

Toybox aims to:

- Strengthen the capacity of Traveller and Roma parents to support their children's well-being and eagerness to learn through home visits.
- Enhance the social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development of Traveller and Roma children from pre-birth to four years.
- Empower Traveller and Roma parents to become involved in the education process for their children and themselves.
- Maximise the participation of Traveller and Roma children in early learning and development opportunities and in at least one year's pre-school/ nursery provision, and to close the gap in enrolment levels between Traveller, Roma and settled children.
- Encourage Traveller and Roma families to engage in local community groups including parent and toddler groups and Sure Start services.
- Ensure that community and statutory early childhood services develop inclusive practices to ensure the full participation of Traveller and Roma children and families.
- Strengthen effective partnership working between parents, Traveller and Roma support groups, NGOs, health and education professionals to support the social and educational development of young Traveller and Roma children, at home and in school.
- Work progressively to ensure that Traveller and Roma values and perspectives are reflected in development and practice.
- Contribute effectively to the development of wider policy and practice that challenge discrimination and inequalities experienced by young Traveller and Roma children.

For further information on the Toybox Programme, please contact:

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**Working in Northern Ireland to
reduce social and educational
inequalities experienced by
Traveller and Roma children.**



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Early Years – the organisation for young children Northern Ireland Charity No: NIC105832

What is the Toybox programme?

Toybox, in partnership with children and parents, provides a rights-based outreach service which aims to significantly reduce social and educational inequalities experienced by Traveller and Roma children aged 0-4. A team of outreach Project Workers deliver the Toybox programme across Northern Ireland.

Toybox uses HighScope, a quality approach to early years care and education based around the evidence-based concept that children construct their own learning by being actively involved in working with people, materials and ideas. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in play sessions in order to support their children's development.

Underpinning Concepts

Toybox draws on the conceptual framework of the child in the context of their family and community as informed and influenced by Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory:

“Without family involvement, intervention is likely to be unsuccessful, and what few effects are achieved are likely to disappear once intervention is discontinued.”

Urie Bronfenbrenner
(1974)



Parent's, Children's and Practitioner's Comments:

Parent's Comments

“I'm pleased my kids have a chance like we didn't get with Toybox, she's in school now and loves it”

Pre-school Staff Comment

“Children have developed great social and language skills with their peers and staff - Toybox supports speech and language development”

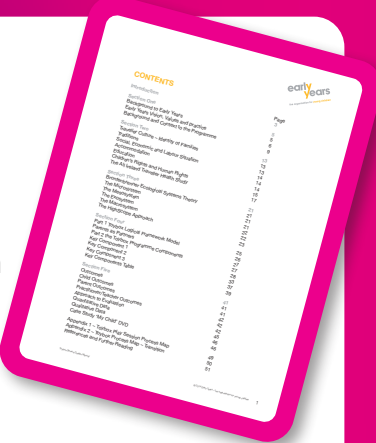
Child's Comments

“I can tell you about the books, and I tell stories to my brother”



The Toybox Service Design Manual

The Toybox Service Design Manual has been developed to support and assist Toybox staff in the implementation of the Toybox programme approach and create effective partnerships with families and other agencies.



The Toybox programme consists of the following key components:

1. An outreach home visiting service aimed at empowering parents to support their young children's optimal development.
2. An access programme aimed at supporting the inclusion of children and parents in Sure Start, pre-school and primary schools.
3. An advocacy programme including a partnership approach with a range of key stakeholders aimed at improving policies and services for children and families.

