

Acknowledgement

The Management Committee and staff of the Sligo Family Resource Centre wish to thank all those who have supported us and contributed to our work throughout the year. These include the funders, the statutory and voluntary organisations and the families who have used the services.

Chairpersons Report

2004 has been a very interesting time in the development of the Centre with visits from Minister Mary Coughlan, Pat Bennett, CEO and Christine O'Connor Principal Officer of the Family Support Agency and Gerry Mangan, Director of Social Affairs in the Department of Social And Family Affairs.

New developments in 2004 included setting up support groups for parents of young children, lone parents and adoptive parents. In co-operation with Diversity Sligo we successfully submitted a funding proposal to the N.W.H.B. for a Family Support Worker to work specifically for asylum seekers in the area. We also celebrated the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in style in May of this year.

In October we held a review and planning day in the Sligo Park Hotel. It was a really good team effort and augurs well for the future of the Centre.

Today I am retiring as Chairperson of this Management Committee. I have been with the Group since September 1993, having served as FÁS Co-ordinator and FAS Treasurer for a number of years and Chairperson for the last four years. Looking back, my involvement has served me better than any institution of learning. Dealing with Government Departments has been a truly enlightening experience, understanding the language used by them is a skill I have not yet mastered. Memorandum and Articles of Association is also a grey area for me. I now know that all these things exist. The latest marvel to arrive into my sphere of knowledge is "Speak Nexus" evaluation programme. Apart from these wonders it has been my privilege to meet many dedicated and generous people.

During 2004, our policy focus was on children's right and poverty. We brought these issues to the attention of Dr Jimmy Devins TD in a meeting in the Centre, in the hope that he will bring them to the attention of the Government.

Finally I would like to thank all Committee members and staff for their team effort over the years, to the staff of Ailim Community Development Support Agency who have supported us throughout the year. Thanks also to our funders FÁS, Family Support Agency, North Western Health Board, Department of Social and Family Affairs, VEC, and Lotto. We are grateful too for donations received and for the generous response to our Flag Day in June.

Noreen Hickey
Chairperson Management Committee
17th February 2005

Mission Statement

The Sligo Family Centre seeks to serve all families without discrimination, in a warm, caring and open environment. We continually strive to identify ongoing and changing needs and to respond to them in a positive fashion. We aim to provide support, information and development courses of the highest standard to families in the Sligo area.

Objectives

- to highlight family needs and issues as they arise, to provide an appropriate response to needs and issues, including a range of drop-in services and activities and where appropriate, to facilitate other local or national family support groups consistent with our objectives;
- to provide immediate access to family related information in an informal, non-directional and confidential environment, to provide public access to family related resource and information material in appropriate formats, and to provide this service widely in Sligo and surrounding areas;
- to provide immediate support and guidance in relation to family issues, with onward referral where appropriate to statutory and voluntary agencies and to develop responses to such other family issues as may arise from time to time;
- to contribute, in consultation with other groups as appropriate, to the implementation of the North Western Health Board's comprehensive child-care and family support programme.

Background to Sligo FRC

2005 is the year that the Sligo FRC celebrates the 10th anniversary of its first opening to the public. It came about as a result of the activities organised in Sligo for the International Year of the Family (1994).

The committee at that time devised the idea of a Family Centre where people could receive information on all issues relating to families in a warm and friendly environment. Since then the Centre has located premises in Stephen Street, Church Street and finally the Mall where it is presently situated.

Up until 2003, the Centre had been staffed by a FÁS scheme which expanded from 7 in 1995 to 15 today.

There was a brief period in 1998, when with funding received from the Peace and Reconciliation Fund, the Centre employed a Development Worker and an Administrator. In March 2003, the Sligo Family Centre received funding from the Department of Social and Family Affairs through the Family Support Agency to employ a co-ordinator and administrator and provide core funding for the next three years. We are today one of over 70 Family Resource Centres in the country.

Other funders of the Centre over the years include the North Western Health Board, the VEC, National Lottery, Sligo LEADER Partnership, Sligo Corporation as well as various donations from local organisations and individuals.

Management structure

Chairperson: Noreen Hickey

Vice Chairperson: Ursula O' Shea

Treasurer: Paddy Berwick

Secretary: Jane Toomey

Directors:

Bernie Davey, Mollie Lee, Dympna McNulty, Anna O'Brien, Kathleen Feehily, Teresa O'Dwyer, Benny Swinbourne, Jim Sheridan, Rebecca Treanor and Sally Ward.

Staff

Elizabeth King Co-ordinator

Bridie Walsh Deputy co-ordinator/FAS supervisor

Imelda Carr Administrator (Job Sharing)

Teresa Ferry Administrator (Job Sharing)

FÁS Community Employment scheme (2004)

Josephine Fitzpatrick, Niamh Feeney, Ann Feeney, Natalia Feeney, Teresa Ferry, Mary Ford, Claire Gaffney, Rhena Gallagher, Regina Kelly, Claire Morley, Margaret Lang, Michelle Mills, Michelle Mullane, Bridie O' Doherty, Timothy O' Rourke, Rosaleen Scott, Caroline Sheahan,

Student

Grace Connolly (school placement)

Tara McGarrigle (volunteer)

A look back at 2004

➤ Staff

This year we had 15 participants taking part in our CE scheme. Nine participants were new to the scheme. During the year some of the longer employed staff left to progress on to other things.

These included:

Ann Feeney	FÁS Training programme in Childcare
Teresa Ferry	Sligo FRC Administrator (Job Sharing)
Mary Forde	St John's Hospital – Part-time chef
Regina Kelly	Part-time Receptionist with the Sligo County Childcare Committee
Claire Morley	Childminder (self employed)
Rosaleen Scott	NWHB special needs assistant

We also took on a new administrator (part – time) Imelda Carr in February. This post was upgraded to full-time in November when we employed Teresa Ferry to job share with Imelda.

➤ Toy Library

The new development with the toy library this year was the outreach work with Globe house. The toy library now operates out of Globe House one morning a week. We received many donations to the library for this purpose.

➤ Parent & Toddler group

This group meets every Monday and Friday mornings. In total 50 parents and 56 children availed of this service during the year. Many of these parents took part in the parent and toddler music and drama workshops which were very popular. The parents also had a social night out during the summer and both parents and children enjoyed a lively Christmas party at the end of the year.

➤ Information

Information service

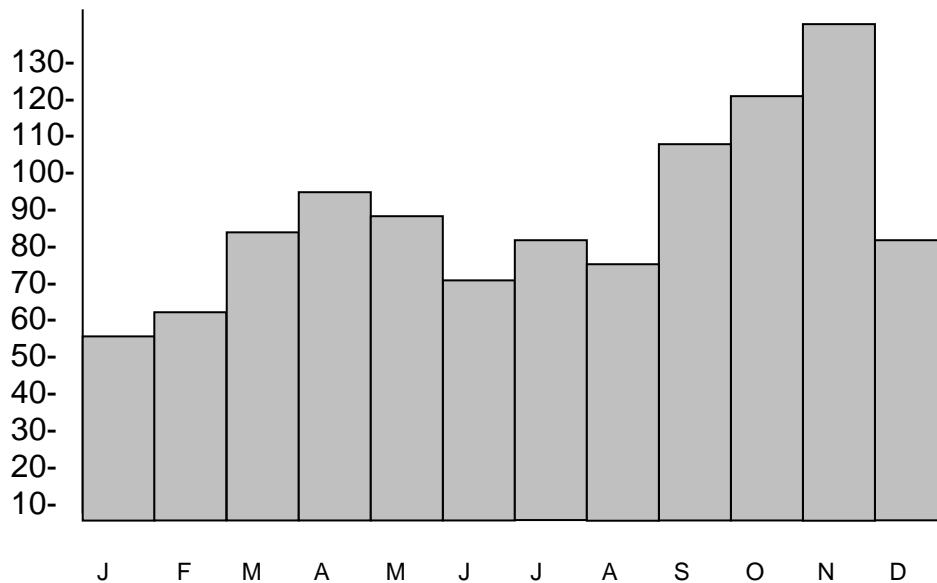


Table 1 indicates the number of enquiries we received looking for information on family related issues during 2004

In total we dealt with 1,022 information inquiries in 2004 up from 846 from the previous year. The highest percentage of calls was in relation to the actual business of running the Centre (39%) followed by queries on parenting courses (11%), staffing matters (10.8%), workshops for children (6.3%) parent and toddler (5.3%), lone parent support group (4.5%) room booking (2.7%) and toy library (1.6%).

➤ Parenting programmes

This year we ran two parenting programmes for the parents of children aged between 0-6 and one parenting programme for the parents of teenagers. Parenting skills was also a major part of the lone parenting programme. Issues covered in these programmes include: communication skills, self esteem, managing challenging behaviour, issues around substance abuse, talking to your children about sex. In total 42 parents availed of these programmes.

➤ Support Groups

As a result of work undertaken in the Centre during the year three support groups have been formed. These include a lone parent support group, parents of young children support group and adoptive parents support group. They meet in the Centre at various times and child care is provided for the groups as required.

➤ Workshops for children

144 children aged between 5 and 10 took part in the Saturday morning and afternoon art, music and drama workshops. These became very popular as the year went on with many children coming back for more.

For all of these events, training programmes and workshops childcare is provided to all parents.

Other work in the Centre in 2004 included:

- Taking referrals from public health nurses, social workers, hospital staff and other local community groups to our various programmes
- Organising and running summer camps for children aged 4-6 for four weeks in the summer
- Organising a week long workshop for 8-12 year olds to paint the wall in the playground
- Liaising with other local community groups to maximise the support to families in the area e.g. we ran a parenting programme which included local women and women who are asylum seekers in co-operation with Sligo County Childcare Committee and Diversity Sligo

- Co-ordinating a programme for lone parents for 36 weeks culminating in a seminar for lone parents organised with the Sligo Leader Partnership and Sligo Social Services
- Compiling an evaluation report on the lone parent programme which was disseminated by email to over 30 community projects, statutory bodies and interested individuals throughout the country.
- Setting up a support group for parents who have adopted children
- Working with the Social workers from St Attracta's Adoption Agency (Sligo), St Mura's Adoption Agency (Donegal) and the Western Health Board to set up a support group for parents who have given their children up for adoption
- Hosting celebrations for the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in May with a parenting seminar, a photographic competition and a Family Fun Day
- Producing bimonthly Newsletters and newspaper articles for local papers
- Membership of the Sligo Travellers Support group, Diversity Sligo, the NWHB Children and Young People's committee, the North West Regional Forum
- Taking part in a cross border initiative under the auspices of the Derry Well Woman Centre to address issues relating to lone parents

- Representing the North West region in the FRC National Forum board of management
- Meeting with Dr. Jimmy Devins TD to highlight issues relating to social exclusion and poverty
- Addressing the issue of social integration of asylum seekers by actively encouraging asylum seekers to use our services
- Meeting facilities for groups Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights and at other times when requested
- Providing rooms for access visits for parents and their children
- Referrals to other agencies as required
- Providing rooms to counsellors
- Holding a one day planning and review session with staff and management committee. This was facilitated by Aideen McGloin Ailim Community Development Training Agency.

Summary of Service Users (2004)

Programme	Adults	Children	Total
Toy Library users		53	53
Parent & Toddler group	50	56	106
0-6 parenting programme	17		17
Teen parenting programme	7		7
Lone parent programme	25		25
0-6 parent support group	10		10
Adoptive Parents Support Group	5		5
Crèche users		50	50
Art, music, drama workshops for children		144	144
Parent & Tots Drama and music	32	36	68
Summer Camp		37	
Wall Mural		9	9
Parenting seminar	49		
Lone parenting seminar	54		
Family Fun day	80	125	205
TOTAL	329	462	791

Many of these parents and children came back several times over the year to use our services and take part in the programmes offered.

Training undertaken and conferences attended by staff members (2004)

- "Getting a Perspective on Family Support" NWHB
- Fire Safety Local fire station
- Health and Safety
- Paediatric First Aid and Safety in the Home
- *Training in Best Practice in Cross Border Activity* run by Sligo Connections – 5 weeks
- *Support and Supervision training for management* FRC National Forum.
- *National Council for the Blind, Sligo* Open Day
- "Establishing a Modern Statutory Framework for Charities" Sligo County Community Forum
- *Disability Training* - DESSA (Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency)
- *Antiracism training for trainers* - National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), Dublin
- *Children First Training* Sligo County Childcare Committee.
- *Cultural Diversity* - Sligo CCC and Trocaire.
- *Managing Challenging Behaviour* - Sligo CCC
- *Child Protection with Staff*
- *Fas Le Cheile Training* NWHB training (12 weeks)
- *Working with Children and Families in Need*
- *Building Resilience and Developing Social Networks*
- *Anti-racism and intercultural Training*
- "A woman's model for social Reform" October
- FSA Conference October

- *Fas Le Cheile Training (NWHB)* Facilitation skills
- Desktop Publishing
- SPEAK/NEXUS Training (Family Support Agency)
- FETAC Level 2 Caring for Children (0-6)
- FETAC Level 2 Early Childhood Education Module