



Our Mission, Vision and Values

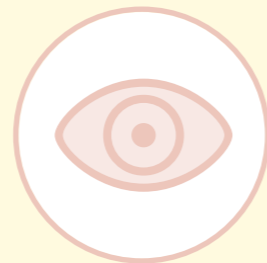
Our Mission:

To promote and develop high quality, evidence-informed early childhood services for young children, their families and communities.



Our Vision:

- Children are strong, competent and visible in their communities
- Children are physically and emotionally healthy
- Children are eager and able to learn
- Children are respectful of difference
- Children grow up in a peaceful, prosperous and shared region



Our Values:

- Childhood – in its own right
- Listening to children – and those who care for them
- A strong voice for children
- Play, fun and creativity

- Parents as first educators
- Participation of children and families
- Community involvement and development
- Partnership
- Inclusion and diversity

- Excellence and evidence-based innovation
- Effective stewardship and governance
- A professional, committed and recognised workforce
- Valuing staff, members and their commitment



The official launch of our inspirational childhood centre of excellence - Fermanagh Early Years Children and Family Centre providing quality evidence-informed early childhood services for young children, their families and communities.

Chairperson's Foreword

Maria McDonagh

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Senior Management Team of Early Years – the organisation for young children, I am pleased to present the annual report for 2019/2020 which demonstrates continuing achievement for the organisation.

I would like to thank all our Board members for their ongoing encouragement, support and dedication over the last year.

The Board of Directors would like to congratulate our new Chief Executive Officer, Pauline Walmsley, for managing the smooth transition of leadership which enabled the organisation to remain focused and financially stable.

In a year which has seen unprecedented change for the planet, Early Years – the organisation for young children has adapted to new pandemic demands while continuing to support its membership. We have proven to be a strong advocate at government level where we have successfully campaigned with our childcare partners for financial support packages and updates to the Childcare Guidance, all of which has enabled the industry to continue to offer quality childcare in the most difficult of times.

The Board of Directors and Senior Management Team are committed to ensuring the future sustainability of the organisation. We appreciate all the hard work and dedication of our team of professional and dedicated staff, volunteers and members across all regions. We all look forward to another year of successes for the organisation and all our early years settings.



Maria McDonagh
Chairperson



Early Years Leadership and Governance conference - November 2019. Graduates presented with Level 5 diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development.

Chief Executive Officer's Foreword

Pauline Walmsley

I am very proud to write my first Foreword as CEO for the Annual Report of Early Years – the organisation for young children. Looking back over the last year, I am grateful for the support of our Board of Directors, volunteers, members and staff who have worked to make this transition an effective and productive one.

The year marked the final year in the delivery of our 2017 to 2020 Strategic Plan. The organisation continues to deliver a number of key supports to children, parents and communities under Sure Start, the Pathway Fund, Sharing from the Start, the Toybox Project and a bespoke mentoring service for PSEP groups. We continue to deliver Level 5, 3 and 2 qualifications.

Early Years has had an active year in terms of advocacy including substantial input to the Early Childhood Peace Consortium, consultations on Peace Plus and providing leading inputs to key developments within the workforce including the Belfast Childcare Academies, the collaborative development of the new Children's Care Learning and Development qualifications and the formation and support of the Early Years Care, Education and Play Employers Forum. I am particularly proud that we have played our part in advocating for and influencing the implementation of significant support packages for services during the COVID-19 pandemic and of the actions taken by the sector to provide safe, sustainable and stable services for children.

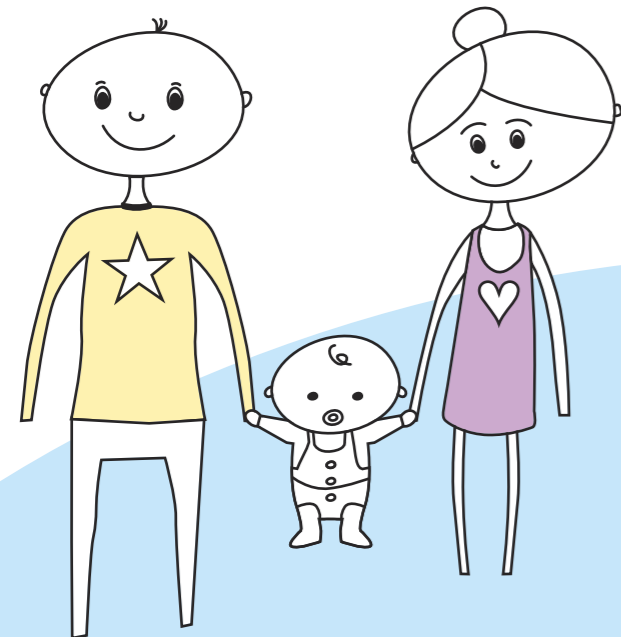
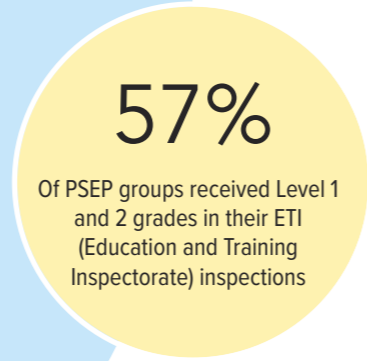
Finally, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Dr Siobhán Fitzpatrick, and wish her well in her retirement.



Pauline Walmsley
Chief Executive Officer

Achievements

To promote and develop high quality, evidence-informed early childhood services for young children, their families and communities



How much did we do?



Achievements

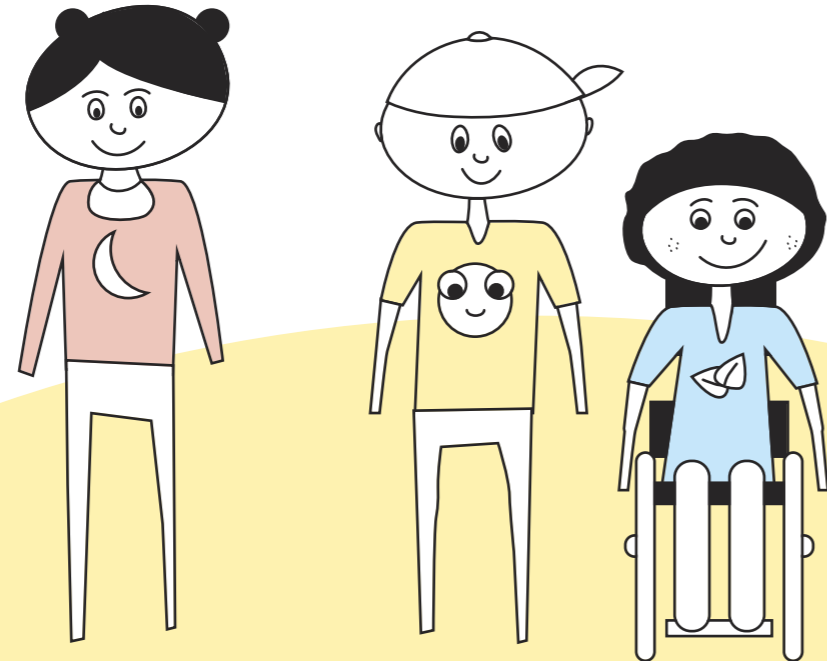
Children are strong, competent and visible in their communities

Leading local and international ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) evidence and practice translated into a format which is useful to policy makers, service developers, change agents, trainers and parents

Young children's rights promoted and evidence-based solutions offered

803

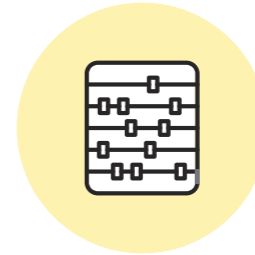
Advocacy contacts to support inter-agency partnerships working between parents and families within the Toybox Project.



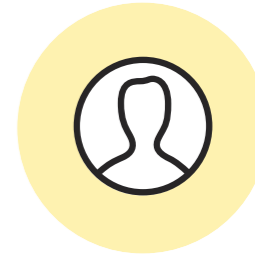
How much did we do?



Engagement with key departmental officials and elected officials on the development of a Northern Ireland Executive Childcare Strategy and associated workforce initiatives



Secretariat support for the Early Years Care, Education and Play Employers Forum



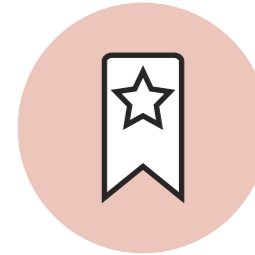
Engagement with key elected representatives on significant early childhood issues and the development of an All-Party Group on Early Years



Contributions to *Early Childhood Development Programming to Sustainable Peace and Development*, a paper produced by Early Childhood Peace Consortium



Consultation responses provided to childcare development in Northern Ireland: Special Educational Needs; Dormant Accounts Funding; Business Rates; and future Peace Plus European Territorial Co-operation funding, primarily still within a political environment which (until January 2020) experienced the absence of a functioning local Executive or Assembly



Northern Ireland and Reggio Emilia Interpretation and Exploration - supporting the professional development of Early Years staff and members to actively participate in society and develop a sense of European citizenship and identity

£1.5m

Of the Pathway Fund was invested in settings based in the 25% most deprived areas

£0.6m

Of the Pathway Fund was invested in settings based in rural locations

Achievements

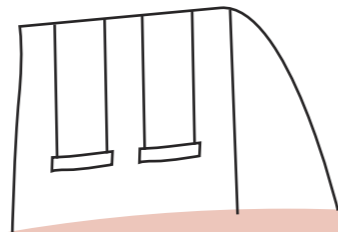
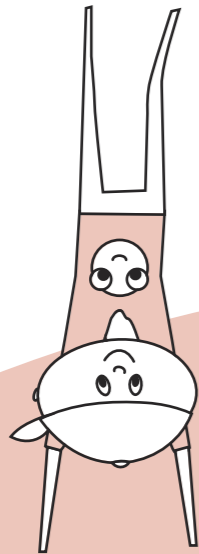
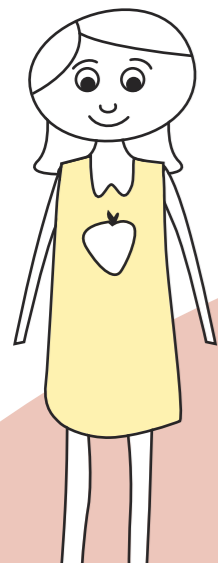
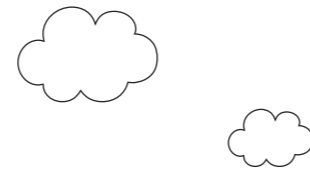
Children are physically and emotionally healthy

8,004

Children registered in Early Years led Sure Start projects

70

Children attending the Early Years Centre of Excellence, Fermanagh Early Years Children and Family Centre, which opened in May 2019



How much did we do?

Early Years is lead body for Clogher Valley, South Armagh, Dungannon, Rainbow, Newry and Splash Sure Starts.

6,416

Number of mothers registered in Sure Start projects

2,386

Number of fathers registered in Sure Start projects

5,078

Number of home visits

6,519

Number of families registered in Sure Start projects

94%

Of transitional settings said they were 'very likely' or 'likely' to contact the Toybox Project regarding a child's transition.

801

Parents attended play and stay sessions accessed through the Pathway Fund projects

Achievements

Children are eager and able to learn

2,851

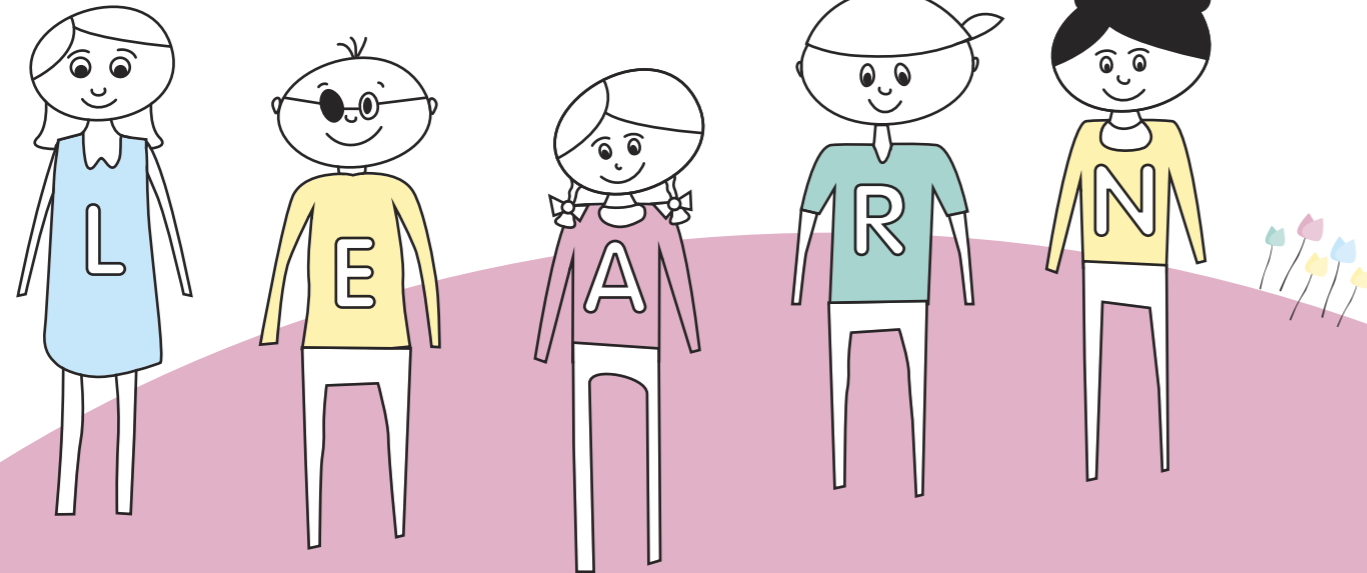
Play sessions with children through the Toybox Project, empowering Traveller/Roma parents to become involved in the education process for their children and themselves

2,228

Programme sessions delivered with Sure Start Programme for Two Year Olds

239

Families and 167 children avail of HighScope through the Toybox Project



How much did we do?

29

Sure Start Two Year Old Development Programmes

1,893

Home visits completed by Sure Start for Two Year Old Development Programmes

217

Stay and Play sessions and 19 workshops delivered

239

Children were supported through the Toybox Project to enhance their social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development

276

Families accessed the Toybox Project and 81 Traveller parents have attended training courses

94%

Of parents felt that it is very important or important for Toybox staff to share their child's Child Development Profile with them, 156 Child Development Profiles were shared

17%

Increase from 2018/19 in engagement from fathers within the Toybox Project

62

Settings with practitioners trained and implementing, to full fidelity, the evidence-based Eager and Able to Learn Programme aimed at improving young children's eagerness and ability to learn

93%

Of transitional settings in contact with the Toybox Project regarding a child's transition

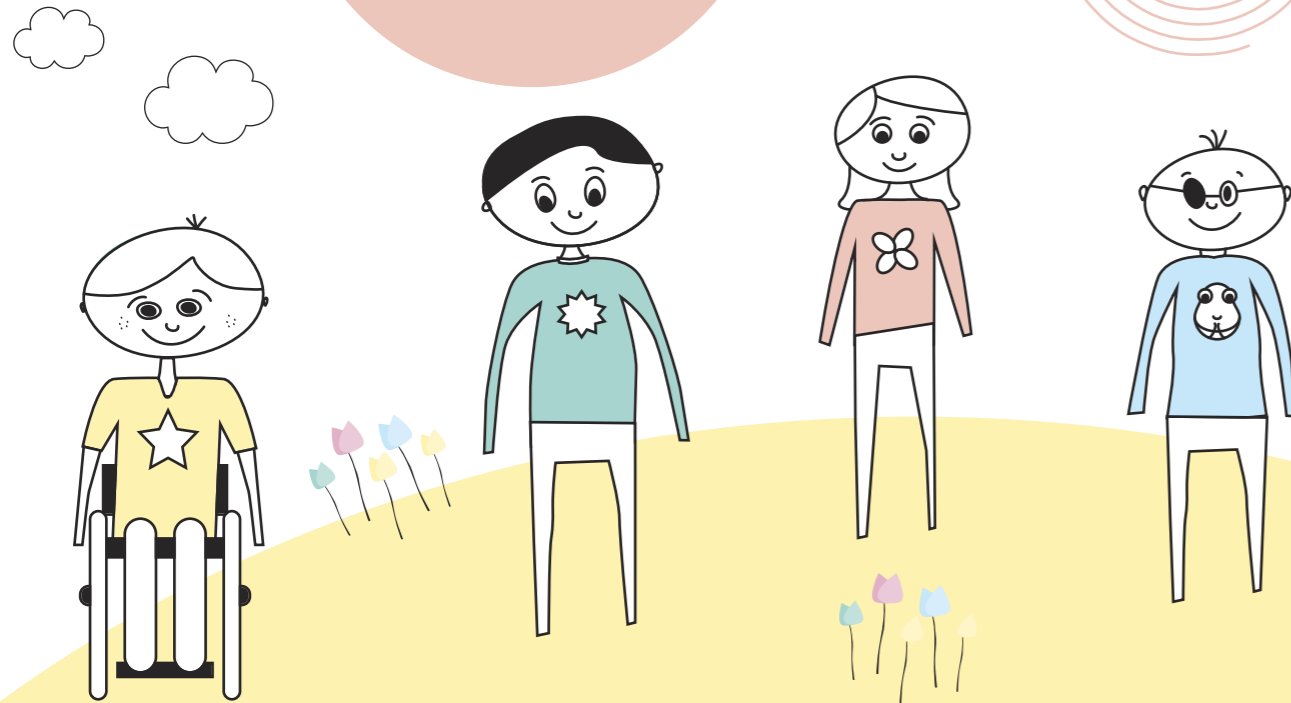
Achievements

Children are respectful of difference

100%

Of parents, staff and board of governors members had a positive response to the Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme and felt it was highly relevant in our society

Technical assistance to UNICEF Country Offices regarding the design, development and delivery of ECD (Early Childhood Development) programmes



How much did we do?

102

Schools, after-schools and day cares engaged in the Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme through funding from Good Relations and Peace IV, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and the Community Relations Council

84

Settings participated in community relations and multi-cultural programmes through the Pathway Fund projects

1,000

Children and young people involved in the EU Horizon 2020 WYRED (netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital Society) Project. Early Years is one of nine partners amplifying youth voices on the project



Supporting and developing evidence-based ECD programmes for peacebuilding in countries affected by conflict, through partnership with UNICEF and with the support of global research centres at Queen's University Belfast, Yale and New York University

19 staff and members participated on the Erasmus+ Northern Ireland and Reggio Emilia exchange and co-operation study trips



Erasmus+ Early Coding Project developing teaching materials on Computational Thinking and Introduction to Coding – the project aims to contribute to capacity building in the education sector to foster very basic computational thinking skills at pre-school level in the five partner countries through up-skilling and engaging games and fun activities



Erasmus+ WeNA (We Are Not Alone) Project in four partner countries supporting parents who have children with special needs, improve their subjective well-being with the help of creative drama and social support groups

Erasmus+ ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) Project in four partner countries to support the development of an effective methodology of teaching for children with ASD

Achievements

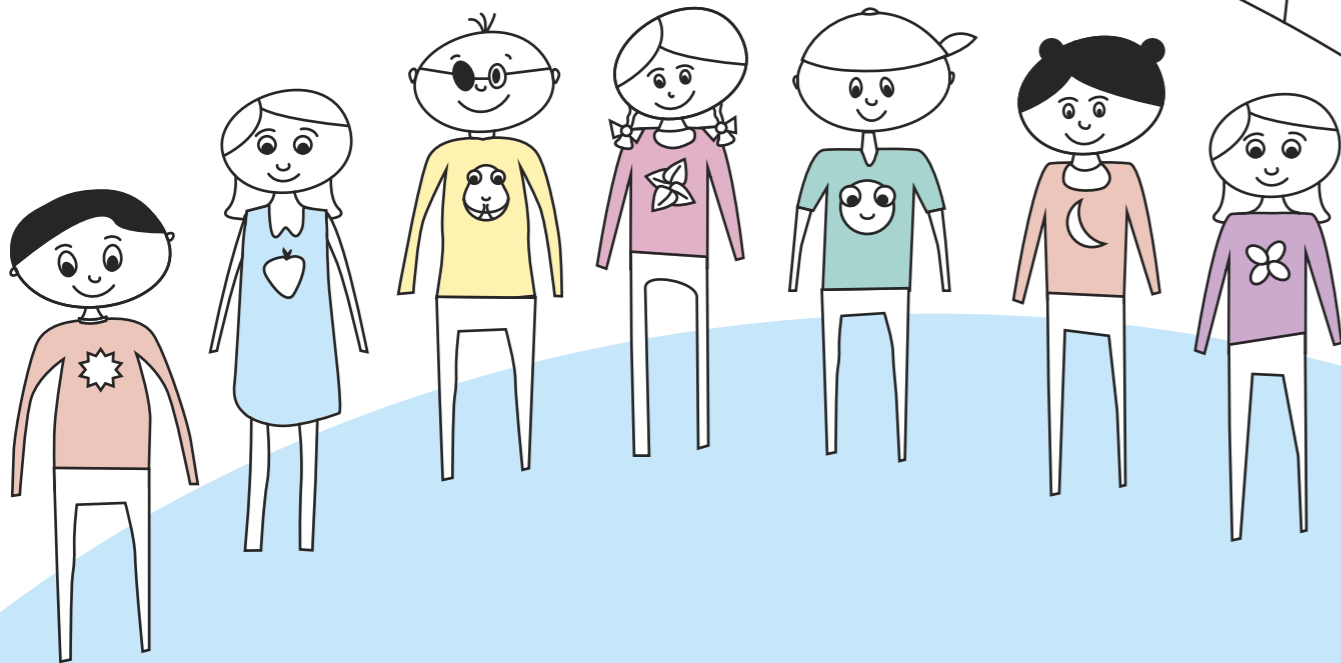
Children grow up in a peaceful, prosperous and shared region

€4.2m

Of funding awarded to Early Years – the organisation for young children (lead partner), the Fermanagh Trust and the National Childhood Network for the delivery of Sharing from the Start, supported by the European Union's Peace IV Programme, managed by the SEUPB (Special EU Programmes Body)

3,167

Children participated in shared curricular activities in Sharing from the Start Programme



How much did we do?

99

Pre-school settings engage in the Sharing from the Start Programme, forming 47 partnerships across Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland

180

Pre-school practitioners facilitating the delivery of shared education classes

99%

Of settings in the Sharing from the Start Programme report 'excellent' or 'very good' support from Early Years mentors

48

Pre-school settings trained in Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme

3,167

Children participating in shared education

41

Joint information sessions attended by parents, carers and management committee members

1,747

Hours of shared education classes facilitated between September 2019 and March 2020

94%

Of practitioners felt that peer learning clusters facilitated by the Senior Early Years Specialists were 'excellent' or 'very good'

500

Over 500 early years teachers and practitioners trained by Early Years in Shanghai and Changzhou, China.

Early Years Board of Directors 2019 - 2020



Alma Loughrey
Honorary President



Maria McDonagh
Chairperson



Ethel Mclvor



Agata Sobieraj
Treasurer



Nemonie Fulton



Jenni Barkley



Ronan Park

Early Years Council 2019 - 2020

Early Years Council:

Antrim/Ballymena *Florence Walker*

Belfast *Ashlea Berryman*

Causeway *Christina McFarland and Michelle Spence*

Cookstown and Magherafelt *Wendy Hayman*

Craigavon/Banbridge

Catherine McPolin and Joanne Conlon

Down *Sarah McCambley*

Dungannon *Ethel Mclvor*

Fermanagh *Katie Murray*

Foyle *Carrie Mullen*

Larne/Carrickfergus/Newtownabbey

Patricia Rush and Hilda Boyd

Lisburn *Sarah McCambley*

Newry and Mourne *Majella Caherty*

North Down and Ards *Laureen Moore*

Omagh and District *Melanie O'Kane*

Sperrin *Caroline McCormick*

Dublin *Anne-Marie Dixon*

Day Care Forum *Francis Loye*

Treasurer's Report 2019 - 2020

The financial year 2019/2020 has seen the Peace IV Sharing from the Start and the Peace IV Rural Respecting Difference projects continue, bringing in revenue of nearly £1,000,000.

Ongoing management and delivery commitments were renewed for the Pathway Fund, Sure Starts, Toybox, DE and Health and Social Care Trusts contract arrangements. This brought in funding of nearly £7 million.

Other projects yielded income of around £860,000.

The core activities of Early Years encompassing membership support, training, publications and management fees, generated income of nearly £1.3 million.

In summary, restricted funding activities generated revenues of over £8.3 million and unrestricted revenues of over £1.4 million.

The organisation is committed to increasing its restricted to unrestricted funding ratio and building up reserves.

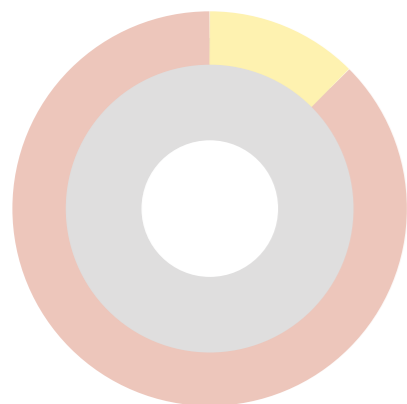
Financial planning for the year 2019/20 focused on cost consolidation and efficiency as well as restructuring of the Early Years Specialist role, yielding improving returns on investment, with additional potential funding opportunities to further develop service offerings.

In addition to a very local focus, the organisation continues to take forward new international opportunities with continued delivery on a contract signed with QUB and UNICEF and being rolled out in East Timor, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Balkans and the Middle East region.

The organisation's key financial focus is on increasing new commercial opportunities in order to move towards a more independent sustainability and a build up of reserves. This in turn will allow reinvestment in development to deliver a strong and stable organisation in support of its members.

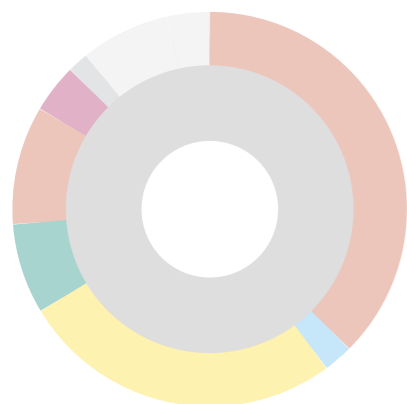
Agata Sobieraj, Treasurer

Income and Expenditure 2019 - 2020



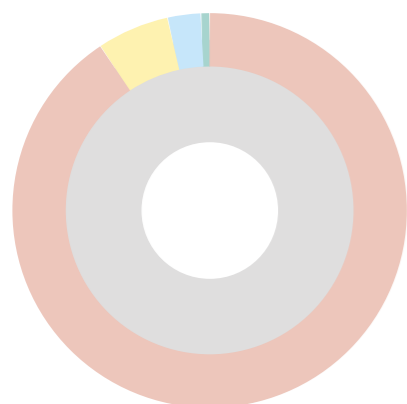
Restricted and Unrestricted Income

Restricted	£8,366,358
Unrestricted	£1,432,252
Total	£9,798,610



Analysis of Income

Health and Social Care Trusts Income	34%	£3,300,220
Health & Social Care Board	4%	£422,691
The Pathway Fund	30%	£2,940,984
Project Funding	9%	£863,192
Peace IV Funding	10%	£959,037
Sales of Resources, Day Care, Training and Membership Services	4%	£433,082
Donations & Other Grants	1%	£140,792
Other	8%	£738,612



Analysis of Expenditure

Direct Charitable Activities	£9,169,483
Support Costs	£1,013,469
Cost of Generating Funds	£46,594
Governance Costs	£8,900

Staff in employment in 2019 - 2020

ArKe Sure Start

Martina Maguire
Ievgeniia Nykyforova
Padrician O'Kane

Blossom Sure Start

Debbie Johnson
Keith McAdam
Emma Winter
Megan Simmons
Eleanor Duffy
Jacqueline Harper
Paula Doran
Pauline Bell
Lindsey Davis
Florentya Kulinska
Marta Sabuniene
Emma Luney

Clogher Valley Sure Start

Dolores Neeson
Ita Quinn
Nuala Quinn
Julie McConville
Julie Thompson
Mairead McMullen
Ciara Reilly
Yvette Grimes
Patricia Shields
Yvonne Keenan
Shauneen McCusker
Ciara McMaugh
Kathryn Mavitty
Kerri Meenagh
Zelma Robinson
Shannen Keenan

Corporate Services - Admin

Amanda Larmour- McQuaide
George Bryans

Corporate Services - Finance

Anna McShane
Colm McCaughley
Christopher McArdle
Nuala Moynagh
Carol Gray
Jane Thom
William Smith

Corporate Services - HR

Samina Waring
Lorna Houston
Gillian Totten
Shannon Martin
Alan Montgomery

Corporate Services - ICT

Peter Balmer

Dungannon Sure Start

Catherine McCone
Paula Graham
Margaret Quinn
Angela McGrath
Emma Faloon
Kerry Anne Johnston
Rhiannon McCann
Noeleen Mellon
Jurgita Macionyte
Cara Mallon
Siobhan Wallace
Marialva Alves
Collette Skeffington
Aoife Doyle
Nina Chapman
Sarah Fairgrieve
Maria Igielska-Michalek
Jillian Greer
Ciara Dinsmore
Tilly Jane Porter
Sarah McCreery
Dora Araujo
Collette Campbell
Paula McVey
Shauna Coey
Aimee Campbell
Nijole Gil
Roagh O'Donnell

Fermanagh Early Years

Lucy Branley
Lindsay Coote
Ellen Monaghan
Joan Jackman
Lesley Sturdee
Louise McCann
Elizabeth Phair
Michelle Maguire
Alison Balfour
Victoria Buchanan
Niamh Caughey
Elinor Keys
Caitlin McNamee
Sandra Vance
Teri Vance
Leanne Goan
Chloe Johnston
Yasmin Fitzpatrick

Kilkeel SureStart

Clare O'Hagan
Diane Maginn
Laura Morris

Knowledge

Noel McAllister
Joanna Gray
Tonine Laing

Newry Centre

Gareth Kelly
Ciara Millar
Arlene Morgan-Carroll
Shaunna Finnegan
Ana Correia
Peter McDonnell
Orla Flinnighin
Patricia Callinan
Selina McElroy
Danielle McCulla

Newry SureStart

Emma Doogan
Deirdre Carson
Denice Nixon
Frances McAteer
Elaine Fearon
Catherine McCann
Claire McKee
Marta Szwenik
Diane Cousins
Sarah McAteer
Colleen Ward
Katrina Monaghan
Anna Rogers
Adele Toal
Patricia McKeivitt
Anne Rice
Mary Rafferty
Sharon Crummy
Roseanne Duffy
Paula McLoughlin
Rebekah Magowan
Karen McGrath

Operations - Funding

Lisa Crawford
Fiona Scullion
Anne Marie Mulholland
Audrey Rainey
Karen Cooke
Nuala McEvoy
Dolores Murtagh
Noletta Smyth
Aveen Owens
Diarmuid Moore
Meabh Poacher
Melissa nHalvey
Clare Cosgrove
Niamh Pollock
Rona Baxter

Operations - Northern & Belfast

Sharon Harvey
Eileen McClean
Sioban Houston

Operations - South Eastern

Megan McConaghy
Helen Doherty
Diane Glasgow
Margaret Tighiouart
Aoife Lacey

Operations - Southern

Emma Magowan
Sharon Flanagan
Marianna Hetherington
Peter McKinney
Fionnuala Anderson
Orla Kilpatrick

Operations - Training

Samantha Logan
Debra Wilson
Zoe Kernohan-Neely

Operations - Western

Elaine Sterritt
Joan Bradley
Marie Wilson
Marian Baker
Donna Sweeney
Mary O'Reilly
Shirley Gillespie
Louise McLaughlin-Borlace

Rainbow Sure Start

Sandra Warke
Linda Houston
Christine McMenamin
Lucinda Clarke
Caoimhe McAleer
Yvonne Tracey
Elaine Devine
Fiona Burt
Gemma Watson
Theresa Devenney
Majella Greene
Winnie McNamara
Trudy Johnston

Senior Management Team

Pauline Walmsley

South Armagh Sure Start

Conor McArdle
Susan Murphy
Helena Rogers
Tracy Walker
Eileen McEvoy
Nicola McParland
Kerry Stuart
Joanne Leary
Sinead Rice
Mona Lavery
Ursula Campbell
Isobel Fleming
Sharon Kennon
Catherine Ferguson
Aileen McDonnell
Hayley McKew
Nicola McCauley
Ashling McGinn
Richella Cottrell

Splash Sure Start

Clare Fox
Keith Cullen
Natalie Lynch
Zoe Ruddell
Catriona Maguire
Agnieszka Judkiewicz-Kozak
Nicola Sharpe
Rachel Eileen Gregson
Mary Boyce
Patricia Mulholland
Jenny Morrow
Kellie Trainor
Natasha Greer
Maureen McClearn
Angeline McKeown
Lynsey Wright

Emir Holland
Roisin Ann Rogers
Patrice Breen
Sarah McCreanor
Morgan Wilson
Rayanne Turner
Dawn Smith
Michelle Robinson

Star SureStart

Dorota Bondarczyk
Sarah McNally
Leanne McGivern

Toybox - Northern & Belfast

Bridgeen Irwin
Rita Simmonds
Hannah Chapman
Mandolin (Mandy) Flavin

Toybox - Southern

Karen McGuigan
Thelma Donnan
Madeline Mackin

Toybox - Western

Catherine McKnight
Martina Grainger

Sponsors and Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals who have financially supported our work over the past year:

Allianz
The Atlantic Philanthropies
Alzheimer's Society NI
Antrim and Newtownabbey Council
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Barnardo's
Belfast Area Childcare Partnership
Belfast City Council Active Belfast
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Belfast Zoo
The Big Lottery
Blackburn Trust
Bright Start/Department of Education
Cavan County Childcare Committee
Children in Need
Clogher Valley Family Centre Ltd
Community Relations Council
Danske Bank
Department of Education
Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
Erasmus+
European Commission

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Health and Social Care Board
Hebei Early Education Institute, Shijiazhuang, China
Hope Early Years
Invest NI
Lockton Limited
Mencap
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Northern Health and Social Care Trust
NICVA
Northern Childcare Partnership
The Northern Ireland Executive Office
Precede Balkan's Network – European Union Instrument for Pre-accession A
Public Health Agency
Queen's University Belfast
Special EU Programmes Body
Sisters of Mercy
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
South Eastern Childcare Partnership
Southern Area Childcare Partnership

Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Southern Regional College
Strategic Investment Fund - Ards and Down
Strategic Investment Fund - Downpatrick
Strategic Investment Fund – Western Zone
Sure Start:
Arke Sure Start
Blossom Sure Start
Clogher Valley Sure Start
Dungannon Sure Start
Kilkeel Sure Start
Newry City Sure Start
Rainbow Sure Start
South Armagh Sure Start
Splash/Brownlow Sure Start
Star (Banbridge) Sure Start

UNICEF
Verity Pensions
Western Childcare Partnership
Western Health and Social Care Trust
Wheelock College

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