continues to require strong communication, trust and honesty, and a robust but respectful relationship between the Board and the Executive. As is so often the case in CDI, this relationship is enabled and enhanced by a balance of formal procedures (reporting, accountability, policy), and an organisational ethos which values relationships.

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On behalf of the Board, our funders, and all those who supported CDI's work in 2020, I am proud to approve this Annual Report which goes some way to documenting our approaches and practices during a global pandemic, and our commitment to working with disadvantaged communities throughout the country.



Professor Mary P. Corcoran  
Chair  
CDI Board of Management

## 1. Governance

CDI takes great pride in our governance arrangements as they give us and our funder's reassurance that our approaches, spending and strategy maximise the investment in our work. This year CDI achieved the Charities Institute of Ireland "Triple Lock" standard which involves adopting the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public; preparing a Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements in full compliance with the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP); making them easily available to the public on our website and formally adopting the 'Charities Governance Code' as devised by the Charities Regulator. CDI have also continued our work towards achieving the Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) Q Mark.

The Board of CDI is chaired by Mary Corcoran. In 2020 there were six meetings of the Board with an average of eight Board members present. The CDI Board members are all extremely experienced and knowledgeable in their area of expertise and bring valuable contributions to the work of CDI. Suzanne Guerin resigned as both Chairperson and Board member in 2020 after serving for many years and having been a central support since the organisation was established. We are delighted that she will continue to work with us as a member of our Research Advisory Committee. We welcomed a new Board member Isabel Aust, whose experience of working with NGOs and delivering communication activities will be a very welcome addition to the existing skillset.

There are established and efficient governance structures, with several Committees supporting CDIs Board, as follows: HR; Finance & Risk; Research, and Business Development. For more detailed information on our Board members, Board functions and Committee details please click [here](#).

In responding quickly to the Government public health guidelines, systems were put in place to support staff in working from home, and all were provided with the necessary equipment to facilitate this. In line with the Government Guidelines, Return to Office Protocols were developed and a return to office plan and induction course, were created and presented to staff. CDI has adhered to Government Guidelines and only essential workers have returned to the office.

A review of all CDI's Policies and Procedures was undertaken in 2020 with the assistance of an external consultant. As a result of this review CDI now has 30 policies with each one assigned to a member of staff to ensure it is in line with best practice and legislation. As part of the review each policy is also assigned to a Board Committee which considers the document in detail before recommending it to the Board for approval. Each policy will be reviewed and approved on an annual basis. A new IT system was put in place following a competitive tendering process and a more robust CLOUD service was provided.

Business Improvement Solutions was contracted to undertake consultation to inform the development of CDIs next Strategic Plan for the period 2021 -2024. This process began in October, and the final plan will be approved by the Board in early 2021, and subsequently disseminated. It will provide the framework for our activities and priorities for the next three years.

Governance targets for the year ahead include:

- 1) Maintaining Charities Institute of Ireland "Triple Lock" standard
- 2) Ensuring all policies are reviewed annually and are in line with best practice and legislation.
- 3) Developing a succession plan is in place for Board and Committee positions

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- 4) All Committees to develop an annual programme of work
- 5) Creating a phased return to the office in line with Government Guidelines.



## 2. Management and Staffing

CDI has retained a dedicated and hardworking team. The organisation is managed by a Chief Executive who is supported by a Management Team of four persons and a staff of 16 with a range of backgrounds and disciplines. All are committed, professional and work collaboratively to achieve organisational goals.

At the end of 2020, three staff members had over 10 years' service, one had 8 years with the remainder stretching between 3 years and 6 months. In 2020 we welcomed three new members to the team across the range of CDI activities which demonstrates the growth of the organisation and we were also joined by a Research Fellow, Catarina Laiteo, from Portugal who is undertaking a two-year project funded by the European Council. Two members of staff, Elaine Fagan and Ciara NicCarthaigh, took time off in 2020 for the birth of their daughters and we look forward to them re-joining us in 2021.

For a list of the CDI team and biographies, click [here](#).

During 2020, several staff participated in courses and professional development opportunities, supported by CDI, these included:

- Diploma in Corporate Governance;
- Certificate in Governance Basics (scope-skills.eu)
- Company Secretarial
- Social Media
- Post Graduate Certificate in Childhood Loss and Bereavement
- Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapy Skills
- Masters in Healthcare Management
- Hanen Certification and Elklan licence, to lead these evidence based, early-intervention language programmes locally with educators and parents
- Higher Diploma in Data Analytics

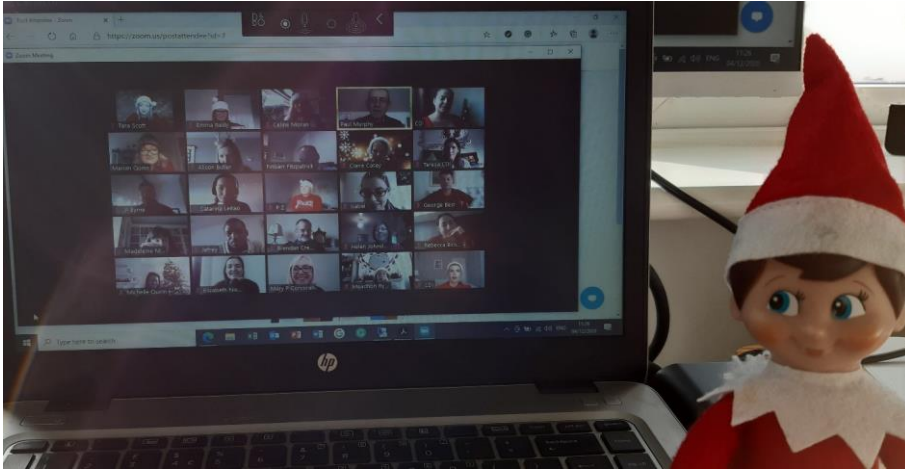
Despite the introduction of working from home in March 2020, in line with Government health guidelines, we managed to continue our commitment to team working and strong internal communication. Weekly Monday morning check-ins, monthly team meetings and individual supervision all continued remotely. In addition, our Programme Team which was established to maximise learning and synergies across intervention areas, met every six weeks and enabled the development of several cross-cutting developments. These are discussed further in Section 5 (Emerging Needs).

Our Social Club continued its activities to ensure that we have fun along with all the hard work! Coffee mornings, zoom quizzes, time for informal catch ups were all organised, and we even managed a tour of, and lunch at the Guinness Hop Stores when restrictions lifted in July!



**Key targets relating to staff for 2021 include:**

- 1) All staff to have a Programme Plan and Personal Development Plan which is aligned to overall Strategic objectives
- 2) All staff receive sufficient and appropriate support and supervision
- 3) Strong communication and staff engagement is maintained, particularly during ongoing restrictions.



### 3. Communications:

In addition to maximising our internal communications, CDI continually engaged with our many stakeholders via several social media platforms throughout the year. We recruited an intern from UCD in September 2020. Rebecca Birney joined the team and developed strong systems and connections across our social media activity, building on the enthusiasm of the relevant programme staff.

We introduced thematic days for our social media posts with ATTI on Monday, Chit Chat on Tuesday, Parent Support on Wednesday, Literacy on Thursday, and Restorative Practices on Friday. This schedule allowed us to be consistent with our posting but has also brought variety to our platforms. This played a key role in helping our audience to recognise CDI more, which in turn helped us to grow in engagement and reach.

During the year, our followers increased every month across all platforms. Our Facebook following grew by 14%, our Twitter following by 27%, our Instagram by 35% and our LinkedIn by 7%. We plan to continue to utilise Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn by producing helpful and engaging content that will connect us with our existing followers whilst also attracting new ones.

## 4. CDI Programmes

### 4.1 ATTI



2020 was a busy and challenging year for the Ante Natal to Three Initiative (ATTI), with Covid restrictions leading to redeployment of many staff working with children and families in the 0-3 age group. This redeployment led to more limited contact with new and expectant parents, raising many concerns within the ATTI Steering Group on the long-term impacts of Covid 19 on the health and wellbeing of new parents and babies. Despite these challenges, the ATTI Steering Group continued to meet and progress the work, and seven SG meetings were held in 2020. Steering Group meetings provided a useful space for agencies and practitioners to share their concerns and give an update on what services were available.

#### Interagency Work 2020

ATTI engaged with a range of interagency work beyond the Steering Group (SG), including Infant Mental Health Network meetings, Tusla's Foster Carer Circle of Security project group, CYPSC Safe and Protected from Harm Subcommittee and PEIN working group on impact of homelessness on children. ATTI also strengthened links with GPs by attending and presenting at the GP Annual Study Day in Tallaght Hospital and presenting at the GP Dublin South West Faculty meeting. The work of the Tallaght Welcomes Breastfeeding Initiative was difficult to progress due to Covid restrictions and lockdowns. Breastfeeding clinics are not taking place. ATTI has utilised social media to promote the benefits of breastfeeding.

#### Achievements and Outcomes, 2020

- Successful in securing funding from Tusla's Parental Participation Fund to engage with fathers on their experience of parenting. The *'Being Dad'* project, a qualitative exploration of the lived experience of fathers in Tallaght, comprised in-depth interviews with eleven Dads. The *Being Dad* report will be finalised in April with a launch event in May.
- Solihull Foundation Training, a model for understanding the impact of relationships on health and wellbeing and the impact of adverse childhood experiences, was successfully adapted and offered online via zoom. Two trainings were completed, in July and December, with twenty-six multi-disciplinary practitioners trained in the approach. Evaluations from the training were all very positive, with 100% of those who responded to the survey, rating the training as excellent or very good. Two Solihull Trainers CoPs were also held in 2020, to support trainers' capacity and development.
- ATTI continued its focus on enabling practitioners to engage with and support fathers. A Webinar was held in September with both national and international speakers presenting on the importance of fatherhood and strategies for practitioners to promote better engagement with Dads. Eighty-eight participants attended the online webinar with excellent feedback on the content and speakers.

- *Bonding with Baby* support materials for new and expectant parents was commenced and compiled in collaboration with PHNs and SLTs. The *Bonding with Baby* booklet will be launched as part of the Becoming a Parent Workshop, Family in Mind event in March 2021.
- ATTI, in collaboration with Tusla, was involved in establishing the Ante Natal Child Protection Advisory Group, which will inform the development of interventions to support pregnant women at high risk of having their babies taken into the care of the state. This will build on other work led by CDI in relation to parent-child attachment. Four Advisory Group meetings were held with input from expert speakers. A literature review was completed, and external consultants contracted to develop an implementation plan.
- The *Research and Realities of Ante Natal Child Protection* webinar was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Seventy-four participants attended the webinar with speakers presenting on domestic abuse, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the role of the PHN and a case vignette from Tusla Child Protection services. This webinar forms part of the wider consultation regarding ante natal child protection.
- ATTI secured funding from the CYPSC Resilience Fund at the end of 2020 to develop and coordinate a series of online workshops and webinars promoting family resilience.

#### **Targets 2021**

- Continue the work of the ATTI SG to improve access to services for expectant and new parents with children in the 0–3-year cohort.
- Launch the *'Being Dad'* report and continue to promote and support fathers' role as active caregivers of their children.
- Work with health care professionals and practitioners to enhance fathers' engagement in services.
- Promote infant mental health, bonding with baby and develop an infant mental health strategy.
- Coordinate the delivery of Solihull Foundation Training and support the integration and application of approaches.
- Finalise the ANCP Implementation Plan and commence delivery of agreed interventions and supports.

## **4.2 Parental Support**

### **4.2.1 Parent Carer Facilitator**

2020 was a busy year in parental support with lots of exciting new developments balanced with some challenges also!

We were delighted to welcome our Parenting Specialist Elaine Fagan back from Maternity leave. Elaine supported the programme from January- June 2020 before departing for her second maternity leave. We were delighted to have Michelle Quinn, CDI's Chit Chat Coordinator supporting the Parental Support programme from September 2020 onwards. Celine Moran, CDI's ATTI

Coordinator also supported aspects of the PS programme, leading out on the CDI's *Being Dad* project and coordinating webinars on engaging fathers.

We began working with two new services in Jobstown: Rainbow House and Naionra Jobstown. We also welcomed three new Parent Carer Facilitators (PCF's) on board, Jessica Towmney in Naionra Caitlin Maude, Teresa Grant in Naionra Jobstown and Aga Krzyzanowska who is based in Rainbow House.

We welcomed a full-time researcher, Dr Catarina Leitao to the CDI team in May 2020. Catarina is evaluating our Parental Supports in Early Years looking at the relationship between the ELC service and the parent, and parental engagement in children's learning, focusing on areas such as the home learning environment and school readiness. This exciting research is supported by the prestigious Marie Sklodowska – Curie Actions (MSCA) grant which was awarded to CDI in 2019.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted directly on all agencies' work and priorities. The various restrictions which took place during 2020 required PCF's to provide their services differently. This included working remotely providing support to families through new channels such as online and other platforms such as Class Tag to respond to the emerging needs of children, young people and their families.

#### **Interagency Work 2020**

The parental support programme continues to collaborate with a variety of agencies. CDI's Parenting Specialist attends the National Parenting Working Group, Local Parenting Forum and represents CDI as a Parental Support Champion within TUSLA's Parent Support Champions Project.

#### **Achievements and Outcomes in 2020**

The following quality support were provided to the PCF's during the year:

- Seven Communities of Practice.
- One planning meeting.
- Eight Service provider meetings.

PCF Activity:

- Calls to parents (March=160, April=278, May=272, June=270, July=182, Aug=66)
- Text messages to parents (March=100, April=153, May=94, June=101, July=44, Aug=26)
- Youngest parents we worked with was 21 years and the eldest was 51 years. Most of the parents are 35 years.
- Data indicate that of the parents we worked with in 2020, 41.6% are homemakers, 23.4 % are in full time employment, 24.7% are in part-time employment, 6.5% are unemployed, 1.3% are students and 2.6% are not working because of illness/disability
- 80.5% of families we supported in 2020 are two-parent household and 19.5 are in single parent households.
- Parents reported reduced stress from their parenting role after receiving services from the Parental Support Program (The average score on the Parental Stress Scale was 51.3 before the program and this reduced to 34.8 after the program).

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- All the participants rated the overall quality of the programme to be satisfactory (100%)
- All the participants rated their interaction with PCFs to be very satisfactory (100%)
- **International Men's day was celebrated** across the services to promote engagement and spread the message that fathers / father figures are important in their child's lives.



#### Targets for 2021

- 8 PCF demonstration sites are maintained and supported
- Parenting programmes delivered to parents in Tallaght
- 7 PCF CoPs attended per year
- One annual team development session conducted
- Increase awareness of CDI's PEAR toolkit within the ELC sector by disseminating information to a wider audience
- Coordinate the roll out of PEAR training
- Explore new ways to engage with more fathers through the parental support service
- Maintain our weekly social media presence in relation to parental supports
- Parental support programme review
- Quality review is completed with all ELC services and PCF's
- Develop new programme name and logo.

#### 4.2.2 Parental Engagement and Relationships

We were delighted to pilot CDI's Parental Engagement and Relationships (PEAR) Training and Toolkit. This training package was designed by CDI in collaboration with the University of Limerick and is based on CDI's experience over many years of providing parental support services in Early Learning and Care Services in Tallaght West.

PEAR is designed to be used as a practical resource for Early Learning and Care Services to support practitioners to develop and maintain strong partnerships and effective working alliances with parents.

- Is everyone who comes through the door greeted with a welcome on arrival and wished well on departure?
- Does every parent feel welcome and valued as an expert on their child?
- Is the open-door policy working? Are parents and professionals coming and going? Is the service a hub of activity in the community?
- Do I play my part to encourage active participation of children, parents/carers and other professionals in order to ensure high quality service provision where everyone's needs are met?
- Is my role valued in the service? Do I feel like an active member of our community?
- Have I taken steps to ensure diversity is celebrated?
- What else can I do to improve inclusion and partnership?

**PARENTING  
ENGAGEMENT AND  
RELATIONSHIPS**

**CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**  
CDI

**P.E.A.R**  
Parental Engagement And Relationships

**Toolkit for Parental Engagement in  
Early Learning and Care Services**

#### Achievements included:

- Two PEAR trainers were fully trained, and one pilot session with eight ELC staff was completed in June 2020.
- Second pilot PEAR training delivered online to 15 EY Participants in August 2020.
- Three PEAR modules were adapted for online delivery in 2020.

Families Impacted by Prison



CDI worked with Tusla to successfully access funding from the Innovation Fund provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). The funding was to enable CDI to deliver a series of awareness raising session through Child and Family Support Networks (CFSNs) nationally and follow up with training for those working directly with families impacted by prison. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, these plans were put on hold, and we hope that we will be able to revisit them in the coming year.

### 4.3 Chit Chat

Like many other services, Covid-19 transformed the Chit Chat Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Service, requiring us to think differently about how we could continue to provide evidence-based supports to children and families who needed to stay safe and at home. In the initial stages of lock down we contacted families, listened, signposted to services, provided advice and reassured parents, whilst being conscious not to overwhelm them. Our SLTs worked hard upskilling on teletherapy by researching the evidence, speaking to our colleagues in other Area Based Childhood (ABC) programmes and having practice sessions with each other. We continued to provide SLT services via teletherapy throughout the various lockdowns.



To increase accessibility to Speech and Language Therapists a Helpline for parents and practitioners was established to allow parents and practitioners to be able to call and discuss any concerns they may be having with an SLT. We adapted our training to be delivered online.

Lockdown exposed the many inequities in our society — from technology access to supportive environments needed to focus on learning. Digital poverty has been a challenge for our service, but with our mantra of meeting parents where they are at, we have been conducting teletherapy on phones, tablets and laptops, and good old fashioned phone calls.

We presented to our local HSE SLT department on our journey from face-to-face intervention to teletherapy to share our learning from our experience.

Returning to face-to-face intervention was also a challenge. A lot of work went into developing our policies and procedures and sourcing PPE; however, it went well with positive feedback from parents, preschools and schools.

July 2020 saw the launch of our new and improved Chit Chat Summer Course for Primary school Teachers designed by Dr Sylwia Kazmierczak-Murray and Aoife Merrins-Gallagher. The course ran online throughout July 2020 with 103 primary school teachers completing the course.

Dr Sylwia Kazmierczak-Murry was commissioned by CDI to conduct a literature review regarding SLT service delivery models in Early Years settings. This exciting piece of work will inform our service delivery plans the coming years.

#### **Interagency Work 2020**

Interagency working continued to be a core theme throughout 2020 in Chit Chat. Integrated service delivery continued through engagement and working in partnership with the three primary schools

and six ELC centres in receipt of the Chit Chat service. Chit Chat continued to work closely with the HSE DSW SLT department. All Chit Chat SLTs attend the HSE SLT team meetings where we share service updates and participate in joint education sessions. Chit Chat continues to link in with other ABC SLT departments to discuss programme delivery and share learning. Chit Chat SLT worked closely with the local HSE DSW SLT department on a *Talk to your Baby* project, developing a 'feely cube' with key messaging regarding communication and language development to be given to parents by PHNs at their child's 7–9-month developmental check. A social media campaign was developed to run alongside this project. This is expected to be rolled out in Q3 of 2021. Chit Chat SLTs attend the Oral Language Forum which is a national forum comprising of ABC SLTs, HSE, Early Years and Teachers, chaired by Duana Quigley, TCD.

### Achievements and Outcomes in 2020

- High quality Speech and Language assessment and therapy were delivered to three Primary schools and six Early Learning Centres in Tallaght
- 77 children and families receiving the service throughout 2020
- 23 new referrals for SLT of which 21 were accepted, 93.8% appropriate referrals, indicating that referrers are adequately trained in identifying children and referring appropriately to the Chit Chat service
- 38% of referrals were known to the HSE, whilst 62% of referrals were unknown, indicating that Chit Chat continue to pick up children who were not previously detected and referred to the HSE
- Chit Chat returned to face-to-face service delivery with new policies and procedures in October 2020
- *Hanen Teacher Talk* training was delivered to 28 early years professionals and six primary school teachers in 2020
- Creating a communication friendly environment training was delivered to nine early years professionals online
- 63 staff consultations regarding children's speech and language needs
- Health promotion coffee mornings were delivered virtually to six early years services with 31 parents attending
- 93% of parents surveyed reported reduced worry with regard to their child's speech and language abilities
- 100% of parents were satisfied with their child's speech and language assessment
- New policies and procedures were developed for Teletherapy and face-to-face sessions throughout Covid-19
- '*Supporting Speech, Language and Communication in the Primary Classroom and Beyond: An Online Summer Course for Primary School Teachers*', was developed by CDI and approved by the Department of Education and Skills. It was delivered to 105 primary school teachers nationally and will be delivered again in summer 2021 & 2022. Post training evaluations indicated that:
  - 96.3% of teachers had improved knowledge on SLT related topics.
  - 80.5% of teachers had improved confidence on SLT related topics.
  - 95.1% of teachers were satisfied with the course.
- 52 Weekly social media posts posted from Jan 2020- December 2020.

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### Targets for 2021

- Continue service delivery to three DEIS primary schools and six ELC Services in Tallaght
- Deliver Online Summer Course to 75 Primary School Teachers '*Supporting Speech, Language and Communication in the Primary Classroom and Beyond*'
- Complete training needs assessment with ELC's and primary schools and co-ordinate training plan as appropriate
- Weekly social media posts for Chit Chat Tuesdays on CDI's social media platforms
- Roll out of *Talk to your Baby* Project
- The Chit Chat service is expanded to the 0-3 cohort in the community through promotion of S&L, literacy milestones and strategies by linking in with Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Weekly Helpline for parents continues
- Chit Chat communication policy is developed and implemented in ELC's and Primary Schools in Tallaght
- Quality review with ELC's and PS receiving the CC service conducted in October and April annually
- Develop new model of service delivery based on recommendations from literature review
- Continue to work closely with the HSE DSW SLT Department and our ABC SLT colleagues.

## 4.4 Doodle Den

### Level of Activity and Outcomes in 2020

Doodle Den was significantly impacted with the emergence of Covid 19 in the Spring of 2020. In September 2019, 16 groups commenced with a total of 230 children. Unfortunately they were unable to complete delivery as children did not return to school. Despite trying to encourage engagement with their Doodle Denners, the Faciliators felt that parents were overwhelmed with the situation and concluded the time was not right to persist with the programme.

In August 2020 we reconnected with the Faciliators to consider how we might overcome the challenges for Doodle Den, in light of the ongoing Covid restrictions. Through this dialogue and engagement, 11 groups with 154 children commenced Doodle Den; six in Tallaght with 78 children, four sites in Dublin inner city with 59 children and one group in Limerick with 17 children. This was a fantastic achievement and testament to the passion and dedication of each Faciliator to continue delivery of the programmes.

2020 also saw CDI train 16 Doodle Champions from a variety of disciplines including Primary School Teachers, Home School Liason, School Completion Officers, those with Social Science backgrounds and Early Years professionals. These Doodle Champions are now in a position to train new faciliators embarking on delivering Doodle Den and Doodle Families.

In November we awarded a contract to Myth Digital after a tendering process to redesign the [DoodleDen.ie](https://www.doodleden.ie) website. We convened an advisory group of literacy specialists to help guide this work. The site will be a series of fun games with a focus on elements such as high frequency words, phonics and rhyming. By the end of 2020 the development was at an advanced stage and the

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website will be ready for launch in the Spring of 2021 and will be widely available and not just exclusively for Doodle Den use.

Another achievement for Doodle Den was work completed around the 'Big Books' element of the programme. Big Books comprise an important element of Doodle Den with 13 of them being used in the year. Over the last number of years some of these books have gone out of print, creating a gap in elements of the programmes. We have now identified an additional nine books with associated activities to support programme delivery. These books have been specifically chosen to reflect the themes and content of the original books in order to maintain the programmes' high standards.

#### **Targets for 2021**

- Finish and launch [Doodle Den](#) website
- Support services to complete delivery of the programme
- Reengage areas and schools which did not engage in 2020 owing to Covid-19
- Develop a Business Development Plan to deliver Doodle Den as a social enterprise beyond Dublin 24
- Establish and strengthen literacy connections with other organisations e.g., NALA, Literary Association of Ireland
- Collect and analyse pre- and post-intervention data.

#### **4.5 Doodle Families**

Doodle Families (DF) too was affected by COVID-19. Nine groups commenced in 2020, with five having completed and four sites just starting prior to the March lock down. Thankfully, all were able to complete by the end of the year. This was challenging as Facilitators need to engage with parents remotely, which they did using various modes including sending packs home with video recorded content and offering phone support to the parents.

Monitoring data indicate that children's attitudes towards literacy significantly improved after the programme. This was more significant for the boys surveyed, and most gains in improved attitudes to reading were amongst those aged seven years. We also found that the types of books associated with improvements in attitudes were those that **explain things**.

DF will also benefit from the support of Doodle Champions who were trained to deliver the Facilitators programme and we saw 15 facilitators trained to deliver DF in 2020.

#### **Achievements 2020**

The table below illustrates significant improvements in attitudes to reading having participated in the Doodle Families programme.

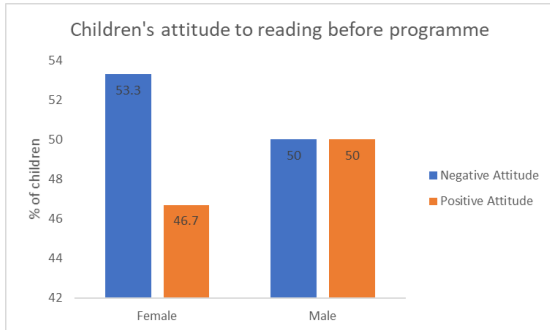


Table No 1 Children's attitude to reading before programme

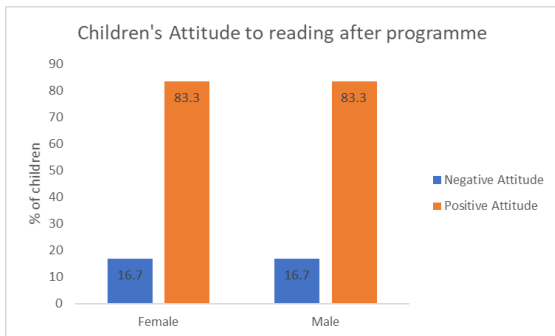


Table No 2 Children's attitude to reading after programme

#### Targets for 2021

- Support services to deliver DF in in our existing Tallaght schools.
- Develop a Business Development Plan to deliver DF as a social enterprise.
- Engage with relevant agencies and institutions such as NALA, ECSI, Parents Council, ETB's and academic institutions to promote DF.
- Collect and analyse data and disseminate findings.
- Develop online version of DF.

#### 4.6 Dolly Parton's Imagination Library



Amazingly the Imagination Library (DPIL) was possibly the only programme that did not bear the brunt of Covid-19. Indeed it was quite the contrary, with 2020 seeing 58,889 books delivered to 5,007 children in Dublin 24. This represents books being delivered to 72% of the 0- to 5-year-old children in Tallaght. We achieved a significant increase in getting more books into the homes of children as outlined in the graph below.

**Parental engagement** was encouraging in 2020 with 18 contacts made via the data base, with a 40% average opening rate of these communications. This represents approximately 1800 to 2000 parents engaging with each communication. These contacts contained various topics, such as top tips for reading with your baby toddlers and young children. It was also used to share information on Covid and Tusla led services. Parents regularly get in touch to say how much their children are enjoying receiving the books here is an example.



The table below illustrates the increased number of books available in the home of children in D24 in 2020, compared with 2019.

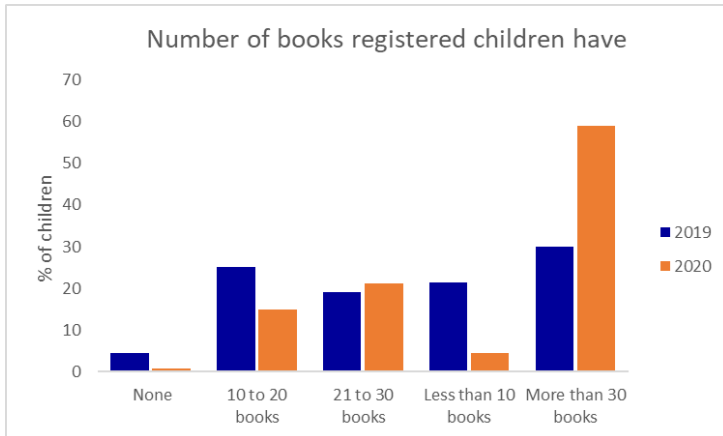


Table No 3 Number of books registered children have

There was also a slight increase in the amount of time children were read to. Table 4 indicates the number of days a week a child was read to in 2020 compared with 2019.

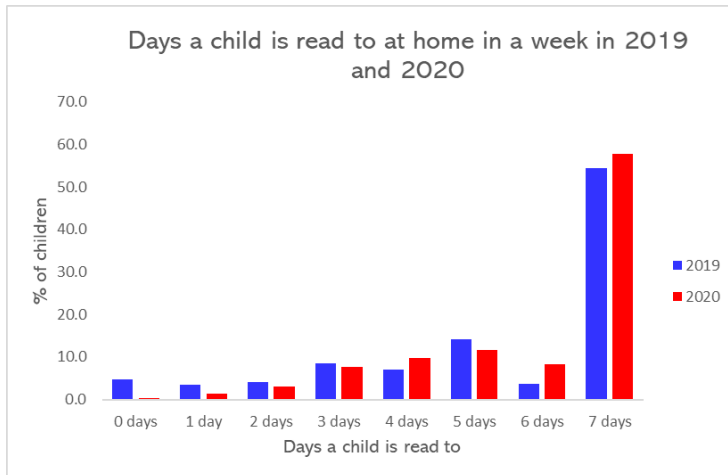


Table No 4 Days a child is read to at home in a week in 2019 and 2020

Parents reading with their children was supported and encouraged by regular engagement from CDI with tips for reading to their children and sign posting them to other supports in the community during the pandemic.

2020 also saw the launch of the Cork affiliate through Young Knocknaheeny which CDI helped to establish.

We secured funding from a number of sources, including Tusla, AWS, and ESB Energy for Generations Fund, but most notably the commitment of An Post to continue to support the delivery of the books in D24.

#### Targets for 2021

- Maintain and strengthen relationships with local businesses and agencies in Tallaght, for the purposes of ensuring all children avail of the programme and to support fundraising for The Imagination Library.
- Continue to deliver high quality books to children in Dublin 24 and reach 75% of the population.
- Develop effective mechanisms to monitor participation of and increase engagement with hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups.
- Maintain monthly contact with families registered with DPIL providing them with added value activities in the form of emails, social media contacts, encouragement to utilise library services and information on local activities.
- Establish a parent ambassador fundraising group.

- Further develop our monitoring and evaluation practices and identify research opportunities to establish the impact of receiving the books for children and families over the lifetime of the programme.
- Disseminate findings from the research and internal data on DPIL.

#### 4.7 Restorative Practices



In line with all of CDI (and, indeed, the whole world!), 2020 was a busy and challenging year for our Restorative Practices (RP) team. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying Government 'lockdown' called a halt to face-to-face training in March and necessitated the development of online and remote alternatives for RP training, communities of practice (CoP), continuing professional development (CPD) events and meetings. Between January and March 2020, we delivered five RP Training courses in Dublin, Tipperary and Cork to 78 people and facilitated two face-to-face RP Trainers CoPs in February and early March.

All RP training courses, CoPs and CPD events for the rest of 2020 were hosted online via Zoom. Following a crash course in online training delivery for the RP Programme Manager, we piloted our first two online training courses (Getting Started with RP (GSRP) and RP Summer Course) in June and July and piloted a third course online (RP Facilitation Skills) in October and November 2020. All told, we delivered online RP training to 246 participants between June and December 2020. Three online and one face-to-face Summer Course for Teachers were delivered in 2020. We also hosted seven RP Trainers CoPs online between March and December.

Commented [MQ5]: Present through graphics

The Erasmus+ TReP project was also very busy in 2020. TReP (Professional Training in Restorative Practices) is a partnership with four European Countries to design and pilot an online RP Course that will be accredited at Level 5 on the European Common Awards System (ECAS), which is equivalent to a Level 7 QQI award. CDI began writing the course materials in 2020 and co-hosted an information Webinar for the course in October. Over 70 people attended from all over Europe and altogether 34 people registered for the pilot course before the end of the year, 16 of whom were in Ireland.

#### Interagency Work 2020

We continued to work with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in 2020, supporting the training of their Wellbeing Advisors to deliver RP Training and providing them with updated online training materials once they had been tested out.

CDI continued to work with Oberstown Children's Detention Campus to develop a restorative culture within the organisation. Socially distanced refresher training in restorative practices was delivered to residential care staff from all seven Units between June and July 2020. Work begun in August on the production of an RP "Induction DVD" for newly recruited staff; this work had to be halted at the start of October due to Government-imposed public health restrictions.

Towards the end of 2020, CDI responded to a request from Tusla to pilot the use of RP in the work of foster care/residential care/social work teams in our local Tusla area. The aim is to test the extent to which adopting RP can improve outcomes for children in care or at risk of going to care, and RPs



capacity to improve working relationships and morale among the team working with these children and their families. This will be an important and fascinating piece of work in 2021.

At national level, CDI continued to provide leadership for [Restorative Practices, Ireland](#). The Steering Committee met three times during 2020, with activities reduced as a result of Covid-19. However the committee also met four times towards the end of 2020 to progress and finalise a Strategic Plan. This will be launched following consultation in Quarter 1 of 2021.

In addition, CDI commissioned a review and update of the Quality Standards which were developed in 2014. These will be presented to the RPI Steering Committee in early 2021.

### **Achievements and Outcomes in 2020**

In terms of our RP training programme, it was quite an achievement to deliver RP training to a total of **324 people** in an unprecedented year that brought us mass lockdowns and social distancing. We facilitated nine RP Trainers Communities of Practice throughout the year, maintaining contact and ongoing reflective practice with RP trainers all over Ireland; an average of 12 trainers attended our CoPs in 2020.

**Commented [JS6]:** Might be better to use a visual disaggregating the number of people trained by the training type.

We developed and disseminated a new Restorative Practices Podcast series called [Circles of Connection](#) that features restorative practitioners working in a wide range of settings all across Ireland talking about how RP has supported their lives and work. The series launched in April 2020, consisting of a short introductory episode and thirteen 20 – 40-minute episodes. By the end of 2020, the series had attracted more than 2,500 **listens!**

**Commented [JS7]:** Can use a visual

The partnership between CDI and the PDST was shortlisted for an award from the Irish Institute of Training and Development (IITD) [National Training Awards](#) in their “Best ‘not for profit’ collaboration or partnership” category. While we did not win the main award, it was a wonderful recognition of the work for us to be shortlisted for it.

An independent evaluation of CDIs restorative practices training was completed during the year. Whilst the pandemic severely interrupted the planned engagement process, there was a good response from previous training participants, and the report draws together the experience, benefits and implementation issues relating to the post-training use of restorative practices. The evaluation will be launched and published in early 2021.

It was also an achievement for us to finalise six out of seven Training of RP Trainers Courses that had begun in 2018 and 2019; meaning we facilitated 70 out of 78 people taking part in the courses to complete their training as RP Trainers. The planned Graduation event had to be postponed twice during 2020 and we agreed with participants towards the end of the year to conduct online Graduations in early 2021.

### **Targets for 2021**

Our targets for 2021 are as follows:

- Provide three Training of RP Trainers Courses
- Develop and pilot one online Training of RP Trainers Course
- Deliver one RP Champions Course

- Provide GSWRP Training to 10 Local Businesses
- Provide eight CoPs and two CPD events for RP Trainers
- Graduate 70 RP Trainers Online
- Provide 10 GSWRP courses and four RP Facilitation Skills (RPFS) training courses
- Deliver one online and 10 face-to-face (or Zoom) Summer Courses for Teachers
- Finalise and disseminate 14 RP Case Studies
- Finalise and disseminate one independent Evaluation Report
- Develop and implement RP Training follow up survey based on learning from Independent Evaluation
- Develop RP training quantitative data tracking and analysis processes based on learning from the independent evaluation
- Conduct six-monthly review of Workplan, M&E plan and targets
- Secure funding for establishment of RPI - Target €80K
- Support recruitment of RPI membership - Target 50 individual and 10 organisational members
- Pilot RP approaches with three local teams of foster and residential care staff in partnership with Tusla
- Support PDST to deliver online RP training - Target train eight Wellbeing Staff as RP Trainers
- Work with two third level institutions to develop RP modules on teacher training courses
- Work with two third level institutions to develop RP modules for social care courses
- Pilot ECAS Level 5 RP Online Course through TREP and Complete Erasmus+ project
- Finalise and disseminate Junior Cycle Year 1 and 2 RP Learning Units to 30 Schools

## 5. Emerging Needs

CDI's new Programme Team met every six weeks during the year to discuss each of our programme areas and interventions. We share best practice and offer cross-cutting supports. This time is used to collectively discuss any new and emerging needs that arise through our engagement with stakeholders and the progress of our interventions. We regularly analyse how each of our interventions and programmes are impacting on child poverty and how programme areas can maximise improved outcomes through interagency work and collaboration.

A specific target to "Dad-Proof" all CDI interventions was agreed, so that all services are committed to improve tailored approaches to facilitate greater inclusion of fathers. The Programme Team regularly reviews how we are engaging fathers and shares learning on effective strategies, such as the language we use, services we offer, supports we advertise, and activities we develop.

Programme Team meetings also provide an opportunity to agree methods which maximise the impact and outcomes of our interventions all, incorporating the voice of the child where possible, and consider the analysed data to ensure continuous quality improvement across all areas of our work.

CDI's leadership of ['The Inbetweeners Project'](#) continued during 2020, although covid impacted considerably on our ability to progress recommendation from the research report launched in late 2019. A positive benefit however was that many services quickly moved to online delivery, a strategy which had been identified as beneficial for many of the young people whose unmet needs were identified in the research.

Two literature reviews were commissioned during 2020, to follow on from the Inbetweeners Report, and these will be presented to the Advisory Group in early 2021, at which point a revised action plan will be developed.

**Targets for 2021:**

- To continue to build on the 'Dad Proofing' work and ensure that all CDI services have considered how best to include fathers.
- CDI to consider training and information needs amongst relevant staff in relation to supporting families in financial difficulty.
- To share the literature reviews on effective service for young people with unmet mental health needs and agree an action plan to address local gaps.

## 6. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

**Achievements in 2020**

In 2020, CDI continued to strengthen and consolidate its Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) systems with a particular focus on enhancing the quality of data collected. CDI also took a leading role in the development of the Tusla ABC programme Outcomes Framework.

**Programme M&E Planning**

- Enhancing the quality and consistency of data collected in programme implementation were key priorities for CDI in 2020. A Programme Data Quality Guideline document was developed for use by programme leads before and after they conduct data collection. The guidelines provide a checklist and recommendations for programme leads to guide them in developing data collection tools and undertaking the data collection process to completion. The process was applied across all programme areas and ensured that programme leads guard against common data quality and consistency issues.
- To double proof data quality and consistency, a Routine Data Quality Assessment Tool (RDQAT) was developed for use by the Data Specialist. All data collected and received by CDI were assessed using the RDQAT. This enabled the identification of quality issues before another wave of data is collected, especially for interventions that have pre- and post-assessments. Together with the programme leads, a quality improvement plan was developed and implemented after every RDQA to improve the quality and consistency of data. We made progress during the year to build PME systems which are collectively owned by the programme leads. Efforts were made to establish an internal structure which allows sharing and learning of PME issues across the programme. The Data Specialist attended and

participated in CDI's routine Programme Team Meetings which provided an opportunity for learning across CDI's service areas.

- Community of Practices (COPs) which specifically focused on PME were organised. These created a platform for the Data Specialist to learn from the programme leads and frontline workers on the challenges experienced in data collection and how to improve on them. Data collection methods and tools were reviewed and strengthened using the learnings from CoPs.

#### **Internal Capacity**

- The full-time Data Specialist role was supported by the Business Development Manager and the Chief Executive Officer
- Regular and ongoing support was provided to programme leads on updating M&E plans, reviewing tools, data collection and management processes.
- Internal training on data visualisation using Power BI was conducted for programme leads.
- CDI's Records Retention Policy was reviewed and updated to ensure it is in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act for Ireland.

#### **Targeting and Child Poverty**

- CDI made progress in understanding child poverty in Tallaght and ways in which child poverty can be incorporated in all interventions CDI implements.
- CDI completed a secondary analysis of deprivation and disadvantage to inform targeting on an ongoing basis. This was used to inform the wider Child Poverty Study in Tallaght.
- CDI was granted ethical approval to conduct a study on understanding child poverty in Tallaght. Despite the Covid-19 restrictions and challenges, CDI successfully carried out Focus Group Discussions with service providers, parents, children, and young people. Two focus group discussions were conducted with service providers, two focus group discussions with parents and five focus group discussions were conducted with children and young people aged between 9 and 18 years of age. The report is due to be launched in 2021.
- CDI applied for and was awarded a Tusla Participation grant to deliver focus group discussions with children and young people.

#### **Targets 2021**

##### **The priorities for CDI's Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation processes for 2021 include:**

- Internal system strengthening: Progressively strengthening staff capacity, particularly in using data for reporting and planning, development of data collection tools, and data analysis and visualisation.
- Building a collective Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System that is sustainable. In 2021, CDI's aim is to establish a PME structure made of internal (CDI staff) and external stakeholders (community and service providers) which will inform and support the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation system for CDI's interventions.
- Launch the Child Poverty study report and develop interventions to address child poverty in Tallaght.
- Analyse, consider and disseminate programme data and findings.
- Implement Social Return on Investment on at least one CDI intervention.

- Enhance the dissemination of CDI research and evaluation reports through developing publishable articles, conference papers, programme reports and infographics.
- Strengthen CDI's data protection procedures, policies and measures.
- Continue to influence the wider Tusla and ABC programme through providing capacity training and M&E consultancy to the ABC Programme.

## 7. Interagency Collaboration

During 2020, CDI staff participated in several inter-agency structures and processes. Many of these have already been referenced above, but additional representation included the following:

- South Dublin Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)
- Sub committees of the CYPSC
  - Youth Mental Health (CDI Chairs this group)
  - Homelessness (CDI Chairs this group)
  - Safe and Protected from Harm
- ABC Managers Forum
- Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN) Executive Committee (The CEO was Chair of PEIN until November 2020). In addition, CDI staff participated in the following PEIN Working Groups:
  - Homeless Working Group
  - Direct Provision Working Group
- Social Workers Registration Board, CORU.
- Tusla Commissioning Advisory Group.

## 8. CDI Training and Consultancy Service:





In the midst of a challenging year for everyone, CDI's training and consultancy service continued laying a solid foundation in 2020. Our training services adapted quickly, pivoting to online delivery. We ran several online courses across all programme areas – QSBO, ATTI, Chit Chat and PEAR, as well as several large-scale webinar events – a webinar on the *Being Dad* project, the MSCA- funded research on parental engagement, Infant Mental Health and ANCP.

With our Business Development Manager on Maternity Leave, October saw the creation of a full time Training Coordinator role, filled by Meadhbh Ryan. This role will help us define our mission for our training services, particularly with our work in the upcoming tenders.

We have also established an internal Social Enterprise Working Group, another step that will help our training and consultancy service step into the future and continue to establish CDI as a sustainable enterprise moving forward.

#### **Achievements and Outcomes in 2020**

- All courses moved to online delivery.
- 243 participants booked on our training courses across all programme areas (excluding RP).
- We ran three large scale webinars, serving 279 participants.
- We established our Social Enterprise Working Group, recognising the moves the sector is making towards additional sustainability.

#### **Targets for 2021**

- Develop a clear vision and mission for CDI training and consultancy services which reflects the changing manner of training in a post-Covid environment
- Develop plans to extend our customer base
- Deliver four QSBO modules to 48 participants from 12 ABC organisations from March to June
- Gain approval to deliver five QSBO modules as part of a DES approved summer course for teachers in July 2021.
- Apply for DES approval for a PEAR summer course for teachers for delivery in July 2022.
- Deliver eight QSBO modules.
- Support programme staff to run online training events including CYPSC online event and the Chit Chat online summer course.
- Product Development Plans to be developed and presented to the Social Enterprise Working Group / Business Development Committee and used to set annual targets.

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- Apply for at least 15 grants, tenders or funding opportunities per year.

## 9. Conclusion

CDI's 2020 Annual Report provides data on levels of activity, numbers of children and families reached, and on the range of services provided. It also names the research completed during the year, identifies the key issues and challenges, and indicates plans for the future and specific targets for 2020.

Undoubtedly service delivery will again be seriously interrupted in the year ahead, as the realities of life with Covid-19 continue. Whilst we do not yet know the full implications for our services or communities we work with, we can be confident that all at CDI will utilise the creativity, hard work and professionalism which underpin our approach to be responsive and relevant in whatever the future brings.



## Acronyms

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
ART	Anti-violence Restorative Training
ATTI	Antenatal to Three Initiative
AVP	Alternatives to Violence Project Ireland
CoPs	Community of Practice
CYPSC	South Dublin Children and Young Persons Committee
DF	Doodle Families
DPIL	Dolly Parton Imagination Library
<b>ECSI</b>	
EIQH	Excellence Ireland Quality Association
ELC	Early Learning and Care
ETB	Education and Training Board
EY	Early Years
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSCA	Marie Sklodowska Curie Award
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
PCF	Parent Carer Facilitator
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PEAR	Parental Engagement and Relationships
PEIN	Prevention and Early Intervention Network
PM&E	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
QS	Quality Specialist
QSBO	Quality Services Better Outcomes
RDQAT	Routine Data Quality Assessment Tool
RP	Restorative Practices
RPI	Restorative Practices Ireland

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SG Steering Group

SORP Statement of Recommended Practice

TOT Training of Trainers

TWBF Tallaght Welcomes Breastfeeding

Contact Us:

[info@cdi.ie](mailto:info@cdi.ie)

[twitter.com/twcdi](https://twitter.com/twcdi)

[instagram.com/childhooddevelopmentinitiative](https://www.instagram.com/childhooddevelopmentinitiative)

[facebook.com/childhooddevelopmentinitiative](https://www.facebook.com/childhooddevelopmentinitiative)

[linkedin.com/childhooddevelopmentinitiative](https://www.linkedin.com/company/childhooddevelopmentinitiative)

