

Mayo County Childcare Committee
STRATEGIC PLAN 2002 – 2006
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



contents

Foreword **2**

Background to the Childcare Committees (including Key Aims) **3**

Background to Mayo County Childcare Committee **5**

Current Provision of Childcare Services in County Mayo **7**

Strategic Objectives and Actions 2002 – 2006 **10**

Membership of Committee **20**

Eamon 'Magic' Johnson once said "all kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them".

In many ways 'magic' has summoned up a lot of the hopes, aspirations and plans of the Mayo County Childcare Committee (M.C.C.C.). In the main strategic document we outline the background to the M.C.C.C. structure and context, a demographic profile of Mayo, current provision of services in Mayo, its future childcare services needs and finally our objectives and actions. This executive summary aims to summarise the main document, however, it is hoped that it will also inspire and encourage you to become actively involved in childcare in your area, to read the main document itself and work with us to help provide children with a little help, a little hope and a society that believes in them.

Mayo County Childcare Committee has been established as the key local component in the development of a co-ordinated approach to quality childcare in Mayo. As a co-ordinating body it is with great pleasure that I can reflect on the level of commitment, co-operation and enthusiasm with which this document was created. The role of parents, statutory bodies, community and voluntary sector, children service providers needs to be recognised and acknowledged for its immense work.



Background to the Childcare Committees (Including key Aims)

In 1997 the Government made a commitment to the social partners that a National Childcare Strategy would be developed and an Expert Working Group on Childcare was charged with developing that Strategy. The Strategy developed integrates the different strands of the current arrangements for the development and delivery of childcare and early educational services.

The Group was established in the context of promoting equality for women and especially in promoting equal opportunities in employment. Equal opportunities between women and men means ensuring that women and men can access and participate in the various 'spheres' (eg decision making, management) and activities (eg training, employment and enterprise) on an equal basis.

The Group, chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, had wide ranging terms of reference and represented relevant Government departments, social partners, statutory bodies, non-governmental organisations and parents.

The Group recommended the development of a National childcare Strategy over a period of 7 years, which includes recommendations:

- Supports for parents with receipted expenses
- Supports for childcare
- A national registration system for childcare providers and childcare personnel
- A local planning and national co-ordination mechanism to develop the childcare sector

The Strategy was adopted to ensure the development of a comprehensive National Strategy, which would meet the needs of all children and parents and take into account the views of as many childcare interests as possible.

As part of the recommendations of the Working Group, the Government has taken on board the need for national co-ordination of childcare, based on local planning mechanisms. Under the auspices of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the County and City Childcare Committees have been established to oversee the development of childcare provision at a local level.

These County and City Childcare Committees have been designated as the key local component in the development of a co-ordinated approach to quality childcare. Their strategic focus is to advance the provision of quality childcare facilities and services within the designated local areas. The role and function of county and City childcare Committees is in addition to other existing support and advisory services (Statutory and non-Statutory) expected to reinforce, enhance and provide a co-ordination mechanism at County and City level.

Key Aims of the Childcare Committees

The main purpose of the Childcare Committees is to assist in the co-ordination of childcare, both nationally and locally and to assist in the prioritisation of funding.

The key aims of the Childcare Committees are:

- 1** To develop a co-ordinated strategy for childcare provision in the city/county
- 2** To increase the supply of childcare services and facilities
- 3** To monitor the implementation of the Strategy
- 4** To support and develop local County and City-wide networks of childcare providers and parents
- 5** To update and develop the baseline data provided in the National Childcare Census
- 6** To develop and information strategy concerning the provision of childcare within the city/county
- 7** To establish and maintain effective links with the appropriate city/county structures – city/county Development Board, Local Development Agency Boards, Health Boards etc.

This document is a summary for the plan developed for County Mayo.

Background to the Mayo County Childcare Committee

The Mayo County Childcare Committee was established on the 17th May 2001. The Committee's remit is to support a co-ordinated partnership approach to the planning and development of childcare services within the county. Specifically the committee will develop actions to

- Maintain and build local capacity.
- Support initiatives and strategies to develop childminders.
- Agree and support the development of quality standards.
- Identify, assess and address training needs
- Support local childcare networks.
- Develop information sharing and learning systems.
- Develop linkages and synergies with local and national policy initiatives.
- Attract and leverage additional resources.

With these specific actions in mind the committees overall aim is to develop a society in county Mayo which cherishes the individual child and parent by providing a range of quality, fun-filled, affordable childcare services suitable to the individual needs and aspirations of all parents.

On the 3rd March 2003 the committee recruited the services of a co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is Jim Power. On the 18th August 2003 the committee recruited Mary Conway as the administrator.

The staff's role is to

- Support the County Committee
- Support the providers
- Provide information for all services
- Co-ordinate a quality strategy for all services
- Engage in specific initiatives for childminding in collaboration with the Western Health Board's Childminding Advisory Officer
- Establish and maintain local networks / for a
- Carry out relevant research

In the coming years the committee look forward to implementing its action plan and basically establishing the service.

Link with Mayo County Council

On the 13/12/2001 the Mayo County Childcare Committee decided to align itself to Mayo County Council by becoming a sub-committee of the County Development Board. The decision has greatly enhanced the ability of the M.C.C.C. to work towards achieving a co-ordinated strategy for childcare in the county. This decision has had many positive impacts for the Mayo County Childcare Committee.

Current Provision of Childcare Services in County Mayo

General Childcare provision

At the time of the Child Care Census 2000 there were;

Table 1 Childcare provision by type 1999

47 Playgroups;	37 offering sessional services, 5 offering full day-care
15 Montessori;	11 offering sessional services, 4 offering full day-care
8 Naíonraí	
8 Crèche/Full Day-care	
1 Workplace Nursery	
7 Parent / Toddler Groups	
0 Afterschool Provision	

Table 2 Children attending services by age - 2000 Childcare Census

Children attending services

Age range	Number	Percentage
0-1	25	1.8%
1-3	211	7.6%
3-6	1035	33%
6-12	12	21%

In December 2002 there were 101 services notified to the Western Health Board.

Table 3 Increase in Notified Services 2000 - 2002

PROVISION	2000	1st December 2002
Sessional Day-care	62	71 (17 of these services provide 2 session per day)
Full Day-care	9	18
Registered Childminders	0	3
Naíonraí	5	11 (4 of these services provides 2 sessions per day)
Parent and Toddler Groups	7	18

Between the child care census 2000 figures (based on figures collated between September 1991 – January 2000 i.e. approximately three years ago) for 1/12/02 the number of notified services has increased for 76 to 101 or by approximately 30%. In terms of places the increase is up from 1,286 to 1,827 a numerical increase of 541 or 42%. This is a significant increase and reflects the effects of various demands, supports and The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme. There has been a doubling of full day care services, Naíonraí and parent and toddler groups. While there is no requirement for parent and toddler groups to notify under the regulations it is the experience of the Health board that a significant number of these service will develop in to sessional services.

These figures are not broken down by age group but some generalisations may be helpful. There are 20,623 children under 12 (1996 Census) which indicated that less than 8.9% attend a formal service up from 6.2% in the 2000 childcare census. Taking the figure for children aged under 6 (9,036) the percentage rises to 20% compared to 14% in 2000. As most of the services are provided in sessional services it can be concluded that most children are cared for in a home situation either with parents or by childminders. Calculations of the numbers of childminders are not possible but there are a number of childminders who have notified. It is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of childminders care for less than 4 children.

At the time of the Childcare Census in 2000 there were no afterschool services and now there are 23 services which provide an after school dimension. The afterschool services are provided as part on an existing full care or sessional service.

Table 4 Notified Services by Type

Provision	Community	Private
Sessional	36	27
Naíonraí	11	0
Full Day Care	4	17
Childminders	0	6
Drop-In Centre		2
Total	51	52

Strategic Objectives and Actions for 2002 - 2006

Aim

The overarching aim of the Mayo County Childcare Committee is to develop a society which cherishes the individual child and parent by providing a range of quality, fun filled, affordable child care services suitable to the individual needs of all children, while also meeting the needs of all parents.

The Mayo County Childcare Committee recognises that to achieve this aim will take time. It has therefore set a number of key strategic objectives for the period 2002- 2006.

Strategic Objective 1: Representative Committee

To develop a broad, inclusive representative Committee so as to ensure a co-ordinated approach to childcare planning across the County.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. will keep its membership under review to ensure effective representation from all the key stakeholders within the County.
- On the decision of a majority of its members present and voting it will request any agency, organisation, or body, with a childcare remit within County Mayo, to nominate a representative for membership. Not later than 1st October of each year the serving M.C.C.C Co-ordinator shall request each of its current nominating bodies to nominate its representative to commence membership at a general meeting of M.C.C.C. to be held before the 31st January of the succeeding year, which general meeting shall nominate the Officer Board of M.C.C.C. and shall review the number and type of each Subcommittee and nominate their the membership.
- The term of office of the first M.C.C.C shall terminate in January 2004 immediately prior to the first General Meeting of the new M.C.C.C. The term of office of each subsequent M.C.C.C.s shall terminate in the following

January immediately prior to each subsequent First General Meetings.

- The term of office of any member of M.C.C.C shall terminate on that member's absence from four successive general meetings properly convened. Where such termination of term of office occurs the nominating group may be invited, by a General Meeting of MCCC, on the decision of a majority of its members present and voting, to nominate a replacement.
- M.C.C.C. will ensure the quality of its internal processes, by regularly reviewing the Ground Rules it developed to facilitate optimum functioning. Some external auditing may also be undertaken.
- M.C.C.C. will develop appropriate sub structures in the form of Subcommittees comprising M.C.C.C members and external expertise, as appropriate, to take forward key tasks. The M.C.C.C. Co-ordinator, or her/his representative shall be the non-voting secretary to each subcommittee. The Chair of each Subcommittee shall be an M.C.C.C. member, elected by the M.C.C.C. and shall be the Subcommittee's Reportaire.
- M.C.C.C. will establish a **Human Resources Subcommittee**, which will ensure that there are the best possible relationships between the Committee and Mayo County Council the accountable body in relation to remuneration, conditions of work, support for the retention of efficient qualified staff appropriate staff are in place to take forward its Strategic and Action Plans.
- M.C.C.C. will establish a **Networks Subcommittee**, which will work to establish local representational networks to assure the active involvement of local childcare providers, children, parents, employers and other stakeholders. The networks will be based on the 7 electoral areas.
- The Networks Subcommittee will develop a Consultation Strategy to ensure ongoing consultation with all relevant stakeholders. In particular, the Consultation Strategy will focus on what is unique in County Mayo in terms of Childcare needs, such as the needs of children with disability, the needs of the Gaeltacht areas, the needs of the Islands, the needs of economically, socially and geographically marginalized individuals and communities, the needs of the Traveller Community, the Immigrant Workers community and the Asylum Seekers community.

Strategic Objective 2: Expand the Range, Type, & Distribution of Services

To develop the range, type and geographical distribution of childcare services across the county by 2006.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. will establish a **Capacity Building Subcommittee**.
- The Subcommittee will update the findings for County Mayo of the National Census to provide an accurate overview of all services in relation to need, and will advise M.C.C.C. on appropriate actions.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will examine the recommendations from the Erris, Greenhills Estate, Castlebar Town and other local research, and will initiate local needs assessment initiatives in areas of low / non-existent provision.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will research and advise M.C.C.C. on the development of models of provision, which may have general application.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will collaborate with Trade Unions, employers and employees throughout the County and will carry out a childcare needs analysis of working parents. The Subcommittee will seek to co-ordinate the co-operation of stakeholders in meeting those needs through the expansion of current services and the creation of complementary new services, cognisant of the fact that at least 75% of employed women are in full-time work and the aspiration to increase female participation in the workforce from 36% to 50% during the term of the Strategy.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will collaborate with the Equality Subcommittee to examine M.C.C.C.'s concerns about the uniqueness of the dimensions of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population of the Ballyhaunis town and district and the possible need for a purpose-built Integrated Early Childhood Centre there.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will carry out research as deemed appropriate by M.C.C.C. on play and leisure facilities throughout the county with a focus on type, quality and location. It will collaborate with the Equality Subcommittee and will seek to coordinate the collaboration of all stakeholders in identifying deficiencies and gaps and in taking appropriate actions.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will liaise with the Equality Subcommittee in assessing the outcome of its audit and the monitoring of 'equality of access' to services throughout the County so as to establish the need for expansion of services to satisfy the unique needs in County Mayo such as access for families with children with disability, Asylum Seeker families, Traveller families, families of immigrants, rural and socially marginalized families and cognisant of Mayo's larger than national average "deprivation score" .

- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will support existing service and new services to access funding. Capacity building support will be provided in terms of applying for funding, identifying new models of provision and training for Management Committees.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will liaise and collaborate with the Training Subcommittee and the Anti-bias Subcommittee in establishing and providing for the training needs of both services management and workers, necessary to underwrite quality and capacity building throughout the county.
- The Capacity Building Subcommittee will seek to ensure M.C.C.C.'s vision of *equality of access* and the *negation of marginalization* by seeking the provision of appropriate monetary subventions for services and individual parents in disadvantaged areas and communities, cognisant of the large and uneven distribution of lone parent families.
- M.C.C.C. will establish a Range of Services Sub-committee
- The Range of Services Subcommittee will research and advise M.C.C.C. on the development of a Childminding Strategy for the County in collaboration with Childminding Ireland and Western Health Board Early Childcare Services.
- The Childminding Subcommittee will advise on the focus for the work of the M.C.C.C. Childminder Advisor and on target numbers of childminders to be supported in year one, and subsequent years.
- Mayo VEC and the Western Health Board have agreed a system of voluntary support for the 40 childminders supported under the VTOS, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres programmes.
- The Range of Services Subcommittee will collaborate with the Capacity Building Subcommittee in researching and advising M.C.C.C. on a strategy for the development of Afterschool Services, with the aim to ensure that all Primary Schools in areas of disadvantage will have an After-school facility. The Subcommittee will work with existing services and the Department of Education and Science and encourage them to 'bolt-on' After-school services when and where required.
- The Range of Services Subcommittee will collaborate with the Quality of Services Subcommittee in researching and advising on a Quality Framework for After-school Services to be adopted by M.C.C.C.
- The Range of Services Subcommittee will liaise with the Capacity Building Subcommittee in supporting the development of Parent – Toddler groups in each location as a means of family support and services capacity building for parents. The previous experience, skill and expertise of the relevant NVCO's will be utilised in this work.

- The County Committee Co-ordinator will be member of the Mayo County Council play policy sub-group.

Strategic Objective 3: Services based on Equality

To ensure that all services are open, inclusive and based on principles of equality.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. will establish an **Anti-Bias sub-committee**
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will research and advise M.C.C.C.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will carry out an audit and monitor equality of access to services throughout the County with a focus on the unique needs in County Mayo, such as access for families with children with disability, Asylum Seeker families, Traveller families, families of immigrants, rural and socially marginalized families.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will collaborate with the Training Subcommittee to ensure that all services will receive training on anti-bias curriculum, and culturally appropriate resources.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will seek to ensure the M.C.C.C. vision of affordable quality services as a right for all children and families by on-going linkage to the work of the Capacity Building Subcommittee.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will collaborate with the Capacity Building Subcommittee to examine the M.C.C.C's concerns about the uniqueness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population of the Ballyhaunis town and district, and the suggested need for a purpose -built Integrated Early Childhood Centre there.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will support families with children with disability, Asylum Seeker families, Traveller families, families of immigrants, rural and socially marginalized families to become involved in the Management of Childcare Settings.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will liase with the Capacity Building Subcommittee in monitoring play and leisure facilities for children and in taking actions to improve quality of services

- The Anti-bias Subcommittee will seek to ensure the M.C.C.C. vision of affordable quality services as a right for all children and families by on-going links and collaboration with Capacity Building Subcommittee and the Western Health Board's Childcare Advisor Services and the National Voluntary Organisations.
- The Anti-bias sub-committee will work with the Training sub-committee to ensure that diversity training is provided to all providers
- Equality for Irish speaking families and children wishing to avail of Pre School and after school services through Irish.

Strategic Objective 4: QUALITY OF SERVICES

To support the development of highest quality childcare services across the County Mayo by 2006.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. will establish a **Quality and Training sub-committee**
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will carry out a quality audit of all existing services.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will be cognisant of the importance of appropriate remuneration, and conditions of work, for the retention of efficient qualified staff and will link with the Human Resources sub-committee in monitor and advise M.C.C.C on such matters.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will link with all other M.C.C.C. Subcommittees, and will bring together all research in relation to national, international models of quality childcare. It will advise M.C.C.C. on the matter, so that it can develop, articulate and communicate a vision for and a Quality framework for Childcare Services for County Mayo. This vision and framework will be linked to national and international developments.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will link with the Capacity Building Subcommittee in order to identify and develop strategies to overcome the anticipated gaps between current service provision, and where they need to be, in terms of quality assurance.

Strategic Objective 5: **Trained Workforce**

To support the development of a highly qualified childcare workforce by providing all staff with access to initial and ongoing training and professional development opportunities.

Actions

- M.C.C.C will establish a training fund to support the Training sub-committee to deliver on its strategic objectives and to support services and individual childcare workers who have particular difficulties in accessing training.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will assess applications from services and individual childcare workers for training grants, and will advise M.C.C.C.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will carry out a training needs assessment and will advise M.C.C.C. on training program targets.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will work collaboratively with Mayo VEC, National Voluntary Organisations and FAS to deliver M.C.C.C strategic objectives.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will liaise with the Capacity Building Subcommittee and the Anti-bias Subcommittee and will collaborate with Mayo VEC in setting training targets and in co-ordinating the provision of FETAC Level 2 and Level 3 training as appropriate, including the provision of training through Irish for staff in Irish speaking services.
- This subcommittee will work with the Western health board to provide child protection training as recommended by Children First
- The Quality and Training Subcommittee will collaborate with Mayo VEC to research the possibility of Third Level Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses in Childcare studies to be delivered in adult-worker-friendly and family-friendly modes into County Mayo.
- The Quality and Training Subcommittee will establish links with the Quality Subcommittee and with the Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education in order to maximise the training within the County.
- The Quality Training sub-committee will collaborate with other C.C.C. in establishing links with the National Qualification Authority of Ireland.
- The Quality and Training sub-committee will link with the County Enterprise Board in relation to business training for childcare providers.

Strategic Objective 6: Information Systems

To develop an appropriate range of information systems which will support the work of the Childcare Committee.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. will establish an **Information Subcommittee**
- The Information Subcommittee will liaise with all MCCC subcommittees and will produce the results of their various audits and needs analysis in easily accessible form.
- The Information Subcommittee will seek to ensure, through a variety of publicity means, that the mission, aims, objectives and actions of M.C.C.C. are known, understood and appreciated as widely as possible by all childcare stakeholders and the general public throughout County Mayo.
- The Information Subcommittee will be responsible for the development and management of the M.C.C.C. website.
- The Information Subcommittee will collate information on best practice in childcare from local, national and international research and will disseminate it to the relevant stakeholders throughout the County.
- The Information Subcommittee's publicity campaign will be designed bearing in mind the linguistic and literary needs of the population.
- The committee will provide a one-stop shop for all County Mayo childcare information.

Strategic Objective 7: Funding

To carry out an appraisal of each application for Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme Funding referred to M.C.C.C. by Area Development Management Ltd. and to make recommendations to M.C.C.C. on each such application.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. has established an **Consultation Subcommittee**
- The Consultation Subcommittee will carry out an appraisal of each application for Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme Funding referred to M.C.C.C. by Area Development Management Ltd. and will make recommendations to M.C.C.C. on the advice to be given to ADM, under Terms of Reference to be decided by M.C.C.C.

Strategic Objective 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

To develop and implement systems of effective assessment and monitoring of actions and outcomes against the statements of mission, aims and objectives of M.C.C.C. and in the context of National and EU Childcare policies and legislation.

Actions

- M.C.C.C. will establish a **Monitoring Subcommittee**.
- The Monitoring Subcommittee will develop an appropriate Monitoring Framework, cognisant of both qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- The Monitoring Subcommittee will liaise with each M.C.C.C. Subcommittee on an ongoing basis to assess and monitor its modes of operation, objectives, actions and outcomes.

- The Monitoring Subcommittee will deliver a Quarterly Monitoring Report to a Quarterly General Meeting of M.C.C.C.
- The Monitoring Subcommittee will produce a draft Annual Monitoring Report for consideration by a General Meeting of M.C.C.C. before 31st December of each year.
- The first task of the Monitoring sub-committee will be to develop an Annual Report of the achievements of MCCC's first year of operation, 2002.
- The sub-committee will review the internal committee processes on a regular and ongoing basis. Mayo county Childcare Committee is dedicated to quality in all of its services. To this end the Committee will review its own functioning and actions, to ensure that all members are able to contribute fully to the implementation of the Strategy. The quality of the meetings, in relation to both task and process, will be regularly reviewed, as will the quality of between meetings communications, the functioning of sub-groups and their reporting to the Committee and anything else identified by Committee members as affecting the quality of the Committee processes.
- The monitoring sub-committee will liaise with other County Committees.
- The M.C.C.C will set up a **Finance Sub-Committee**.
- The finance sub-committee will include representation from Mayo County Council, Co-ordinator and ADM. It will advise the MCCC on compliance with the agreed accounting procedure.

Membership of County Mayo Childcare Committee

NAME	ORGANISATION
Lily Cunningham	Department of Social and Family Affairs
Breege Jackson	Chambers of Commerce
Vivienne Rattigan	I.C.T.U.
Pat Higgins	V.E.C.
Mary Mulryan	Community Pillar Community and Voluntary Sector
Vacant	Farming Pillar
Yvonne Coyne	National Childcare Voluntary Organisation
Brid Ni Lionaird	National Childcare Voluntary Organisation
Hilary Kenny	National Childcare Voluntary Organisation
Justin Salmon	Local Development Groups/Partnerships
Paul Murphy	Western Health Board
Maria Cross	Western Health Board
John Coll	Mayo County Council / County Development Board
Geraldine Glendon	FAS
Sr Margaret McHale	Traveller Representative
Mary Lenaghan	Parent Representative
Maire Connaghton	Parent Representative
Mary O'Boyle	Service Provider
Vacant	Dept of Education
Pamela Ni Thaidhg	Udaras Na Gealtachta

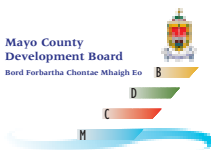
The Staff of the Mayo County Childcare Committee currently are:
 Co-ordinator - Jim Power Administrator - Mary Conway,
 Development Worker - to be appointed

The address and location for the Mayo County Childcare Committee is
 Mill Lane, Bridge St., Castlebar Co Mayo

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Your Plan - Your Future



E.U. Structural Funds

Funded by the Irish Government and part financed by the European Union Structural Funds under the National Development Plan 2000-2006



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