



Sligo Family Resource Centre Annual Report 2020

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www.sligofamilyresourcecentre.org



TÚSLA

Chomhairle na Leanaí
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An Roinn Comairce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



HE

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



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1. Introduction

Sligo Family Resource Centre (FRC) has been in existence since 1995. Based at 49 The Mall, Sligo this FRC is one of 121 FRCs in the country. The FRC Programme is Ireland's largest national family and community-based support programme core funded by Tusla Child and Family Agency.

Mission of Sligo FRC is to:

To support individuals, families and communities to reach their full potential and in doing so help to build a stronger healthier community

Sligo FRC has based its objectives on the Túsla CFA National Programme Outcomes for parents and children:

1. Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
2. Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.
3. Safe and protected from harm.
4. Economic security and opportunity.
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world.

The Sligo FRC outcomes are as follows:

- That individuals, families and groups have access to a range of supports and services that enable and promote participation in society
- That people actively avail of a variety of community-based learning and development opportunities
- That children's holistic development is nourished in a safe, comfortable and fun environment.
- That individuals and families are supported in times of need
- That minority individuals and groups are empowered to participate in their wider community

A statistical analysis of every aspect of Sligo FRC's work is made annually through the FRC's SPEAK (Strategic Planning Education and Knowledge) recording system. This annual report is intended to give the reader a flavour of the various services, events and activities offered by the FRC in 2020.

2. Information and Services

Sligo FRC welcomes all members of the community to avail of its programmes and services and/or to find out more about other services or opportunities in Sligo. 2020 will be remembered for a long time for the effect Covid 19 had on the entire world. Here in the Sligo FRC the immediate impact was that we closed our doors on 16 March and the staff were asked and supported to work from home. The first Lockdown lasted until 29 June and in that time, the public could no longer access the services we offer physically. All services where possible were provided remotely, other services

where this was not possible were deferred or cancelled. The St Patrick's Day Intercultural Event was the first to be cancelled as well as two intercultural events we had planned for April and May with Healthy Ireland funding drawn down through the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

From 29 June to 12 October, we had limited contact with service users which included providing services in the open-air: garden/front door visits and taking walks as well as limited contact, time, and number of people indoors. Footprints creche opened on 10 August providing a morning service to up to six children each day.

We then had the second Lockdown from 09 October to 07 December and again with Level 5 restrictions we were prevented from providing support indoors and/or face-to-face and once again limited to providing support remotely using the phone and/or video link with WhatsApp, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. Footprints creche closed for this period and did not reopen until 29 March 2021.

During the weeks before Christmas, we returned to the limited indoor face-to-face support and home visits by the Support Workers in exceptional circumstances.



During this time, the building was revamped with Perspex dividers installed in the reception area and on each desk, hand sanitising stations were placed throughout the building, a one-way system was installed in the building, rigorous cleaning routines were established, staff were provided with PPE as required, wearing of masks was mandatory when not sitting at a desk and a "pod-system" to reduce contact between staff. Additional cleaning materials were purchased, as well as masks, gloves, aprons and Covid Kit boxes for those using their cars

The Covid 19 Response Plan was drawn up in early summer using guidance and templates from the HSE, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Health and Safety Authority as well as input from all staff. A number of staff members were given a training session on infection control by the HSE Infection control officer Clodagh Keville. All staff were given induction training prior to returning to the building after Lockdown 1, and relevant forms were completed and submitted as directed by the Response Plan.

Information was provided over the phone and using social media. All staff phones were upgraded to smart phones in early March which meant that we were able to access more media platforms for providing services online or over the phone by voice or video link. Social media usage increased (see below)

Sligo FRC <https://www.facebook.com/SligoFamilyResourceCentre> (1,849 followers (increase of 18%) with 1,809 likes 17 Events advertised with 40.9 people reached and 560 responses)

Sligo Intercultural Project <https://www.facebook.com/SligoInterculturalProject/> (735 followers (increase of 8.4%) with 727 likes)

Parent Hub Sligo Leitrim: <https://www.facebook.com/SligoLeitrimParentHub/> (1,944 followers (increase of 24.8%) with 1.875 likes, 27 Events with 41.5K people reached with 600 responses)

Social Prescribing: <https://www.facebook.com/slifofrchealthandwellbeing> (126 followers with 122 likes 1 Event, 5.6 people reached and 35 responses)

Business facilities at the Centre are available for hire at subsidised rates to facilitate community groups and organisations to meet. Sligo *Lend A Hand* group has been using one of the rooms for over a year now. The AA and Hope House continue to meet every Monday and Tuesday night throughout the year. These all ceased in March 2020.

3. Parenting Support Initiatives

Parenting Support Champions is a Tusla Parenting Support Strategy whose aim is to promote seven general messages and the 50 key messages for parents within the Parenting24seven initiative. There are 7 PSCs in Sligo/Leitrim and the Sligo FRC manager is one of these. In the Summer of 2020, the PSC rolled out 13 Webinars for parents in the area. 533 parents registered over the 13 events of which 58% attended (223) 30.8% (100) attended more than 1 Webinar. Topics covered included: confidence and self-esteem, dealing with anxiety, resilience, bullying and internet safety. In November, we gave a presentation to the PSC Learning Network (western region) on the roll out of these webinars

Presenter	Date	Time	Topic	No attending
1. Mary O' Kane	27 July 2020	19:30 – 21:00	Resilience	13
2. Mary O' Kane	10 Aug 20	19:30 – 21:00	Resilience	30
3. Mary O' Kane	07 Sep 20	19:30 – 21:00	Resilience	28
4. Stephanie O'Malley	28 Jul 20	20:00 – 21:15	Confidence & Self Esteem	19
5. Stephanie O'Malley	25 Aug 20	20:00 – 21:15	Confidence & Self Esteem	31
6. Stephanie O'Malley	22 Sep 20	20:00 – 21:15	Confidence & Self Esteem	26
7. Julie Meehan	20 Aug 20	19:30 – 20:45	Anxiety	28
8. Julie Meehan	09 Sep 20	19:30 – 20:45	Anxiety	31
9. Julie Meehan	07 Oct 20	19:30 – 20:45	Anxiety	26
10. Stephanie O'Malley	18 Aug 20	20:00 – 20:15	Bullying	18
11. Stephanie O'Malley	15 Sep 20	20:00 – 21:15	Bullying	27
12. Stephanie O'Malley	29 Sep 20	20:00 – 21:15	Bullying	18
13. Internet Safety	21 Oct 20	20:00 – 21:15	Internet Safety	34

Parenting Network: The Sligo FRC manager represents the FRC National Forum on this Network. The All-Ireland Group brings together senior staff in a number of the statutory and non-statutory organisations who work in the area of parenting and children along with, public officials, professional bodies and senior academics and professional researchers also working in this field. The Network hosted a conference on Co-Production: Realising Parental Participation in Children's Services in Wood Quay Venue, Dublin on the 12 February which was attended by up to 120 people.

Parenting Strategy: Sligo FRC is involved in a subgroup devised to devise and develop a parenting strategy for Sligo/Leitrim. The strategy will be available in July/August 2021.

Breastfeeding supports: we held two further breastfeeding support group sessions in January and February before they had to cease due to Covid 19 restrictions. Six parents and their babies attended, Sligo FRC was also involved in the new initiative “*We’re Breastfeeding Friendly Sligo*” being led out by Lifestart.

Danú Birth Mother’s Support Group has been meeting since 2015 and continues to be facilitated by Sligo FRC manager. Sheila Gallagher Tusla SW and Carmel McNamee. The group met once face-to-face in February 2020 and declined the offer of virtual meetings for the rest of the year. Sheila Gallagher continues to support the women by phone and email.

I am Baba is a magical theatre adventure of song, lights and textures for babies aged 0-12 months. We rolled this out in collaboration with Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC). This was aimed at parents with their babies aged 0-12 months and was held in the Avalon Centre. We offered it to the parents we are working with in the Family Support Service. Six parents and babies attended.



Parents of children with dyslexia Sligo FRC in collaboration with the Sligo Education Centre hosted a workshop for parents on Spelling with guest speaker Brendan Culligan. 33 Parents registered for this event 17 attended. The afterschool classes for children with dyslexia continued up to the second week in March with two teachers from the Mercy Primary running the classes. Parents pay for this service.

Adoptive Parents Group We continue to disseminate information by email to this group. Some members of the group and the FRC manager met for a social event in December. We also met with Barnardos Adoption Services in early March. They have set up an office in Galway and we discussed ways of working collaboratively.

Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) funded by the European Union and Department of Social Protection, this service is designed to support those who are struggling in the form of food hampers. In 2020 we distributed 236 food hampers to 107 adults and 218 children. In addition to the FEAD supply we received a donation of non-perishable goods from Coola Community School Transition Year students. We were also part of a sub groups established through the CFSN areas to look at food poverty in the area. This group met several times during Lockdown.



Recycled clothes and furniture: in the first Lockdown, a gap was identified by Sligo FRC when parents were unable to buy clothes for their fast-growing babies. We supported 31 families with baby clothes, furniture such as beds, kitchen table, chairs, as well as baby equipment two buggies and three cots. We were also able to source second hand books for children and adults to give out to support people during the Lockdown.

4. Family Support Service Including Footprints Drop-in Crèche

The **Family Support Service** including Footprints crèche is funded by Tusla Partnership Prevention and Family Support (PPFS) office, Department of Children Equality, Disability Integration and Youth under Pobal and Dept of Social Protection. In 2020 the Service provided home based targeted family support to 59 families in north Co. Sligo, north Co. Leitrim and Sligo Town (Child and Family Network Area CFSN 1). 109 adults with 162 children availed of this service in 2020.

The support it provides includes:

- Advise on children's behaviour
- Creative Packs and outdoor play activities
- Delivery of Food Hampers
- De-cluttering
- Early years development & mirroring parenting
- Emotional support to parents
- Financial issues, welfare payments
- Food shopping
- Introducing parents to parent & toddler groups
- Linking with relevant health services
- Meithals
- On-line family support using audio or video links
- Parents Plus one to one parenting programmes, one to one in groups and on-line
- Preparation of healthy meals
- School attendance
- Supporting mothers with breast feeding
- Supporting children with homework
- Support to parents & children with additional needs
- Supporting young mothers
- Working with the parent on basic house hygiene
- Working with teenagers



In 2020, most of the families were supported remotely. The FSWs visited the families as restrictions allowed and delivered FEAD food hampers and educational packs at the start of Lockdown and again in the summer with an outdoor activity pack. In addition, two on-line cookery classes were hosted one evening/week for four weeks in the summer and again in November. Nine parents attended these and they were all given a cookery utensil hamper at the end.

Two Parents Plus programmes were rolled out; one in Kinlough in January – March and one on -line in the autumn, Parents Plus is also rolled out on a one-to-one basis with parents through the family support service.

Footprints Crèche is a service open to all families in Sligo and the surrounding area. It provides sessional care for up to 10 children up to 6 years of age on a once off or continuous agreed basis to facilitate parents to attend appointments, training, counselling etc. In 2020, even though the creche was closed from March – August and again from October to the end of the year it was able to provide childcare to 18 children from 17 families. Referrals from social work are always given priority.

5. Community based education, training, and social integration opportunities

The **Parent and Toddler Drama** with a trained drama teacher continues every Tuesday morning, which consists of a programme of music and drama to develop toddlers' language and movement. This has been running in the FRC for over 15 years now. Prior to the Parent and Toddler no longer running up to 25 adults with 30 children availed of this class.

Sligo FRC works with Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB) to provide a variety of training opportunities in the community. Twelve women attended five **Knitting Classes** prior to them being stopped in March. They did not resume for the rest of the year.

Working with Sligo Social Services, we began the roll out of a Healthy Eating Programme in particular for those who avail of our FEAD programme. These were based in the Northside Community Center and ran for three weeks before Covid restrictions were put in place.

6. Services to Adult with a Learning Disability

Sligo FRC now has six part-time support workers on varying hours and one part-time co-ordinator employed in this Service. The **one-to-one support** to ten adults with learning disabilities living in the community is in the form of addressing issues such as healthy eating and lifestyles, managing a household, managing a budget, personal hygiene, social isolation mental health and self-care.

The work we do in **Cregg House** is to provide community integration with residents involving bringing them into

town to shop, attend hairdresser, have coffee etc. The **Coffee Dock Café** based at Markievicz House, provides training opportunities in a social enterprise for up to 17 adults with a learning disability.

Attendance at the **Thursday Club** is constant each week with about 10-12 attending. Participants engage in arts and crafts, board games while having a light lunch. When this closed during the first Lockdown, it

reopened in September – October for two service users.

Two staff members were redeployed to work in Cloonamahon Centre for Intellectual Disability for three days/week.



Following on from March 2020, the work of the Coffee Dock, Thursday Club and Cregg House stopped. The one to one support moved to telephone and video link. Some of the services users would ring several times each day. This

support was also offered to the trainees in the Coffee Dock who wanted it. With funding from the Sligo Co Co Enhancement Grant we bought tablet to enable this type of engagement which worked very



effectively. The support throughout the year was continued both on line, on the phone and face to face indoor and outdoor depending on the government restrictions at that time.

To get a flavour of the type of work undertaken by the Disability Support Workers – here is a list.

- IT Support: Setting up online banking, purchasing, and setting up a laptop online, setting up WiFi, setting up various online accounts e.g., myThree, Amazon, Paypal, online banking. including using a tablet, watching YouTube videos,
- Advocating: services e.g., Electric Ireland/ Bank/Property Management company (Landlord)/Credit Union Sligo County Council, social workers
- Health and Wellbeing: including art and crafts, word games, board games, pool, painting glass, oil painting, making a rug. creative writing, poetry, Christmas movie afternoon, Zoom Christmas party, letter writing to family and favourite band in this case the Pet Shop Boys.
- Practical Support: Setting up TV, budgeting, shopping for essential items, making up cleaning schedule, buying bed linen, buying new phone, cleaning the house prior to daughter's visit, decluttering, ordering a skip and medication for a dog with fleas, finding alternate accommodation,
- Personal hygiene: Supervise a weekly visit with family so service user could use shower.
- Emotional support: provided on release from prison, support to a service user who was attending court, support following the breakup of a relationship.
- Personal safety: Support service user in ways to be safe online and supported when issue needed to be referred to local Gardaí.
- Physical Health: attending GP, dentist and other appointments, healthy eating and exercise encouraged, smoking cessation, support with taking medication, meals on wheels.
- Employment Support: arranging a meeting with an INTREO case officer and 'Employment Response North West', updating CV, interview preparation.
- Educational support: Signposting and support to access MSLETB weekly Online Maths classes, secured training (computers, English class and manual handling) through MSLETB and INTREO. Signposting to a Healthy Eating Workshop and a knitting class, Visits to the library
- Mental health: mindfulness and breathing, Referral for counselling.
- Conflict resolution (disputes with neighbors)
- Translation (service user does not speak English as a first language)
- A walking club was set up during the pandemic to provide a social outlet and an anchor to the week of those participants who needed a friendly catchup and an opportunity to make or renew acquaintances.
- We received funding in December 2020 from 'Healthy Ireland' and developed and delivered six interactive six-week programme which was accessed by phones, tablets or laptops though Zoom for those with all levels of ability.



7. Working with Cultural Minorities

Sligo FRC continues to be actively involved in working with minorities. We were successful in receiving funding again from the Department of Justice and Healthy Ireland in 2020. In February we ran two Saturday morning workshops in the FRC entitled "Our

Voices” with the Sligo Leader Partnership 9 adults and 10 children attended the first one and 10 adults with 16 children attended the second. The aim of these workshops was to increase the awareness of the impact of culture and heritage in our lives.

On 06 March we hosted an **Intercultural Women’s information morning** to mark International Women’s Day in collaboration with the Sligo/Leitrim Gardai and Domestic violence Advocacy Service. Over 120 women attended the event in the Riverside Hotel. The St Patricks Day Intercultural Event which was organised was cancelled on 13th March.

In September we commenced a **Walk and Talk** session every Friday morning to encourage exercise and improving spoken English. We ran it for four mornings and five women availed this.

Globe House Direct Provision Centre – we provided support the women in Globe House through sourcing baby clothes as they needed them.



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We had 11 volunteers working in the Syrian refugee families **Befriending Project** continued throughout the Lockdown by phone and outdoor meetings as restrictions permitted. We held four support meetings for the volunteers throughout the year on Zoom. Conversational English moved to Zoom as well for the three teenage girls who had been attending them in the FRC.

A meeting took place in the FRC with International Organisation for Migration in July – the three representatives from this organisation were keen to work with us on rolling out information sessions here in Sligo. They did not happen due to restrictions.

8. Social Prescribing for Health and Wellbeing

Funding was secured for this in February through the Local Community Development Committee Health Ireland funding. We advertised internally and one of our Disability Support Workers was successful. The post was 6 hours per week. In May we suspended the roll out of this service due to the challenges of restrictions. In November we secured funding for this service from the HSE Sláinte Care funding stream for 12 hours. This budget has to be spent by June 2021. The service offers to link people with sources of support within the community i.e. physical activity, arts and creativity, learning new skills, self-help, books for self help and support groups.

9. Interagency Work

Sligo FRC is represented on a range of committees and boards in Sligo in order to represent the needs of the families and individuals and to bring about policy and practice changes which it is hoped will improve their lives. Here is a flavour of this work done in Sligo FRC

- Africa Day preliminary preparations (event cancelled due to Covid)
- Child and Family Support Network areas 1 and 3
- Childcare managers network
- Child Protection Conferences

- CYPSC (Children and Young People's Service's Committee)
- CYPSC Supported in Active Learning, Kinlough and Food distribution subgroups
- Finn Valley FRC VBD and manager information meeting
- Health and Wellbeing Vision for Sligo (PPN)
- HSE Excellence Awards submissions
- Local Community Development Committee
- Local Action Group
- Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences working group
- Meithal meetings
- Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings
- National Childhood Network
- National Forum of FRC including board and governance sub-group
- North West Regional Forum of FRCs
- Professional Meetings
- Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme
- Sligo County Childcare Board of Directors
- Sligo Leitrim FRC manager's meetings
- Tusla CEO Bernard Gloster meeting in Markievicz House

10. Voluntary Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers 2020

Sligo FRC is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors who oversee the work of the Centre and strategically guide the services. Twenty full and part-time staff are employed to manage and implement the work and ensure services are provided to the highest standard. Eleven staff are employed through a CE training scheme.

The voluntary Board of Directors was made up of eight volunteers in 2018. The executive sub-group meets for employment/staff matters or specific issues. Sub-groups of 2-3 board members are established for specific, short term pieces of work in order to share the load and they've proved to be effective.

Chairperson: John Burrows

Treasurer: Michelle Lally

Secretary: Padraic Cuffe

Directors: Sonya Coffey, Sarah Wetheral, Ada Cunningham, Chris Davis, Julia Potysz, Phil Brennan, Shona Gallagher

Staff

Aishling Kelly	Family Support Worker
Ann Boyd	Disability Support Worker
Caroline Cunningham	Coffee Dock assistant supervisor
Cathy McGowan	Administrator
Charlotte Bussmann	Family Support Service Coordinator
Charmaine Davidson	Family Support Worker
Emma O Connell	Family Support Worker (left Aug)
Elizabeth King	Manager

Helen Powell	Disability Support Worker
Izabella Sawiska	Disability Support Worker
Karen Casey	Disability Support Coordinator and Coffee Dock supervisor
Loretta McLoughlin	Disability Support Worker and Social Prescribing Coordinator
Lorraine Johnston	Family Support Worker
Mairead Jennings	Family Support Worker (from Dec)
Marion Roycroft	Coffee Dock supervisor (retired Feb)
Rose McCrann	Footprints Crèche Supervisor
Sinead Benison	Family Support Worker (maternity cover to Feb)
Tracy Brooks	Disability Support Worker

Students in 2020:

Sarah Curran Sligo IT
Tara Fay Wurrell Ballinode College

FÁS Community Employment Scheme Participants (2017/2018), 19.5hrs/week

Administration and Reception

Karen McArt, Cathy Gallagher, Blaitin Langan and Louise Bewey

Childcare and Home Support Workers

Geraldine Ryan, Margaret Coen

Disability Workers

Tracey Brooks and Sidonie Leunde

Caretaker/Cleaner

Michal Malinowski and Michael Coyle

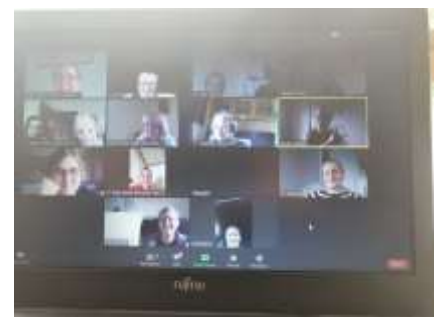
The two CE supervisors, Sarah Cleasby and Sarah McCaffrey, employed by Youth Work Ireland North Connaught have an office in the Sligo FRC and contribute greatly to the work of the FRC.

Volunteers

Befriending volunteers: Pamela Barnes, Sheila Canning, Geraldine Delorey, Maura Doherty, Mary Heery, Christopher Kelly, Naoimi McBride, John Moore, Nicholas Vreeland, Ciara Gallagher

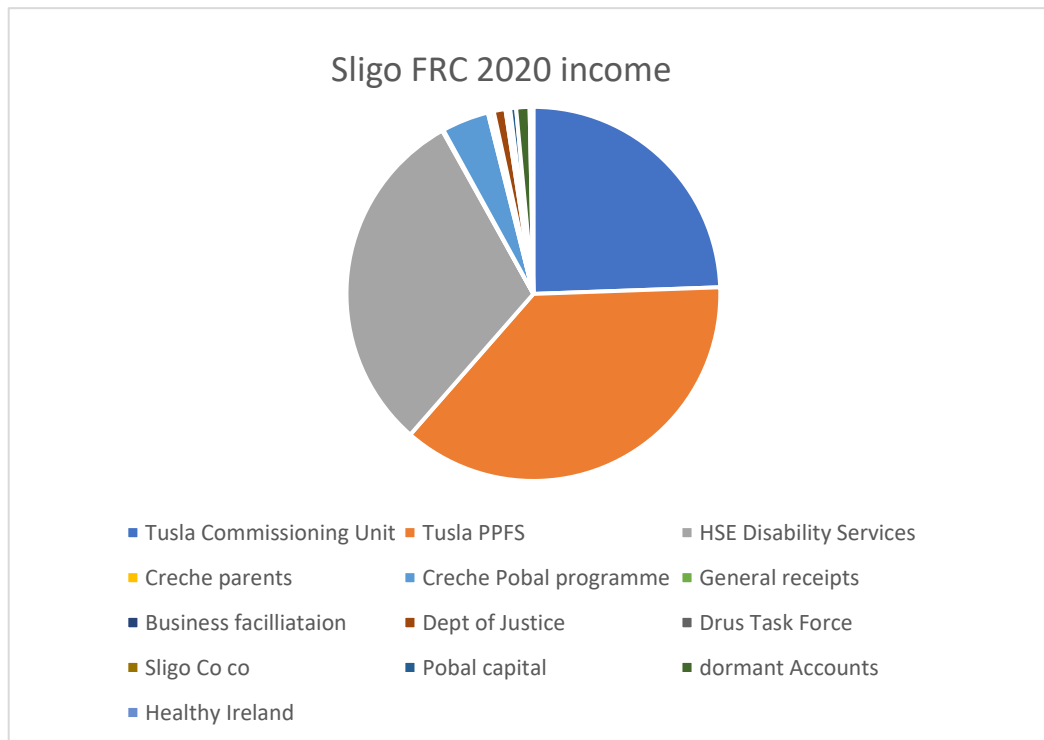
Team Building

This year team meeting took place online where all staff met on three occasions.



11. Funding

Here is a breakdown of the funding received in 2020 (€492,811) and the sources of this funding.



12 Continuous Professional Development – Sligo FRC staff

8 steps to constructive conversations

Anxiety webinar

Assist

Attachment Training MACE

Autistic thinking in changed times

Charities Governance Code: The Road to compliance

Child to Parent non-violence resistant training

Children First E-Learning

Coercive control symposium

Co-Production: Realising Parental Participation in Children's Services

Coronavirus training (prevention, policies and procedures)

COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Health & Social Care Workers who visits the home

Cyber security

Dealing with disobedience

Domestic Violence training

Environmental Health Awareness Information

Facilitating Parents Plus online

Funding applications with Sligo Leader Partnership

HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point)

Induction (new FSW)

Infection Control - HSE

Intellectual Disabilities studies

Living Works Suicide awareness

Manual handling

Meithal Lead Practitioner

Mental Health Medication

Mental Health First Aid

Mindfulness

Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (MACE)

Non Volent Resistance (NVR)

Outcomes Star

Pieta House – an introduction

Play and Attachment

Policies and procedures in creche

Quality of Life

Refresher First Aid

Return to Work Protocols and Sligo FRC Covid 19 Response Plan

Resilience and self care

Social Prescribing induction

Understanding the sensory child

Zoom and Parents Plus