

# A National Review of the Community Mothers Programme

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# Congratulations on the Review!



***Community  
Mothers***  
*Supporting Parents*



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive





**National Policy Context for home visiting services such as the Community Mothers Programme**





# A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families

- Launched by Taoiseach, Minister Zappone and Minister Harris
- First ever cross-sector strategy addressing antenatal to age 5 phase
- Ambitious framework of Strategic Actions to be delivered over 10 years
- 4 Goals
  - Supporting Families and Communities
  - Optimum Health
  - Positive Early Learning
  - An Effective Early Childhood System
- Initial 3 year implementation plan

# A VISION for EARLY CHILDHOOD

All babies' and young children's early years will be valued as a critical and distinct period which should be enjoyed.

Families will be assisted and enabled to nurture babies and young children and support their development, with additional support for those who need it.

Those providing services for babies, young children and their families will be equipped to contribute to their learning, development, health and wellbeing.

Community contexts will help babies and young children make the most of their early years and fulfil their potential.

# 4 Goals; 9 Objectives; 5 Building Blocks

## A

**Strong and supportive families and communities**

1. Balance work and caring
2. Information, services and supports for parents
3. Practical and material resources

## B

**Optimum physical and mental health**

4. Positive health behaviours
5. High quality health services
6. Positive mental health

## C

**Positive play-based early learning**

7. Positive home learning environment
8. Affordable , high quality Early Learning and Care
9. Supported transitions

## D

**An effective early childhood system**

- Leadership, governance and collaboration

- Regulation, inspection, quality assurance

- Skilled and sustainable workforce

- Research, data, monitoring & evaluation

- Strategic investment

# Parenting support context & evidence base



- Broad range of information and services for parents
- Considerable variation in nature/availability of parenting services
- PHN service provides a universal foundation
- Strong international evidence for home visiting approaches
- Rigorous evaluation of implementation of some models
- Range of home-visiting models in operation as well as Community Mothers (Preparing for Life, Parent-Child Home Programme, Lifestart, Marte Meo and Infant Mental Health home visiting...)



# Key First 5 Actions

***Strategic Action 2.2: Develop a tiered model of parenting services built on a foundation of universal provision, with extra support available for parents in line with their level of need on a progressive basis.***

- National model of parenting services, universal to targeted,, across key stages
    - Based on review of existing provision (Tusla PPFs, National Parenting Commissioning Framework, Quality and Capacity Building Initiative, and CYPSCs)
    - Informed by research on parenting support needs
    - Led by DCYA in collaboration with Tusla, the HSE, SICAP and other relevant partners.
    - Will specify parenting services to be available beyond universal provision
    - Outline funding model and a framework for allocating resources to ensure consistency
  - Universal parenting services under the model will be based on two key foundations:
    - Develop National Healthy Childhood Programme (antenatal to age three and parents)
    - Deliver supports for parents through Early Learning and Care services
- Agree approach to home visiting services, across a continuum of need, consider Irish evidence.



## Other relevant First 5 Actions

- Consolidate parenting information resources into coherent, user-friendly resources
- Public information campaign on positive parenting
- Pilot Baby Boxes and Book Bags focusing on parent–baby bonding, baby development, early learning and promotion of baby safety
- Develop a dedicated child health workforce
- Review Maternity and Infant Care Scheme, standardise post-natal checks and consider extending coverage beyond six-week post-natal check
- Extend PHN antenatal visits to expectant mothers in line with need
- Mainstream Nurture Programme Infant Health and Well-Being initiatives
- Extend post-natal depression screening for all mothers (standardised approach)
- Roll out screening for social-emotional devel. to all young children at the 2 yr check

# Next steps and considerations



- First 5 Implementation Plan – milestones for first 3 years
- Reporting via Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures structures
- Engagement between Departments, Agencies and wider partners is KEY
- HSE/Tusla connections particularly important; supported by DH/DCYA
- Parenting Support Policy Unit now providing important co-ordination
- Essential to have aligned national approaches
- Local level implementation needs consideration; role of CYPSCs

# Congratulations on the Review and the work being done

- An opportunity to renew energy and consideration
- First 5 represents important cross government policy
- Home visiting services play critical role
- Evidence based and evidence informed
- Collaborative working between Tusla and HSE, DCYA and DoH critical



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