



NEWSLETTER Feb-March 2006

Letter from the Editor

Need a break from the old routine? Feeling bogged down in the day-to-day routine of caring for small children? Breakfast, lunch, dinner, laundry, shopping, ferrying, cleaning, comforting and again the next day and so on! Well, you know what they say? Be careful what you wish for! Last week we were temporarily jolted out of *our* routine.

Rory (10½ months) had a fall. One of many falls, these days. He is crawling around, climbing up and getting into trouble all day long. So we are *used* to falls. And usually after a kiss and a cuddle he's up and off again. But, not this time. We couldn't seem to console him at all and I was sure he was hurt in some way.

So off we went to Temple Street. Daddy stayed behind with the other two. We were seen promptly by the nurse who questioned me: *Where were you?* (Not even in the same room.) *Was he on his own?* (No, with his Dad.) *Was he watching him?* (Not at that moment.) *Did he bang his head?* (I don't know.) *Could he have climbed up onto the bed?* (I don't think so – but he learns something new every day!) If I didn't feel guilty going in I *certainly* did by now.

Waiting in A & E with your child is not fun. But it is a great leveller. Watching the other worried parents and children you waver between relief that your child is not too bad and worry about the unknown. My mind was racing. Could he have a head injury? What if he has internal bleeding? A broken rib? Will they admit him? Who will mind the other children? How am I supposed to go to the loo? Look at that awful head wound over there! (I wish I'd eaten my dinner before I came in!)

After a long wait we were seen, examined and sent off for a head x-ray. You can imagine how co-operative Rory was at this intrusion in the middle of his night. I knew he was saying to me 'What are you doing? – *rescue me!*' In the end they sent us home saying that they could find nothing wrong. Boy, did I feel foolish. What a

waste of time and worry. Not quite the end of the story, however. Next morning I *knew* he wasn't right. A boy who is on the go every waking moment now wouldn't crawl, or stand or *move*. He just sat in the middle of the floor and looked at me plaintively. So, I collected Cormac from playschool and we went in again. This time, a different doctor diagnosed a broken collar bone almost immediately. An x-ray confirmed it.

So, about twenty-four hours after the fall he finally got some pain relief. I can't believe I hadn't even given him Calpol. Will he ever forgive me? And home we came with a very small arm in a very small sling.

I feel so lucky. After my very brief glimpse into a children's hospital I realise how blessed I am to have three healthy children. I *know* that there are so many parents out there who would gladly swap the odd broken bone and gash for the conditions that have their children in hospital. Not to mention children in other countries who don't even have access to an A & E. So, next time you're stuck in traffic on the school run feeling shattered after a broken night just think how lucky you really are. And I will too!

Well, enough domestic dramas. Here is the spring newsletter! And spring, of course, means daffodils, brighter evenings, and the Dublin North East Annual General Meeting! Don't be scared – come along. It has, on occasion, been a fun evening! Really! And I guarantee that you won't be co-opted onto the COMMITTEE! We stopped doing that ages ago. So come on! If you care about the branch come along and see what it's all about. I've been reading that volunteering is not only good for your personal health it's also good for the health of society at large. So, ask not what your branch can do for you but what you can do for your branch!

Enjoy those daffodils while they last!

Jan Power

Dates for your diary

(more details inside)

Parenting Talk and AGM

Monday March 13th 8pm
Killester Resource Centre, Howth Road (beside Killester Church)

Library and Information

Night

Tues March 14th 9-10.30pm
Topic: Children and bereavement

Library and Information

Night

Tues April 11th 9-10.30pm
Topic: Open

Easter events in the next newsletter

The newsletter is put together by the newsletter team: Anne Dooley, Pauline Logan, Jan Power, Mairead Peppard, Susan Glynn, Reinhild Bock and a group of regular contributors. We would love some additional people to join us, particularly anyone with an interest in putting the newsletter together (currently using MS Word). Please contact us if you'd like to get involved.

Please note that the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cuidiú.



Are we nearly there? – surviving car journeys with small children

Do you remember when the only dispute in the car used to be whether you would listen to *his* Sonic Youth/Nirvana or *your* Oasis/Blur? Now, you'd be grateful if you were allowed to listen to a few minutes of Morning Ireland on the way to school. And what about those long car journeys? Do you hear 'Are we nearly there?', 'I'm bored' or (my daughter's favourite) 'How many minutes 'til we get there?' all too often on long car journeys? Well, as well as lots of snacks and drinks, it's always a good idea to have some games up your sleeve to help pass the journey without too much strife. Here are a few good ones:

I Spy

This is best played if you are stuck in traffic for a while. Otherwise whatever has been 'spied' will be long gone by the time it's guessed. Each player takes turns to say 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with A' (or whatever). The other players have to guess what the thing might be. For smaller children you can substitute a colour for a letter.

Alphabet Search

Look for something you pass beginning with the letter A and then work your way through the alphabet. As you can imagine, it gets tricky when you reach letters such as Q and X because, of course, it must be a real object. You can ban words which you've had before such as C is for 'car' and R is for 'road'.

The Yes/No game

Whoever is 'on' has to answer all questions without using the words 'yes' or 'no'. If they do they lose. The questions can be on a particular topic or simply random. Good fun for kids when they catch the 'grown-ups' out, which they will!

Think of Something...

This is a good game to play with players of varying ages because the person setting the question can vary it to suit the ability of the child. Each child, in turn, is asked to think of something with a particular characteristic such as furry, red, made of wood etc. Older children could be asked to think of something more abstract or complicated such as electronic, Japanese or magnetic.

Car-Colour Bingo

This is an easy game for younger children. Each child picks a colour and scores a point for every car of that colour spotted. If you want to cheat, apparently silver is the most common car colour!

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral

The first player thinks of an object and says whether it is animal (wool, leather, bone etc.), vegetable (anything that has grown such as wood, cotton etc.) or mineral (almost anything that's left). The others then take it in turns to ask questions to try to work out what the object is. Whoever guesses correctly gets to pose the next puzzle. This game could keep you going for a while!

I feel sick!

No, this is not a game! Just the last words you want to hear from the back of the car. If, for some reason you cannot stop immediately, here are some tactics which may help. Opening a window really does help. Deep, slow breathing may also stave off an attack. And, if these don't work just make sure to have a plastic bag handy or a towel for a smaller child. Good luck!.

(Most of the above ideas are taken from Dad Stuff by Steve Caplan and Simon Rose.)

Jan Power

"The key to successful parenting is not found in complex theories, elaborate family rules, or convoluted formulas or behaviour. It is based on your deepest feelings of love and affection for your child, and is demonstrated simply through empathy and understanding. Good parenting begins in your heart, and then continues on a moment to moment basis by engaging your children when feelings run high, when they are sad, angry, or scared. The heart of parenting is being there in a particular way when it really counts."
John Gottman 'The Heart of Parenting'

Mairead Peppard

Recent Events

The main events since the last newsletter were the **Trip to see Santa in Lullymore** on 10th December and the **Christmas Night out in Bay** on 15th December. Both were great successes.

As the person who suggested and booked **Lullymore**, I must admit that I had concerns that people would not consider the trip worthwhile as we hit the country roads in the middle of the Bog of Allen at 11am on a Saturday morning in December. My concerns were quickly allayed when we got there. The 24 children who attended had a wonderful time, from the visit to the Fairy Bower led by Buddy the Elf, to the train ride out into the bog, to the play in the festively adorned Funky Forest indoor play area to finally an audience with Santa himself. Lullymore is well worthwhile visiting at

any time of the year, but particularly when the weather is good enough to enjoy the outdoor playgrounds, crazy golf and to have an outdoor picnic. There are also heritage exhibits and a treasure hunt that would appeal to older children.

What can I say about the **Christmas Night out**? The food was excellent and as always on Cuidiu nights out, the chat was great. I think we all got to meet new people involved in our branch in different ways, which is always a treat and one of the reasons these get-togethers are so worthwhile. And while you may not know many people the first time around, I guarantee you if won't take long before you do!

AGM and Parenting Talk

Come along to the AGM and Parenting Talk on Monday 13th of March at 8:00 in the Killester Resource Centre, Howth Road (beside Killester Church).

Parenting Talk: Dealing with Opposition from your child

This talk will present ideas and tips on how to manage difficult behaviour from young children such as tantrums, opposition etc. The talk will also incorporate the topic of bedtime routines. The ideas will be illustrated with video snippets from the Parents Plus Early Years Programme and there will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

Biography of speaker
Dr. John Sharry is a family and child psychotherapist, and co-developer of the award winning Parents Plus Programmes. He is also the author of six self-help books for parents and families, including Parenting preschoolers and young children, Bringing up Responsible Teenagers, When Parents Separate- helping your children cope (Veritas 2005, 2001, 2001), Parent Power and Coping with Depression in Young People (Wiley, 2002, 2004). He is currently a weekly columnist with the Evening Herald writing on

the subject of parenting and family life and is the featured parenting expert with the VHI.

Places are limited. Daddies are very welcome. Contact Mary Stack OR Tracey Carbery

AGM

While some members are staying on the Committee for another term, some are moving on. We are very keen to get a couple of new people on the Committee for 2006. To keep the standard up we need new input and energy. It is important for any Committee to change and evolve but of course to do this we need your support.

If anyone wants to have any issue discussed at the AGM, details should reach Carole, our secretary, 14 days prior to the AGM. Our AGMs are usually efficient and very short.

The Killester Centre closes at 10:00, with our busy agenda we do not have enough time for a tea break. We will instead retire to Harry Byrnes -further down the Howth Road - for a relaxing refreshment.

Mary Stack

Upcoming Events

The main events over the next while will be the **Library and Information Nights** (Children and Bereavement on 14th March, Open on 11th April) and the **Parenting Talk/AGM** on 13th March. As usual, we will be running an **Easter Egg Painting** session on Wednesday 12th April and an **Easter Egg Hunt** on Saturday 15th April - more details in the next newsletter.

Pauline Logan

Cuidiu Dublin North East Outgoing Committee Members

Secretary:

Carole Carragher

Treasurer:

Paula Oliver

Membership Sec & Antenatal Rep:

Sarah McCann
Sarahmccann@iol.ie

Breastfeeding Rep
Orla Cluff

Events:

Mary Stack

PRO:

Tracey Carbery

Links Co-ordinator:

Derville Shields

Humpty Dumpty Rep:

Derville Shields

Newsletter Liaison:

Pauline Logan

Library and Information Nights = Parentlink?

With this issue of the newsletter there is a full list of the books that are available in the Branch Library. The collection is available every month at the Library and Information Nights which are intended as 'parentlink' meetings - on much the same line as babylink and kiddilink but without the kids. They are especially to be suitable to members who do not go to any of the weekly events but would like a chance to meet other members to discuss all members favorite subject - our children! There is usually a theme to each meeting with someone knowledgeable about the theme leading the discussion.

The Library and Information Nights happen on the second Tuesday of each month from about 9-10.30pm. The Nights start at 9 because by then most kids have settled for the evening, but it is not 9 sharp! Themes covered in the past include fostering, discipline, breast feeding, consumer rights, child care, food and diet, starting school and bullying. Here is the schedule for the next few months:

March 14- Children and bereavement

April 11 - Open evening

May 9 - Car safety

Mairead Peppard is going to facilitate an evening on the topic of children and bereavement in March. Mairead works as a guidance counsellor in a school and is accredited with the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP). We can try to shy away from the subject of death and bereavement with children because we don't want to upset them. However we cannot protect them from the death of loved ones or the associated pain and curiosity.

The Library and Information Night in April has no special theme to encourage members to come along and meet other members while browsing through the library collection.

In May the theme is car safety. A video entitled 'Child safety in cars' produced by the National Safety Council will be shown followed by a discussion. I hope this can alert us to any potential hazards before we embark on long summer drives at home and abroad.

The books from the collection may be borrowed/returned outside of Library and Information Nights by contacting Charlotte Cousins

Charlotte Cousins

Household Remedy: Onion Compress



Did you know that onion works like a painkiller if anybody suffers from earache? Earache often appears in conjunction with a cold or sinusitis. Sometimes even just cold wind or a visit to the swimming pool might be the reason for it. The onion compress relieves the pain and can be used as first aid. If the pain continues or the patient gets temperature, a visit at your GP is necessary. Take the risk of an ear infection into consideration!

How to make the onion compress: You need a thin piece of cloth (cotton), an onion, a pot with a lid, a piece of woolen cloth or a woolen sock, a scarf or a hat.

Chop an onion into small pieces and put it into the middle of the thin cotton cloth. Place this on a lid which is turned upside down. Place the lid like this on the pot and heat some water in the pot. This will gently heat the onion. Wait until the onion has a pleasant temperature - check that carefully! Wrap the onion pieces in the cloth. You can use tape to fix it, form a little package. On one side of the compress only one layer of cloth should cover the onion. Place this side on the aching ear (Again: Check the temperature carefully!). Place a woolen cloth or sock on the compress and fix it all with a scarf or a hat. Leave it on up to an hour, repeat it up to three times daily. The compress should have at least the size

Perfection

In our busy catch-up day, we do our best to ensure everything is just right for our family. Last summer when feeding my newborn baby girl in the wee hours of the morning I would lift her into the bed and snooze while she fed. Often I would wake up and find her fast asleep but still attached. Moments like those were so precious and I realised that I was meeting one of the most important demands of my family by just being there.

The Perfect Moment

A still and quiet house, all safe and sound asleep.
Quiet soft breathing in the early morning light.
Baby and I lying side by side.
Mirroring each other in a C shape.
Waking and sleeping in our own time.
Small limp limbs against my tummy.
Little mouth on breast.
Small feet pressing on my knees.
Soft contented noises.
Peaceful small face.
Eyes closed.
Little hands stretch open.
Perfect little hands.
Perfect moment.

Maggie O'Donnell

of an ear.

The smell is strong but so is the effect! I suffered from an ear infection two years ago and since then I am very fond of the healing effect of onions. Gute Besserung!

Reinhild Bock

Here Comes Summer!!



It's that time of year again when we start thinking of summer holidays. If you haven't booked already or want to do things a little differently this year you may like to consider the a la carte option of organising your own package. Even if you are not planning to go abroad or are just organising a weekend break you can do it from the comfort of your own pc. The internet is a wonderful tool, where you can take your time to look at all your options and in many cases you can book online. It allows you to be very flexible and you can often make substantial savings by booking yourself rather than going through a tour operator. For example Ryanair offers car hire where you can pick up a car at one airport and return it to another at no extra cost as long as it is in the same country. Similarly camping holidays can be cheaper if you book through the campsite directly on their website rather than through the tour operator.

Below are some websites you may find useful.

Travelling by air/package holiday

www.aerlingus.com

www.ryanair.ie

www.ebookers.ie: flights, accommodation and packages.

www.gohop.ie: good for last minute package deals.

www.britishairways.com

www.usit.ie: student based site but also has some fares open to all.

By Sea

www.irishferries.ie

www.stenalines.ie

www.euroline.ie: combines coach and ferry trips

www.cheapferry.ie: intermediary offering ferry tickets to the UK and Europe on several different ferry lines. Worth comparing with booking direct.

www.aranlandsfastferries.com:

serving the Aran Islands.

www.norsemerchant.com. Dublin to Liverpool.

Car Hire

www.dan-dooley.ie

www.europcar.ie

www.budget.ie

www.ryanair.ie (offers car hire from it's airports)

www.aaireland.ie: insurance, route planner, breakdown services.

www.rac.ie: European travel, hotel finder, route planner

By land or rail

www.buseireann.ie:

www.irishrail.ie

www.dublinbus.ie (for local bus timetables)

www.rail.co.uk: UK rail services, including timetables

www.eurostar.com: Channel Tunnel services

Accommodation

www.irishtouristboard.ie

www.tourismresources.ie: Irish country inns and houses

www.dirl.com: provides information on accommodation, travel, currency, and the weather in Ireland.

www.geotour.com: good for camping in France

There are lots of hotel and accommodation websites. If you type in the name of most cities into say Google you will get a list of sites offering accommodation and tourist information.

Health

www.vhi.ie: frequent travel insurance

www.aairelan.ie: frequent travel insurance

www.oasis.gov.ie: for European Health Insurance card.

www.tmb.ie: Tropical Medical Bureau - advice on vaccinations and health abroad.

<http://www.who.int/ith/>:

World Health Organisation information about the latest health situations worldwide.

Currency

www.xe.com: a convenient currency conversion site.

Travel requirements

www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie:

details of passport applications, loss and renewal, embassies in Ireland, embassies and consulates abroad, accredited embassies, advice about travelling to "hotspots".

www.oasis.gov.ie: details of passport application loss and renewal, free travel conditions.

Country information

www.library.ie/public/index.shtml:

link to public libraries nationwide. Many have on-line catalogues to search for travel books which may be borrowed.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/>:

information about countries aimed at the traveller.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publication/factbook/index.html>:

up to date facts and figures about countries of the world. Quite useful, especially for more remote destinations.

Mairead Peppard

What is fostering? Who can do it?...



At the Library and Information Night in January Helen Claxton and Angela Smith gave us an inspiring session about fostering. Both women were very generous in sharing their experiences as foster mothers, and insisted there were more highs than lows. Angela pointed out that members of Cuidiu are ideally placed to foster because of their interests in parenting and mothering. In the area covered by the Dublin North East branch of Cuidiu foster parents are currently required for 6-10 year old children.

Fostering is defined by the IFCA as "caring for someone else's child in one's own home - providing family life for a child who, for one reason or another, cannot live with his own parents, either on a short or long term basis." Fostering is totally focused on the child and their needs. Some of us in attendance were asking about the emotional difficulties experienced when a child leaves a foster family, particularly one they have been with for a long time. Angela and Helen reminded us that fostering is child centered and that from the outset you have to expect that children will return home and be happy that they can.

The Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) was formed in 1981 by a group of foster carers & social workers. The association offers its members training, support and information and keeps them up to date with regard to changes in the law in relation to foster care. The IFCA works in partnership with the health boards to promote foster care as the best alternative for children who cannot live with their own families. The Association provides situations where all those who are interested in foster care can get together to support on

another, air their views and where necessary, campaign for improvements in the regulations governing foster care.

There are many different kinds of fostering - long term, short term, emergency and respite foster care. The different kinds of fostering reflect the different needs of children in care. Access to their birth parents is very important to the child in foster care. Although it can be fraught with all sorts of difficulty it is essential that the child knows who they are and where they come from and that they maintain links with their birth family. According to the Northern Area Health Board Review of Adequacy of Child and Family Services 2004 "social work practice experience demonstrates that the longer a child remains in care the less likely he / she is to return home."

The same report outlines many of the statistics on children care, including foster care. The report states that 'foster care continues to be the first choice for children who must live apart from their families of origin', that only in exceptional circumstances will a child under 12 be placed in residential care. The principal reasons given for children to be in care in the area were described as follows; Parent unable to cope/ housing or finance difficulty - Neglect of child -Family member abusing drugs / alcohol - Mental health problem/ intellectual disability in other family member - Other which includes child abandoned, rejected, awaiting adoption, parental disharmony or other family crisis. There are more males than females in the care population. Based on the statistics for 2004 most children remain in care for 1-5 years, with an almost equal number in care for under 1 year or over 5 years. The report also mentioned that public have an inaccurate view of fostering and tend to see it as "caring for a young baby for an extended period, an unrealistic proposition given the low numbers of very young children in care and the reality that many children return home."

Since last year the Health Service Executive (HSE) has replaced the various regional Health Boards. Each HSE Area in Ireland assesses recruits and trains foster families according to the needs of the area. The HSE Area is then responsible for each child in care. Each foster child has his or her own social worker who monitors the growth and development of the child and ensures that the best interests of the child are always kept in mind. Each foster family also has its own social worker, who may have helped assess the family as suitable to foster children and who will support the family throughout the foster term. An important part of the social worker's role is to develop the relationship between the foster child and the foster family and between the foster child and his or her own family.



Anyone can apply to be considered as a foster parent - married or unmarried couples, same sex couples and single people. You do not have to be a parent already to be considered for fostering. Applicants undergo an assessment and training process, the Health Authorities must ensure the applicant is suitable to fostering and that fostering is suitable to the applicant. Garda clearance is sought and a detailed report is submitted by a social worker to the HSE, the report is seen by the applicant prior to submission. Children in foster care have a medical card and foster carers receive child benefit for children in their care as well as an allowance of approx 300euro per week

to cover the needs of the foster child and the costs arising from the placement.

From listening to both Angela and Helen describe their experiences of fostering it is clearly a challenging but ultimately rewarding activity. Angela stressed the importance of attachment for children in foster care, if a child has experienced attachment or is able to attach she assured us they will be alright, they will be able to get over what ever it is that has caused them to come into care. Attachment is about the creation of strong, healthy emotional bonds between children and their parents. These bonds nurture and fulfill a child's need for trust, empathy, and affection, providing a lifelong foundation for healthy, enduring relationships. There are difficulties that arise from time to time in fostering and some placements do break down – sometimes placements are sabotaged by children who are actually happy in their foster family but that happiness causes them to feel very conflicted and disloyal to their birth parents.

I would like to thank Helen and Angela for providing us with such a rich insight into fostering children. If anyone is interested in finding out more about becoming a foster parent you can contact the Irish Foster Care Association at info@ifca.ie or (01) 296 1083. Or you can contact the HSE Northern Area Child Care Services, based in Swords at (01) 813 1867.

This article is based on the information provided by Helen and Angela at the Library and Information night as well as the IFCA website and booklet, the Oasis.gov.ie website and the Northern Area Health Board Review of Adequacy of Child and Family Services 2004 available online at <http://www.hsenorthernarea.ie/docs/nahb.pdf>.

Charlotte Cousins

DUBLIN NORTH-EAST BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT



Orla and I (Rebecca) qualified as breastfeeding counsellors in February 2004 and along with Charlotte and previously Sile have been hosting weekly meetings to share information and support to breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women. Since February 2002 the meetings took place weekly in Sutton Methodist Church hall on the Howth Rd. Prior to this they were held in Sile's home. However in April 05 thanks to Derville and Sinead (BabyLink) we were able to move to new premises in the recently refurbished Baldoyle Library. Orla and I also attended an 18 hour intensive Breast Feeding course in Nov 04 in the Rotunda Hospital

Not only do we not have to pay rent (the meeting costs although nominal were often more to host than was collected Cuidiu felt its value worth the expense) but we are blessed with a room with a stunning view of the Baldoyle Estuary and Islands Eye. The new venue is also warm with up to date under floor heating. One of the difficulties we had with the church hall was being able to heat it sufficiently for the comfort of new babies and feeding mums

We have most certainly experienced an increase of attendance and many mums enjoy browsing in the library after the meeting, they may even get some quiet time on the library's computers should their baby take a nap

The library staff are very friendly and helpful and we are never

hurried out, so if a baby is nursing even if the hosting counsellor has to leave, the mummy and baby can stay undisturbed

We are provided with flasks of hot water, fabulous from a safety point of view (wobblers and toddlers) and convenience, they have also given us beanbags and some toys

We have 3 training counsellors who already play an active role; Helena Jeffrey, Helen Ball and Eva Sharry. Orla recently worked in Liberia for 2 months! and Charlotte has stepped down after 4 busy years. Due to the increase in numbers of phone calls and meeting attendances they are greatly appreciated and it's lovely to share information and ideas

As part of the celebrations for National Breastfeeding Week Sarah McEvoy from the Northern Area Health Executive organised a coffee morning in the Marine Hotel Sutton on Tuesday the 4th October 2005 for breastfeeding women in the area as she did last year. Cuidiu La Leche and Clontarf Health Centre were invited. It was a lovely get together with 23 mums and breastfeeding babies and toddlers plus A La Leche Leader Aislinn and 2 public health nurses Agnes and Mary. We also delivered 500 Cuidiu National Breastfeeding leaflets to 8 local Health Clinics

YOU CAN FIND US EVERY MON EXCEPT BANK HOLS AND SCHOOL HOLS

IN BALDOYLE LIBRARY10 - 1130. ORLA AND REBECCA ALSO OFFER SUPPORT AND INFORMATION BY PHONE AS WILL HELENA HELEN AND EVA SHORTLY

Rebecca Horner

Easter Treat



Have you ever needed a quick, easy but yet impressive dessert to bring somewhere or to have for an occasion? I have shied away from making desserts for years for fear of the thing burning or not rising or somehow acting up and instead volunteered to make a starter or indeed a main dish in preference. However I've recently come across this Bailey's Banoffi and tailored the method somewhat to produce an almost foolproof, stress proof (ok second time I made it was stress proof) high fat, high dairy but delicious dessert.

You will need:

400g can condensed milk (found with the custards)
250g digestive biscuits

125g butter melted
2-3 large bananas
300ml double cream
4 tablespoons Baileys cream liqueur
25g dark chocolate grated (flake is quicker)

Method

1. Technically you are supposed to boil the condensed milk in the can and let it simmer for 3-4 hours, but who has time for that? So you can open the tin and boil the milk and simmer for about 5-10 minutes until it thickens. However you must be vigilant about stirring with a whisk because it burns easily. I found it better to bring it to the boil very gently.
2. Put the biscuits in a strong plastic bag, (a bread bag is good). Close the top, then crush with a rolling pin to make fine crumbs. Mix the biscuit crumbs with the melted butter, then press into the base of a 20-23cm (8-9 inch) spring release tin. Chill in the fridge.
3. Slice the bananas and lay on the biscuit base.
4. Spoon the caramelised condense milk evenly over the top, covering the bananas.
5. Whip the double cream with the Bailey's until it stands in soft peaks, then spoon on top of the caramel, taking it to the edges of the dish. Sprinkle grated chocolate all over the top.
6. Chill until required - if anything, this tastes better after 24 hours.

Note: There is a recipe on the tin of the condensed milk but I tried this and found the addition of sugar unnecessary as the milk is sweetened and also made it easy to burn.

Mairead Peppard

It's a Wabbit!



Those of us whose children are a bit older, look back fondly to a time when they were just learning to talk. Apart from harking back to that time as a period in our lives when we could get a word in edgeways, we remember the excitement of being able, at long last (especially with the first child), to have a real conversation with our child and the "cuteness" of mispronunciation and funny words/phrases our children used as they learned.

My eldest used to call himself "Ah" and his favourite expression at around 2 was "Ah do it". My youngest used to call his sister Orla, "Cissy", principally I'd say because for so long she had

leaned over him in his pram/cot and said, in her special tone reserved only for him, "I am your sister you know"!!

Speech and language can be a great source of joy and fun but it can also be a worry to us as parents, especially if our child seems to be a "late" talker and is way behind our friends' children. (One website I used when researching this piece, defined a "late talker" as a child with a spoken vocabulary of less than 50 words at the age of 2).

Children learn all sorts of things at different rates and this is especially true of speech and language. Girls for instance are

usually quicker to develop in this regard than boys. More importantly, however, than the rate of development is that your child's speech develops steadily. While tables of what to expect at different ages can be useful (see below), any chart of milestones is meant as a guideline, for naturally not all children will reach them at the same age.

A rough guide to what to expect of your child is that they will:

- Develop their first real words between 12 and 18 months

- Have a "spurt" of language development before the age of 2
- Have 4-5 word sentences by the age of 4 and that their grammar will be correct most of the time by then
- Almost everything they say by the age of 4 will be understood by "other people"

The best ways to help improve your child's speech and language are the obvious things:

- Have plenty of "chats" with them, from their earliest days
- Read to them, even when they are tiny
- Ask them questions once they begin to "chat" back

While most of us would not be surprised to read that children learn the sounds of their language over several years, and that some sounds are harder to learn than others, we may be surprised to read that it is quite normal for children not to have all the right sounds in the right spots until they are as old as 8.

The table below shows the average age for mastery of different sounds:

1 – 3 years	p, m, h, n, w, b
2 – 4 years	k, g, d, t, ng, f, y
3 – 6 years	s, l
3 – 8 years	s, ch, sh, z, j, v

It is important not to correct your child's mispronunciation but of course to continue to pronounce the sounds correctly yourself.

So what should we worry about?

The following is normal: All children sometimes misunderstand what is said to them, utter oddly-worded sentences and put speech sounds in the wrong spot when learning to talk.

While the following is not normal :

- Stuttering,
- Hoarseness unless the child has a cold
- Disinterest in communicating, poor eye

contact, aloofness with outsiders or continually responding by echoing all or part of what you say.

The right time to seek help about your child's speech or language development is when you are concerned, no matter what age the child. One website declared that a child is never too young to be assessed from a speech and language point of view.

We are fortunate in this country to have a good speech and language therapy service offered free of charge through the Health Executive Authority, though the waiting lists are frequently longer than one would like. If you have concerns put your child's name down early – referrals can be made through your public health nurse or your G.P.

You will find a comprehensive Language Development Chart at the website of the Child Development Institute:
http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/language_development.shtml

Anne Dooley

Child Sexual Abuse - prevention and what parents should know

Like many of you I would like to ignore the fact that there is the potential threat of abuse for our children. But I am sure that information is the first step towards prevention.

It is very difficult to make precise statements about its frequency because child sexual abuse happens in secret and most victims tell no-one. Nevertheless research shows that in the UK 1 in 6 young adults have been abused before they reach the age of 16.

There is a growing knowledge that sexual abusers are likely to be people we know, and could well be people we care about; after all, more than 8 out of 10 children who are sexually abused know their abuser. They can be family members, friends, neighbours or babysitters. Some people who abuse children have adult sexual relationships as well. Abusers come from all classes, racial and religious backgrounds and may be homosexual or heterosexual. Most abusers are men, but some are

women. You cannot pick an abuser out in a crowd.

The harm sexual abuse causes to children can be profound, not just to their emotional and physical development, but to their trust in adults, especially if their abuser is someone they love. The sooner abuse is identified, the sooner the healing process can begin for all concerned.

Sexuality is a part of every human regardless of age. For example children show healthy sexual behaviours if they are playing the "doctor game", if they are showing and looking at private body parts among each other.

The abuser doesn't respect the fact that child sexuality is completely different from adult sexuality. Additionally physical affection is a vital part of bringing up children and should be positively encouraged. But the difference between genuine affection and abusive behaviour is not always clear. The abuser takes advantage of this and crosses the boundaries of the child. This dynamic is the reason why the victim often keeps the abuse a secret: He or she feels guilty because, up to a certain extent, they might have enjoyed the physical affection.

Because for the abuser it is vital to keep the abuse secret, he or she will often use the child's fear, embarrassment or guilt about what is happening, perhaps convincing them that no one will believe them. People who abuse children may offer a combination of gifts or treats and threats about what will happen if the child says 'no' or tells someone about the abuse. They may make the child afraid of being hurt physically, but more usually the threat is about what may happen if they tell e.g. the shame for their family.

What can we as parents do to make our children strong in order to prevent them from being abused?

A safe relationship between us as parents and our children is one in which secrets are hard to keep; where our children would feel able to tell us even if they hadn't been able to say 'no' to the abuse. People who want to abuse children avoid these situations. The more difficult we make it for abusers to come between our children and us, the better-protected our children will be.

1. Talk to your children, and listen to what they have to say. Believe them if they tell you a worrying incident. People who sexually abuse children rely on secrecy. They try to silence

our children and to build trust with us, counting on us to be silent if we have doubts. The first step to tackling this secrecy is to develop an open and trusting relationship with our children. This means listening carefully to their fears and concerns and letting them know they should not worry about telling us anything. It is important to talk with them about sex, and to be comfortable using the words they may need. Start to talk to your children about this as early as possible using age appropriate language and expressions.

2. Demonstrate to children that it is all right to say 'no', for example when they do not want to play, or be tickled, hugged or kissed. Even if a granny wants a kiss it is up to the child if he or she wants it.

3. Help them to understand what is unacceptable behaviour and that they must always tell us if someone is behaving in a way which worries them, even if they were unable to say 'no' at the time.

4. Set and respect personal boundaries in the family living together. Make sure that all members of the family have rights to privacy in dressing, bathing, sleeping and other personal activities. Even young children should be listened to and their preferences respected.

5. Take sensible precautions about whom we choose to take care of our children. Be careful about who children are left with. Find out as much as we can about baby-sitters and don't leave our child with anyone we have reservations about. If our child is unhappy about being cared for by a particular adult, talk to the child about the reasons for this.

What are the warning signs of a child who may have been abused?

Children often show us rather than tell us that something is upsetting them.

There may be many reasons for their behaviour, but if we notice a

combination of worrying signs, it may be time to call for help or advice.

- Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects.
- Nightmares, sleeping problems.
- Becoming withdrawn or very clingy.
- Personality changes, seeming insecure.
- Regressing to younger behaviours, e.g. bedwetting.
- Unaccountable fear of particular places or people.
- Outbursts of anger.
- Changes in eating habits.
- Physical signs e.g. unexplained soreness or bruises around genitals, sexually-transmitted diseases.
- Becoming secretive.

If you are unsure or worried about your child's behaviour or what he or she tells you, don't hesitate to seek advice on what steps you could take. Here are some useful addresses:

<http://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>

Most of the information in this article is taken from their website!

<http://www.cari.ie/>

CARI is for children, families and groups affected by sexual abuse. CARI's helpline service is at 1890 924 567. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm

The Gardai and social services are other bodies to turn to and might have further information on responding to suspected child sexual abuse. Hopefully there will never be a need for it.

Reinhild Bock

Spring is in the air

And not far behind will be Summer (we hope!)



I am hoping to compile a "pull out" list of local summer camps / courses for children in the Summer edition of the newsletter and so will be on the lookout for entries.

Do you know of schools / playschools / sports clubs etc in the area which offer courses or camps for children - from tots up to 12 year olds? If so, could you let me know about them

Anne Dooley



And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said :

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

From "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran.

OUR WORLD
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Purpose Built - Est. 1992

Grange Park Grove,
Raheny, Dublin 5.
Tel: 01 848 0605.

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 9.30am - 1.00pm

Snacks & drinks provided daily

Tel: Carole @ 01 848 0605

ALL ENQUIRIES WELCOME

Baby Blues

A nigerian girl is singin' her blues long into the night...

She doesn't feel right,
here all on her own - so far from home,
baby's not sleepin' and she has been weepin'
Tryin' to remember her Grandmother's tunes
All so long ago now and far as the moon, so far, far away...

The words keep escapin' she can't make them stay...

We're all wide awake now, us freshly hatched Mothers

we've been up all night and we feel her plight
She's singing our pain, our loss and our gain -
She's singing our blues for we too must loose...
Our childhoods, our memories, our own lullaby's
Even our precious babies, yes they too will die
and somehow her music is helping us cry,
all sobbing in solo but joined in our pain,
it'll pass like the bird-song outside
in the rain ...

Christina Molloy



DUBLIN NORTH EAST REGULAR EVENTS 2006



WHAT?	WHEN?	WHERE?	WHO co-ordinates?	HOW MUCH?
BABYLINK - a Parent* & Baby group from pregnancy & for 0 – 12 months	Tuesday 11.00-13.00	Rotating venue - contact co-ordinator	Ciara Leahy	€1.50 members, €2.50 non-members
TODDLERLINK 1 - a Parent* & Baby group for 12 months- 2 years.	Wednesdays 10.30-12.30	Rotating venue - contact co-ordinator	Derville Shields	€1.50 members, €2.50 non-members
TODDLERLINK 2 - a Parent* & Baby group for 2- 3 years.	every Friday 10.00 - 12.00	Rotating venue - contact co-ordinator	Noeleen St Leger	€1.50 members, €2.50 non-members
KIDDYLINK - a Parent* & Child group for 4-5 year olds	every Wednesday 15.00-17.00	Rotating venue - contact co-ordinator	Reinhild Bock	€1.50 members, €2.50 non-members
HUMPTY DUMPTY CLUB - A Parent* & Child group with playtime & 30 minutes of singing nursery rhymes & clapping time to music (guitar), percussion instrument provided for each child to encourage active participation! 6 months - preschool.	Thursday morning. Two sessions: 9.30–10.45 and 11.00– 12.15	Bayside Community Centre (next to Bayside Church)	Derville Shields	€3 for members €4 for non-members
BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT - Whether you're a breastfeeding mum, or pregnant and thinking about breastfeeding, you are welcome to the breastfeeding support mornings. Tea and Coffee provided and toddlers are always welcome.	Every Monday morning (except Bank Holidays) from 10.00-12.00	Baldoyle Libaray, Strand Road, Baldoyle,	Rebecca	€1.50 members, €2.50 non-members

Do you have a child at primary school?

If so, our next parenting course may be of interest to you.

For parents of children in the 5 – 13 age group, it will offer “practical skills to help parents become more responsible and more effective”. It covers topics such as applying discipline, enjoying quality time together, listening and communicating about problems.

The course runs for 8 weeks, 1 night per week at a local venue.

Further details from Anne Dooley

Advertising in this newsletter

There is a cost involved in getting this newsletter printed and one way to meet this cost is through advertisements. If you know of a business that would be interested in targeting approximately 180 households in the Dublin North East area, please ask them to contact Pauline. Rates very reasonable! Incidentally, members can place a quarter page ad for €15.

Library nights

Library & Information nights are held on the second Tuesday of each month, 9-10.30pm, with tea/coffee and biscuits provided. The dates and themes for the next few months are:
March 14– Children and bereavement
April 11 – Open evening
May 9 – Car safety
 Further details in this newsletter or from **Charlotte**

Reading Circles

One of the three Reading Circles has space for one more reader/would be reader. Interested? Then contact **Joan Montgomery**. **If there is enough interest, we can look at setting up a fourth group.**

Don't forget to come along to our Parenting Talk and AGM which takes place in St Killester Resource Centre, Howth Road on Monday 13th March at 8pm. **It promises to be a fantastic night, rounded off by a chat in Harry Byrnes!**