

## **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.*

### **Aims 2009- 2011**

- To consolidate the existing work of the FRC
- To be inclusive of families in the area experiencing isolation, disadvantage and poverty
- To be inclusive of families from minority groups including Travellers , refugees and asylum seekers, migrants, members of new communities, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT)
- To provide relevant supports and services for grandparents, parents and their children.

## **1.0 Brief overview of 2010 in the Sligo FRC**

The Sligo FRC had a busy year in 2010 with big changes in staff. Eleven CE staff members left during the year and three other staff members including the job sharing co-ordinators (one resigned and the other left at the end of her contract to cover maternity leave). In addition six new staff members were recruited. The main difficulty for recruitment of new staff was the delay in getting Garda clearance and as a result we did not achieve the full compliment in CE staff. This is reflected in the income received from FÁS this year.

The family support specific project gained an extra 5 hours/week and an extra worker increasing the number of workers in that project from two to three. The social club for adults in the community with learning disabilities commenced in 2009 with one evening/week increased in October 2010 to two evenings.

The joint initiative with the Sligo LEADER Partnership PEACE III project which included workshops for fathers and children and an intercultural parent and toddler group was a great success as was the art project with the local schools.

Up to ninety parents/childminders took part in the parent and toddler groups run on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings while Footprints drop-in crèche had its busiest month to date in October 2010 with 254 visit. The outreach home support visits were affected by the delay in getting Garda clearance, nevertheless we were able to provide this service to seventeen families.

Sligo FRC witnessed an increase in the use of the Centre by people born in other countries. This was assisted by intercultural parent and toddler group and the father and children's intercultural workshops. In December 2010, a joint funding application with Diversity Sligo and the HSE public health nurse in Globe House was submitted to PEACE III for a women's group comprising women from the community and women from Globe House. The application was successful and the group started in February 2011.

## 2.0 Management structure and staff

Chairperson:	Josette Newman
Vice Chairperson:	Chris Davis
Treasurer:	Ruth Campbell
Secretary:	Sonya Coffey
Directors:	Chris Davis, Jim O' Connor, Mary Kelly, Bernie Davey, Marian Hargadon, Trish Mc Laughlin (maternity leave covered by Tina Butler) and Martina Kilgallon.

The management committee is made up of eleven volunteers. In 2010, one volunteer resigned and was not replaced. The executive sub-group is made up of the chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary and treasurer. This group meets in the event of a crisis or for employment issues.

In addition to these, a sub-group is established of two to three committee members working with staff in the event of a specific piece of work to be undertaken and then disbanded once the work is completed. This year we had one such sub-group, one who was involved in the recruitment of two co-ordinators (one in January and the second in October). This has proved very effective as it ensures the work of the Centre is spread around to all members of the management committee.

## 3.0 Staff<sup>1</sup>

Fiona Brennan	Coordinator February – September 2010 (4 days/week)
Maria Scott	Coordinator – resigned in September 2010 (1 day/week)
Elizabeth King	Coordinator – from September onwards (4 days/week)
Bridie Walsh	FÁS supervisor (job sharing)
Sarah Cleasby	FÁS supervisor (job sharing)
Cathy McGowan	Administrator
Charlotte Bussmann	Family support childcare co-coordinator
Rose McCrann	Drop-in crèche assistant
Sue Coleman	Home support worker (25 hours/week)

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<sup>1</sup> All staff members written in blue left the Centre in 2010

## Sligo Family Resource Centre

Mary Hamilton	Home support worker resigned April 2010 (10 hours/week from July 08)
Colette Sheerin	Home support worker from May 2010 (20 hours/week)
Ann McPadden	Home support worker from May 2010 (10 hours/week)
Ann Boyd	Social Club Leader (4 hours/week)

## FÁS Community Employment Scheme Participants (2009/2010)

Ann-Marie Finnegan, Ray Cawley	Mary Coughlan, Eilís Feeney, Clare Lynch, Joanne Kelly	Administration and Reception
Maureen Scanlon, Michelle McGovern, Sandra Davey, Karen Keenan, Jacinta Stafford, Katarzyna Fedorka, Jacinta Killoran, Ronak Palani	Stephanie Creaven, Heather Phibbs	Childcare
Sharon Duffy, Noreen Maye, Anne Byrne, Gail McNamara	Sarah Deadman, Ann Gethins	
Alan Fox		Caretaker
Maureen Scanlon		Social Club Leader (4 hours/week)

## Students

Lisa Fox, Roselle Mannion, Deirdre Waters	Ursuline Secondary School Transition Year Students
Mahamuda Islam	FÁS childcare traineeship

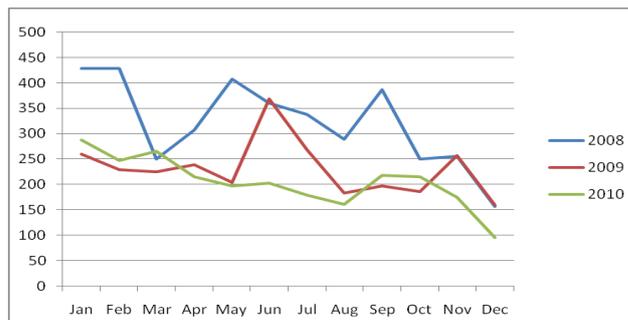
## 4 Overview

The following is a flavour of the work we have undertaken in the Centre during last year.

### 4.1 Centre Activity

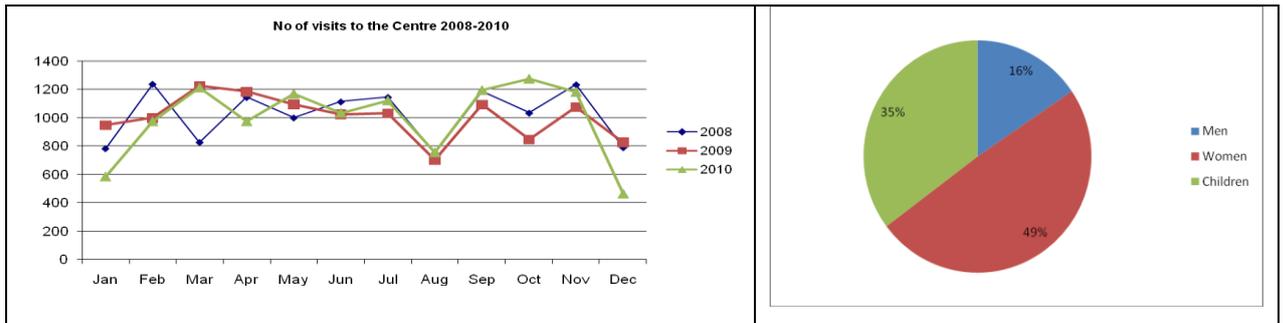
To record the activities of the Centre, the administration workers collate the numbers of telephone calls in and out of the Centre and the numbers of people who visit the Centre every day. These figures give the reader an overview of the activity of the Centre over the year, enable comparisons with previous years and are used as one of the indicators of the work under taken by the Centre.

Phone calls into the Centre 2008-2010



## Sligo Family Resource Centre

A rapid increase in the number of phone calls to the centre took place from 2005 to 2008, peaking in that year and then settling down in 2009 and 2010. Staff feel that this is due to the increase in the use of email in particular and texting to a lesser degree, neither of which to date are recorded for our statistics. Phone calls related to activities taking place at the centre e.g. workshops, courses and summer camps, as well as family support/footprints crèche and family centre business.

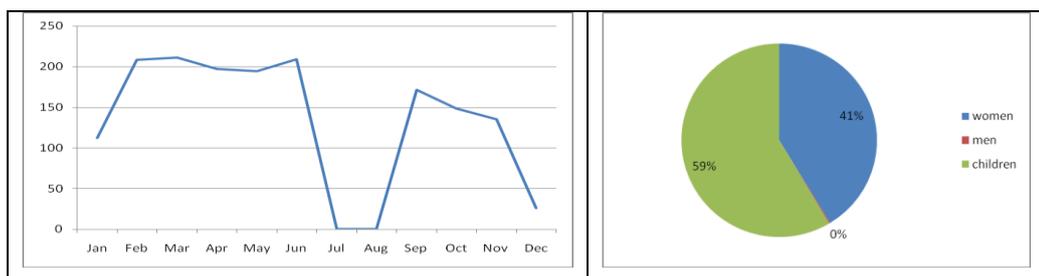


In 2010 there were 11,926 visits to the centre, a slight decrease overall on the previous two years. The poor weather in December impacted negatively on visits, which had peaked in 2008. There has however, been an increase in the number of men using the Centre up to 16% in 2010 from 12% in 2008.

### 4.2 Parent Support Groups

These include:

*Parent and Toddler Groups* –There are parent and toddler sessions every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. The Tuesdays and Wednesdays facilitated drama group has been particularly popular with both the parents and their toddlers. In these sessions, the parents and toddlers take part in singing, dancing, rhymes, mime and storytelling sessions. The Friday parent and toddler group while not as busy is a favourite with parents with small babies too young for the drama sessions. Below is the breakdown of the numbers attending the facilitated parent and toddler drama sessions on a monthly basis and a breakdown by gender, adult and children.



### *Sligo Family Resource Centre*

*Intercultural Parent and Toddler Group* – This group was established as part of a PEACE III funded project “*Promoting Diversity through Family Interaction*” through the Sligo LEADER Partnership. The group was facilitated by Deirdre Gaul and met over 20 weeks on Monday mornings from May – July and September – November 2010.

39 parents with 41 children attended. As it was an “open-door” session, not all parents and children attended regularly but 20% of the parents and their children attended more than three times. The objective of this initiative *was to develop intercultural awareness and challenge stereotypes through work with families and their young children.*



*Adoptive Parent Group* – they continue to meet on the last Monday of every month. In 2010, the group organised an information workshop in April, a family fun day in July and a Christmas party in December.

*Birth Parent Support Group* – this group met 4 times during 2010 with a similar group from Donegal in 2008, as well as meeting together in the FRC. It is facilitated by the social workers from St Attracta’s and St Mura’s Adoption Agencies and the Sligo FRC co-ordinator.



*Fathers and Children Group* – this group was also part of a PEACE III “*Promoting Diversity through Family Interaction*” through the Sligo LEADER Partnership. It ran over 10 weeks beginning with a drumming workshop in July and every Saturday morning from September – November. In total 14 fathers and their children took part in this.

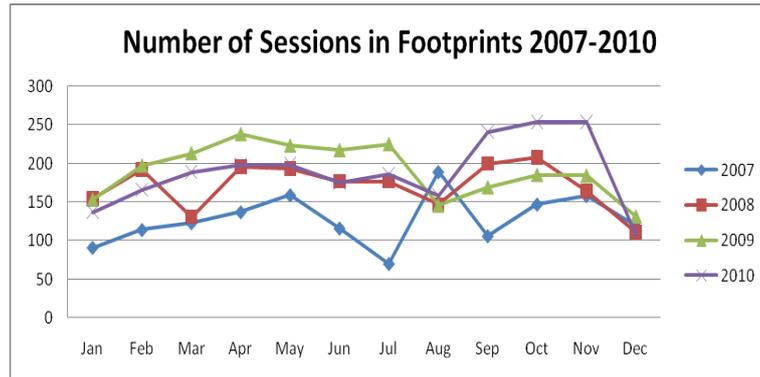
### **4.3 Family Support Project**

This project, which includes *Footprints* drop-in crèche and the home support work, was funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund 2006 – 2007. In the autumn of 2007, we successfully negotiated with the HSE to continue funding this project. In 2009, we received funding for the crèche under the Office of the Minister for Children and Young People (OMCY) Childcare Subvention Scheme (CSS).

### 4.3.1 Footprints Drop-in Crèche

The Footprints drop-in is now in its fourth year with the increasing numbers of families using the service.

By the end of December 2010, 178 children with on average 43 families per month had used the service. 71 families who used the service this year were new to the Centre. Below is a chart of the number of sessions in the crèche over the past four years.



### 4.3.2 Home Support Work

This highly innovative project has provided support to 62 families directly in their own homes since it began in 2007. Support is provided in the form of parenting skills, budgeting, nutrition, childcare and homework support. Seventeen families were supported in 2010. The delay in recruiting staff due to the long wait for Garda clearance has affected this service somewhat, as with the changeover of CE staff every August we frequently have to wait up to nine months for Garda Clearance.

#### 4.3.2.1 Home Support Specific Project

An additional project was established in co-operation with the HSE social work department Tubbercurry during 2007. It involves working with one specific family for fifty hours per week. An evaluation of this project was undertaken by Claire Galligan, independent evaluator in April 2008.

In early 2010, a decision was made to increase the hours with this family from 50 to 55. Sligo FRC was then in a position to employ an extra home support worker. The three staff now work 25, 20 and 10 hours per week, respectively.

#### 4.4 Social Club

This is a joint initiative between the Adult Learning Disability Social Work Department in Markievicz House and the Sligo FRC. The Club is for adults with learning disabilities who live independently in the community. Up to November 2010, the Club was held for two hours every Saturday evening. Due to its popularity with the clients, the number of hours has increased and a second two-hour session is now held on Tuesday evenings. There is a core group of 4 people attending the Club but in the past year 13 people have taken part in its activities.

#### 4.5 Training for Parents

This year, Sligo FRC ran a 0-6 parenting programme in May attended by 9 parents and a positive parenting programme in September/October funded by the HSE Health Promotion Unit Fás Le Cheile initiative, which was attended by 19 parents. In their evaluation participants spoke positively of how the course helped them to *“be positive, enjoy and take time to relax and enjoy being a parent”* and to *“listen better, think about what’s going on and gain confidence.”* A positive parenting course was run in March/April with 14 participants.

#### 4.6 Outreach School Art Project



The rationale for this project was to outreach to and work directly with communities that the Centre targets. In February 2010, as part of a collaborative Art Project between Sligo FRC and the local primary schools, 21 first class children in the St Edward’s school took part in the *“Unity Tree”* project. The project was inspired by the song *“We are Raindrops”*, a song rich in the ideas of unity and diversity. Seán Ó hAnrahan and a CE participant delivered a series of art workshops to the children.

#### **4.7 Summer Camps**

Sligo FRC organised and ran summer camps for children aged 4-6 for two weeks in the summer. The camps were attended by 20 children, 10 of whom were from Globe House. The children tried out new activities including arts and crafts, sports and a social as well as a fun trip to Kevinsfort playground and sport's fields. The children made new friends and got the opportunity to share summer experiences that would otherwise have been unaffordable to them.

#### **4.8 Family Fun Days/Events**

In April, Sligo FRC held the annual family fun day to celebrate the International Day of the Family. A second family fun day for adopted children and their families was held at the end of August.

Sligo FRC held four fundraising events during the year. The first was on Pancake Tuesday for the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght and the second was in June, with a picnic in Kevinsfort for Barnardos. There was also a pram push and a flag day in June to raise funds for the Centre.



Christmas parties were also held for the adoptive parents and their children (November 2010) and the parent and toddler group as well as children from Footprints drop-in crèche (December 2010).

#### **4.9 Ethnic Minorities**

Sligo FRC is involved in working with minorities through Diversity Sligo and the Globe House crèche steering group. In 2010, as part of the Sligo LEADER Partnership PEACE III project, the Sligo FRC hosted an Intercultural parent and toddler group between May and November and a series of fathers and children intercultural art workshops between September and November 2010, as outlined above. In December the Sligo FRC in collaboration with Diversity Sligo and HSE public health nurse in Globe House submitted a funding proposal to PEACE III to set up a women's group to include women from Globe House and women from the community. This was successful and work began on that in January 2011.

#### **4.10 Other Initiatives/Services**

**The Family Room** is used by parents and their babies/toddlers as a drop in for a break from being in town, to change/feed a baby, to meet other parents, to use the toy library or to get a cup of tea/coffee.

**Access Visits** between parents and their children who are in foster care and/or living with the other parent frequently takes place in the Centre. This year we were in a position to accommodate seven families in this service.

**Refugee Legal Aid** – the solicitor from the Refugee Legal Aid service in Galway attends the Centre once a fortnight to provide free legal service to local refugees and asylum seekers.

**Room Rental** – the Centre provides space for groups to meet on Monday, Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. The active retired group used the room for art every Friday afternoon and the rooms were also used for alternative therapies funded through the Ballymote FRC and the NW Drugs Task Force. La Leche League breastfeeding support group rent the room once a month, with some additional meetings at other times during the year.

**Counselling room** – two counsellors use this room to provide counselling services.

**Local Networking** – Sligo FRC is represented on the board of the Sligo County Childcare Committee, Area Implementation Team (AIT) as part of the RAPID working group, Social Inclusion Measures (SIMS) group, Sligo/Leitrim Children and Young People's Committee, Diversity Sligo.

**Regional Networking** – occurs as part of the Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo FRCs' co-ordinators' and administrators' regional network meetings and the Regional Forum of FRCs.

**National Networking** – Sligo FRC attended the AGM of the National Forum of Family Resource Centres and FRC national forum.

**Training undertaken by CE participants (2009-2010)**

<b>Training</b>	<b>No of Participants</b>	<b>Level of Achievement</b>
Computerised Payroll	2	N/A
Occupational first Aid	12	FETAC Level 5
Driving Lessons	1	N/A
Creative working with children workshop	8	N/A
After School Support Skills	1	FETAC Level 5
Occupational First Aid Refresher Course	1	FETAC Level 5
Child Protection Training	9	HSE Certification
Lifestyle Planning	2	FETAC Level 5
Working in Childcare	2	FETAC Level 5
Work Experience	2	FETAC Level 5
Caring for children 0-6	3	FETAC Level 5
Early Years Health Promotion	2	N/A
Personal Development Training	1	N/A
The Challenge of Challenging Behaviour	5	N/A
Outdoor Conference Early Years Health Promotion	4	N/A
Safety Awareness Training	12	FETAC Level 3
TAS Books	4	N/A
Computerised Accounts TAS Books 1	1	Certified
Publisher Training	3	N/A
Home Support Training	6	N/A
Diversity Awareness Training	16	N/A
Induction	11	N/A
Buntus Refresher Training	2	Certified
Positive Parenting Course	9	Certificate of Attendance
Computer Applications	1	FETAC Level 4
Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training	2	N/A
Domestic Violence Advocacy training	5	N/A
Employment Seeking Skills	7	Certified
Health & Safety in the Workplace	1	FETAC Level 5
Work Experience	1	FETAC Level 5
Early Childhood Education	3	FETAC Level 5
Human Growth & Development	1	FETAC Level 5
Early Childhood Education	1	FETAC Level 5
Communications	3	FETAC Level 5
Child Development	2	FETAC Level 5