

Community Mothers Programme



Annual Report 1997

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Those of us who are formally associated with the Community Mothers Programme are very conscious of the big part played by many whose names do not appear. We refer to the great work of the Printing Department, and to the contributors of art, visual aids, cartoon material and technical assistance.

We are grateful!

Publication Team Credits

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Copied by	-	The Bureau
		Dr. Stevens Hospital

Section i

Preliminaries

COMMUNITY MOTHERS PROGRAMME JANUARY - DECEMBER 1997

Visits by Community Mothers: 8260 Number of families involved: 1192	Ante-Natal visits by Family Development Nurses: 133 Number of mothers-to-be involved: 133
Visits by Family Development Nurses: 482 Number of families involved: 56	Nutrition intervention visits by Community Mothers/Family Development Nurses: 792 Number of families involved: 792
Breastfeeding Support Visits By Community Mothers/Family Development Nurses: 1080 Number of mothers involved: 245	Health Information visits by Community Mothers/ Family Development Nurses: 123 Number of families involved: 123
Traveller visits by Community Mothers/Family Development Nurses: 482 Number of Traveller parents involved: 54	Parent & Toddler sessions facilitated by Community Mothers: 413 Number of Parent & Toddler Pairs involved: 135
Ante-Natal Visits by Community Mothers: 270 Number of mothers-to-be involved: 254	Number of Community Mothers trained during the year: 72 Average length of stay for Community Mother: 25 months
Present number of Community Mothers (Dec 1997): 152	

COMMUNITY MOTHERS PROGRAMME
JANUARY-DECEMBER 1997
Outcomes Snapshots

Parents

58% of parents who agreed to take part in the Programme were lone parents.

Community Mothers

67 Community Mothers left during the year.

33% of the Community Mothers who left the Programme took up paid employment.

50% of Community Mothers attended courses during the year in addition to their training received in the Community Mothers Programme.

The majority of these courses were self-funded.

Parents

50% of Programme parents attended courses including courses on parenting and self-development as a result of their contact with the Programme. The majority of these courses were self-funded

Infant Feeding

22% of Programme mothers initiated breastfeeding.

44% of the above were still breastfeeding at 1 month.

40% of the above were still breastfeeding at 3 months.

12% of the above were still breastfeeding at 1 year.

85% of Programme parents kept their infants on formula feed for twelve months.

13% of Programme parents introduced solids to their infants before 3 months.

Child Abuse

No cases.

Early Reading

94% of Programme parents started reading to their infants in the first year of life.

Hospitalisation

12% of Programme infants were hospitalised during the year.

1.5% were hospitalised due to accidents.

Immunisation

93% of Programme infants completed their immunisation this year.

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Brenda Molloy
Mary Glennon
Deirdre Barry
Margaret O Dononvan
Aine Mooney
Liz O Regan/Florence Burns
Mary Reid
Barbara Goldsmith

Fionnuala Kinsella
Paul Harrison
Ann Savage
Teresa Keegan
Bernie Rooney
Marie Bolger
Ruby Johnson/Martina O Kelly

EVALUATION ADVISOR

Dr. Zachary Johnson

COMMUNITY MOTHERS

Linda Kavanagh
Margaret Dorcey
Maureen McDonell
Mary Keating
Deirdre McCarthy
Josephine O Malley
Ruth Brennan
Roisin Mellon
Grainne Dempsey
Ann Murphy
Janet Copeland
Julie McCracken
Deirdre Lally
Jane Tobin
Emer Torpey
Maire Ni Mhurchu
Mary O Runaidh
Geraldine Tipple
Debbie Treanor
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Mary Reddy
Betty Waters
Elizabeth Sheehy
Catherine Thornton
Lily Boland
Rena McDonagh
Mary Walsh
Pat Hogan
Teresa Ward
Bernadette Doyle
Aine Quinn
Imelda Gavin
Antoinette Kissane
Therese Callanan
Kathleen Kelleher
Helena Kennedy
Suzanne Doolin
Ruth Campbell
Lorraine Fitzgerald
Lisa Hynes
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Patricia Gray
Deirdre McCarthy
Bridie Geary
Marie Murray
Irene Byrne
Bridie Flynn
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Jackie Kelly
Vivienne Cummins
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Patricia Coleman
Mary Fields
Olive Tonge
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Patricia McCann
Dorothy Ketterer
Annmarie O Neill
Marie Barrett
Maureen Conroy
Teresa Marlow
Collette Gibbons
Ann Nugent
Una Kelly
Christine O Kelly
Liz Myers
Deirdre Gargan
Pauline Jackson
Siobhan Rooney
Niamh Corrigan
Pauline Byrne
Eileen Cronin
Rachel Cullen

Paula Murphy
Marie Dagger
Anita Murphy
Sylvia Newman
Lynn O Callaghan
Carmel Shanahan
Eileen Grimes
Cathy Donnelly
Geraldine Murphy
Harriot Sterling
Karen Hughes
Josephine Moynihan
Pat Stafford
Geraldine Dandy
Mary Carroll
Marie Smith
Ailish Meeley
Christine Coleman
Ann Bradley
Lily Roche
Mary Byrne
Shirley Carroll
Lorraine Horrigan
Tammy Marshall
Pauline Dunne
Bernie Dorothy
Kay O Grady
Teresa Deegan
Ann Poylon
Bernie Reid
Kathleen Carr
Kathleen Burke
Karen O Reilly
Jessie Sullivan
Dolores Doyle
Siobhan Ormond
Linda O Rourke
Tina Mullen-Prendergest
Jean Rowley
Mariann Collins
Margaret Byrne

Stella Murphy
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Helen Mullen
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Joanne Purvis
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Sharon Moles
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Alison Purcell
Una Dunne
Denise Kiely
Debbie Dyer
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Betty Naughton
Lisa Ryan
Kathleen Reid
Olive O Donoghue
ThereseMcCann
Geraldine Hayden
Lesely Sweeney
Kitty Ryan
Geraldine Kelly
Bernadette Burke
Marie Armstrong
Margaret O Sullivan
Mary Hickey
Brenda Doyle
Susan Abrook
Mary Delaney
Barbara Blasio
Sandra Kenny
Mary Bonnor
Mary Callan
Mary Duggan
Niamh Lennon
Jane Joyce
Margaret Jones

COMMUNITY MOTHERS PROGRAMME

The Community Mothers Programme is a support programme designed to develop the skills and self-esteem of first-time and second-time parents who live in mainly disadvantaged areas. It aims to give power to parents, developing their latent skills and restoring confidence and self esteem so that they tackle their own life problems in their own way. The model is one of parent-capacitation and empowerment.

Experienced mothers, known as Community Mothers, are recruited and trained in disadvantaged areas to give support, and encouragement to parents in the rearing of their own children, emphasising health care, nutritional improvement and overall development. Community Mothers work under the guidance of Family Development Nurses. Each unit consists of one Family Development Nurse and eighteen Community Mothers and deals with approximately two hundred referrals per year. The parents are visited by the Community Mothers once a month. The intervention is not very intrusive. It gives the parents involved in the Programme a structured opportunity to form a relationship with the Community Mothers.

A number of spin-off initiatives have evolved including Parent and Toddler groups. The expectation would be that parents who attend these groups would become more connected to the community in which they live. Breastfeeding Support Groups and home visits to breastfeeding mothers are also facilitated by the Community Mothers. The Programme has also been extended to the Travelling community. An important aspect of this programme is the organisational /management philosophy underlying it which is one of empowering all those involved.

Themes

- The Programme is parent and home centred - the parent is seen as the expert with their own child and the key agent for change. Parents are supported while they achieve their own goals for their children.
- The Programme encourages/ stimulates togetherness and parents and visitors work together as equals.
- The Programme aims to give power back to parents and build their confidence and self-esteem so enabling them to find their own solutions to their problems and promoting their health and well-being.
- The Programme also aims to give power back to the community - it represents an alternative to the top-down approach, encouraging people at local level to articulate their own needs and take control of their lives.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Bottom up approach: The user determines needs and priorities.
- Community Participation: The community assumes defined responsibilities.
- Community Resources identified and utilised: The formal service supports and facilitates the community system.
- Continual assessment: Performance is continually monitored.

Section ii

Evaluation

Elaine Scallan

Evaluator

In February of this year I was invited by Zachary Johnson and Brenda Molloy to take part in an evaluation of the Community Mothers Programme. The study involved contacting all the mothers who took part in an evaluation of the Programme when it first began in 1990 and asking them to complete a questionnaire. The purpose of this was to see whether the



All the mothers had wonderful things to say about the programme



benefits of the Community Mothers Programme, which were evident at one year of age, was still applicable at eight years of age.

The study was carried out in Community Care Areas five, six, seven and eight. Difficulties were encountered in contacting all the women involved because of the



The study was carried out in Community Care Areas five, six, seven and eight



seven year gap. Many had moved soon after the initial evaluation, leaving no forwarding address. Of the 233 mothers who took part in the original study, 76 were eventually located and all agreed to be interviewed for the current study.

All of the mothers I interviewed had wonderful things to say about the Programme and the Community Mothers themselves. We expect to have completed the report by the summer of 1998.



We expect to have the report completed by the Summer 1998



Section iii

*Director &
Secretary's Reports*

Brenda Molloy
Director

The Community Mothers Programme links the skills of Family Development Nurses with the skills and commitment of experienced mothers known as Community Mothers. The home visiting strategy, on which it is based, has achieved a great deal of success. The World Health Organisations goals of returning control of health back to the community is becoming a reality through the work of the Programme.



*It has been
another good year*



It has been another good year. Our resource allocation in 1997 enabled us to maintain the overall Programme at the 1996 level of operation and individual Programmes performed well. The Community Mothers continued to serve their communities so successfully as in years past and they have been involved in a wide range of health promoting activities including women's health, children's health, nutrition and safety and accident prevention. Thirteen hundred parents including fifty Traveller parents received monthly home support visits from Community Mothers and Family Development Nurses this year.



*We have become
accustomed to less
spectacular gains*



Within existing resources it was possible to deliver on most of our priorities. Accordingly the working group continued to meet and develop Programme materials. The fieldwork for the seven year follow-up study on the parents who took part in the 1989 evaluation study was completed.

A cartoon on important information for women about folic acid and Spinia Bifida was completed and is now in use in the Programme. The Traveller Evaluation was published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Public Health. A number of training events refreshed our spirits particularly in view of the intensive nature of the work. There has been a big demand on our energy and skills and there was a need for replenishment to keep optimum effectiveness.



*The Community
Mothers have been involved
in a wide range of
health promoting activities*



Information on the Programme was disseminated in many ways this year by presentations at seminars and conferences, through the media, visitors days, reports, publications and by the facilitating students of various disciplines.

Some of the Family Development Nurses experienced difficulties recruiting Community Mothers this year. I would be reluctant to identify this development as an emerging trend and hope it is just

a temporary problem.

This year has seen the regeneration of the Programme. We have taken time to reflect and shifted the focus as necessary to take into account changes in Irish society for example more mothers returning to work.

We have become accustomed to less spectacular gains and while there are fewer opportunities for further innovation there is still more possible momentum in a number of areas for example the Traveller Programme.

I would like to thank all who contributed to the success of the Programme this year, and welcome new members.



Fionnuala Kinsella
Secretary

This is my second year as Programme Secretary. The time seems to have flown by.

This year has been extremely busy in the Programme. The Programme seems to be growing in strength and numbers as the years go on. We had a lot of enquiries during the year from people who had heard about the Programme and who wanted to find out more about it and also how they could get involved. I lost count of the number of information packs I sent out during the year.



*This is my second
year as
Programme Secretary*



The publication for the Annual Report for 1996 was delayed this year due to the fact that I was out on sick leave.

A number of training events were held in Park House during the year.

We had our usual Visitors Days with people coming from different parts of the world.



*We had our usual
Visitors Days*



I enjoyed the Christmas lunch with the Family Development Nurses and Brenda in December. It is not very often that I get to meet all the nurses together in a group. Unfortunately I couldn't make this year's Christmas Party for the Programme but I heard it was a great success. Everyone seemed to enjoy it.

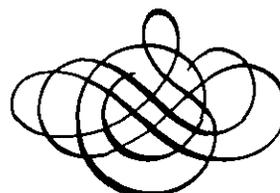


*It was lovely to
meet the
Community mothers
and Parents in
the different areas*



I also went out to some of the Groups e.g. Parent and Toddler Groups, etc. with Brenda this year. It was lovely to meet the Community Mothers and Parents in the different areas and it was nice to get out of the office environment for a while.

I have enjoyed typing up this year's Annual Report. I hope to see you all in the near future. Keep up the good work.



Section iv

*Reports from Family
Development Nurses*

Deirdre Barry

Family Development Nurse
Community Care Areas 1&10

1997 was a challenging year for all involved in the Community Mothers Programme. The emergence of the *Celtic Tiger* gave many mothers, both young and experienced, a chance of employment or of joining various training courses. Both of these options have been readily taken up.

This had consequences for the Programme. The pool of experienced mothers available to volunteer as Community Mothers has diminished. Therefore a lot more effort has to be directed towards recruiting.

There are seventeen Community Mothers now in Areas 1 and 10. Great credit is due to all those Community Mothers who put in tremendous effort and who gave of their time whilst visiting in their community. I wish to thank each one of them.

Those who work on the Programme are aware of the powerful support it gives. One Programme mother said:

" It was a life-saver in the beginning when the baby had colic. I found the support very helpful. The cartoons were simple, practical and usable. I take them out often to remind me how to deal with things. The craft ideas were good too. The Programme gave me a ray of hope".

Promotion of Breastfeeding/ Programme

I visit the ante-natal outreach clinic weekly at St Colmcille's

Hospital where ante-natal mothers attend. I give information on breastfeeding to individual mums-to-be, answer queries and give the times of the Eastern Health Board's Breast Feeding Support Groups in the vicinity.

The midwives are very pleased with the Community Mothers involvement. I also take the opportunity to distribute information on the Community Mothers Programme.

Group Meetings

Monthly meetings are held with both groups in Areas 1 and 10. These are enjoyed by all and help to promote support between Community Mothers while encouraging discussion, of the Programme philosophy and methodology.

We look forward to another challenging year in 1998. May I wish all Community Mothers fulfilment and happy visiting.



Margaret O Donovan

Family Development Nurse
Community Care Area 2

This past year has seen greater change in the Programme in Area 2 than it has in any time since its inception in the mid-eighties. Almost an entire change of Community Mother volunteers has taken place. Eleven Community Mothers left the Programme for reasons as diverse as returning to work, engaging in further education or due to increased family commitments. Twelve new Community Mothers

were successfully recruited and trained.

Despite the changes in Community Mothers, five hundred and ten Programme visits were accomplished, seventy seven new families accepted the Programme, forty two completed at least one years Programme visiting and forty one families withdrew having received between one and seven Programme visits prior to withdrawal. The main reasons for withdrawal were a return to work, moving from the area or the Community Mother leaving. Twenty-six breastfeeding Mothers received support visits of which one hundred and sixty two were accomplished

To further support the Community Mothers as well as the monthly one-on-one with the Family Development Nurse, two monthly groups support session were offered. At these sessions some health promotion aspects of our work were further explained and necessary updating of information exchanged. This was further enhanced by the Community Mothers offering relevant health promotion material and visits to their Programme families during the nationally designated health awareness weeks, such as Healthy Eating Week, National Breastfeeding Week and Dental Care Week.

At the September '97 group support group meeting, a suggested agenda for each Community Mother in her own local area was to raise the awareness of the Programme amongst young families and communities through local

networking between existing community groups. This initiative is hoped to have a two pronged effect, one in recruiting new Community Mothers and the other in raising the awareness of the existence of the Programme, which may facilitate the Community Mothers as they offer the Programme to new families. This local awareness can never be taken as "a known thing", as the demography of the areas change.

As we look forward to the challenges and changes of 1998, I extend my gratitude to all twenty six Community Mothers involved in the Programme in this area this past year.



Aine Mooney

Family Development Nurse
Community Care Area 3

This is my first Annual Report for the Community Mothers Programme, which was restarted in Community Care Area 3 in May 97.

I have been very fortunate to have had the generous support of Helena Kennedy who has previously been a Community Mother in the area. Helena has rejoined the Community Mothers Programme and has been very helpful in passing on her valued experiences as a Community Mother. Thank you Helena.

Having initially recruited twenty-one potential Community Mothers and then watched their departure as one by one they either gained employment, commenced FAS - sponsored community employment schemes

or other courses, I realised my main difficulty would be recruiting suitable Community Mothers.

There is great competition for volunteers in the area due to the launching of many necessary Social Services manned by volunteers in response to community needs.

As 1997 drew to a close, I felt I had been taking one step forwards and two steps backwards. Simultaneously, I have found that through my involvement with the Programme and the Community Mothers and the patient orientation by Brenda Molloy, I have learned and continued to grow in knowledge and awareness of the philosophy and the potential for empowerment which this programme facilitates.

The Community Mothers Programme is to be extended to designated areas of Rathfarnham in 1998. My base and the core Programme will remain in South Earl Street Centre catchment area.

I envisage the Community Mothers Programme growing from strength to strength in 1998. The groundwork done, as well as the networking, advertising, liaising, listening and learning despite the many problems, not least of which are drug abuse and unemployment, will cause the community to reap the rewards of a thriving Community Mothers Programme. This will be entirely due to the enthusiastic commitment of the Community Mothers who have taken its philosophy on board and who

have without fail continued their programme visits despite various difficulties.

The joyful and empowering rapport which I am witnessing develop between Community Mothers and Programme families has been so motivating and energising for all of us.

"The journey has only begun".

I wish to thank Brenda Molloy, Programme Director, for her support and encouragement. Also Fionnuala Kinsella, Programme Secretary, for helping me to get started in Area 3.

I also wish to thank the Public Health Nurses in South Earl Street for the warm welcome they gave me and for their continued support and assistance.

Many thanks also to Superintendent Public Health, Nurse, Ann Flynn, and Mary McDermott, Senior Public Health Nurse, and all the clerical staff in Carnegie Centre.

But a very special thanks to the Community Mothers in Area 3 who have put their all into getting the Programme started - Helena, Debbie, Esther and Lisa, and a very warm welcome to those who will soon be joining them on completing the initial training.



Florence Burns

Family Development Nurse
Community Care Area 4

Some time ago I worked abroad and it was during this time that I came to appreciate the value of

mothers helping other mothers within their own community. So when the Family Development Nurse position became available, I knew I would like it. However it is not an easy decision to make, because I was very happy in my old position at Curlew Road Health Centre. I enjoyed working with my colleagues there, and having been in the area for over two years I had developed some very positive relationships with the clients. I knew I would miss them. However, I made my decision to join the Programme and I have spent the last two months adjusting to that.

The training sessions at Park House were very challenging and further re-enforced my belief in the philosophy of the Programme. The individual sessions with the Community Mothers have been very stimulating. Their energy, experience and genuine concern for their fellow-mothers have been encouraging to witness. In December, I offered the Programme to two families. The information is implanted in a non-threatening way and the new mothers were very keen to receive it.

There is quite a lot to take on at first, getting to know the Community Mothers (this process was speeded up by a very enjoyable night at the Christmas Party) learning the 'nuts and bolts' of the system, visiting families myself with the Programme, and recruiting new Community Mothers and training them. But this process has been made easy by all the help that is available to me. This includes Brenda Molloy and Fionnuala Kinsella in Park House, Miss

Walsh, the Superintendent Public Health Nurse, who has encouraged me; Mary and Barbara in Tallaght; all my Family Development Nurse colleagues and the Community Mothers in Drimnagh who were very welcoming to me. To you all I want to say a big 'Thank You', and I look forward to working with you in 1998.



Mary Reid

Family Development Nurse
Area 4

I could describe this year 1997 as one of learning and sharing. Through our group meetings and by invitation, several people met with the Community Mothers and myself. Michelle Hinds, Drug Addiction Counsellor, discussed the issue of Drug Awareness with the group. Contrary to the popular media and some people's perception, the drug abused mostly by young and old is alcohol. A lively and interesting discussion ensued.

Mary Conlon Public Health Nurse, specialist in incontinence management, emphasised the importance and necessity of pelvic floor exercises for new mothers, older mothers and young grannies. Mary stressed a very serious subject in a light-hearted manner. This is very valuable information especially for the new mother we meet on the Programme.

Patricia Quinn and Fiona Nolan from the Lone Parents Network Tallaght gave a talk on their organisation and how fragmented

services can be on the community for lone parents. When one is rearing children with no partner, accessing information and entitlements can be difficult. Lone Parents Network are a support system where one is not left alone.

During the month of May all the Community Mothers from Tallaght visited the Cherish headquarters in Pembroke Street. We had a tour of the building and saw a video of their present involvement with single mothers. We met some of the parents using the crèche facilities and the computer room. It is so much easier to speak of an organisation when you can see and feel the atmosphere for oneself. One of our Programme mothers is presently attending a course in Cherish.

During our summer, we had a morning workshop lead by Joan McCluskey, a psychotherapist. Joan described the different ways of listening and we had some practical experience of listening skills. I shall always remember Graffe Listening. This is when ones heart is so far away from one's ears, that the negatives one hears should not result in an emotional response which can be anger. As the saying goes 'don't take it to heart'. I try to remember it when necessary.

I have commenced visiting the Travellers on the halting site beside the County Council offices. Presently I am visiting two families and there is a report in the Travellers section.

Bernadette and Margaret have a report on the Parent and Toddler

Group in the relevant section. Many thanks to them for their dedication and also for providing crèche facilities for parents participating in the Kilnamanagh courses.

Jean Walsh did office support work during my holidays and has described her experience in that section.

Many thanks to Annette Kinsella, Tedda Sheehan, Catrina Coady, Mary McKay, Patricia Gray, Deirdre McCarthy and Bridie Geary for their enthusiasm and the support given to me and the Programme Families. The Community Mothers Programme is reliant on a team effort.

Finally a renewed appreciation to Brenda Molloy and Fionnuala Kinsella in Park House. I thank all the nursing and administrative staff in Area 4. Miss C Walsh, Superintendent Public Health Nurse, Senior Public Health Nurses, my colleagues and the clerical staff in Old County Road I appreciate all your help in 1997. I look forward to a new and exciting year.



Barbara Goldsmith
Family Development Nurse
Area 4

The Community Mothers Programme thrived in Tallaght during 1997. There is a great deal of growth and development in the area. There are excellent opportunities for training and employment for women.

This year, two new Health Centres have been built in

Brookfield and Killinarden and we are hoping for a new centre in Jobstown. This will be of great benefit to local parents who currently travel to Millbrook Lawns to visit their Health Centre. The new Tallaght Hospital is due to open next year and this will be of great benefit to the whole community.

This year I received a great deal of positive feedback from the Public Health Nurses about Community Mothers visiting families in 'their' area. I pass this on to the relevant Community Mothers who find it very encouraging. Programme parents comment at the evaluation visit that they enjoy the Programme's useful tips and information, but it's the visit and the visitor they enjoy most. Community Mothers helped parents through many crisis situations this year such as relationship difficulties, post natal depression, stress when a baby is ill and coping with single-parent hood.

The Parent and Toddler Group is busy every Thursday morning at Rathminton Clinic. "Well Done to Maire for all her hard work". There is another group being set up in Old Bawn. This is much needed in the area as many mums suffer isolation and loneliness following the birth of their first baby. The Parent and Toddler Group provides friendship, opportunities for enhancing bonding through play and a welcome morning cup of tea!

This year there was an increase in the number of women breastfeeding. The Community Mothers support them at home

with extra visits and we encourage them to come to the Breast-Feeding Support Group. Marie sees pregnant mums at the outreach antenatal clinics and offers support on infant feeding. This has helped some new mums to choose breastfeeding. She also offers antenatal visits at home and this helps the parents to make an informed choice on infant feeding.

"Thank you to all the Community Mothers who stayed this year and welcome to the new Community Mothers who joined us". All the Community Mothers who left this year are in paid employment. There was great commitment and enthusiasm this year and the Community Mothers went to great lengths to get their visits done. We enjoyed our summer lunch at the Spawell and the excellent Christmas Party at Dr. Steevens Hospital.

Thank you Brenda for your encouragement and enthusiasm; also Miss Walsh and my Public Health Nurse colleagues for your continuing support; and Mary Glennon and staff at Dr. Steevens for their administrative help and friendly encouragement.

Congratulations to Jackie Kelly on the birth of her sixth child. Well done!



Ann Savage

Family Development Nurse
Community Care Area 5

1997 was a busy and challenging year. The Community Mothers continue to visit about 100 families with enthusiasm and

commitment. Last year, five Community Mothers left all of them to take up employment. We thank them and wish them well. Six new Community Mothers have joined the Programme and it never ceases to amaze me that each new Community Mother adds new dimensions through her personal approach to the Programme while still working within the same philosophy and structure.

There is still a very low rate of breastfeeding in the area. The Bawnogue Group was well attended during the year, but despite the enthusiasm of Cathy and Karen, the numbers attending the Neilstown Group have been disappointing. We hope that this will change as our antenatal visiting rate has improved slightly.

The Parent and Toddler Group in Bawnogue is thriving with 15-20 parents attending weekly. Once again, thanks to Liz and Deirdre for their diligence.

Some of the most heartening aspects of the Programme is the building of friendships, support and communication throughout the community that, without the Community Mothers would otherwise not have developed. I would especially like to thank all of the Community Mothers and my colleagues who supported the Programme throughout the year.



Teresa Keegan
Family Development Nurse
Area 6

It was a successful year in this Area. The targets we reached in

1996 have been maintained. All Community Mothers offer the Programme to parents and visit ante-natally. All Community Mothers operate within the philosophy and methodology of the Programme.

Parent and Toddler Groups

We still have four groups and the local school, St. Brigid's has requested a fifth group. I am looking into this. Each group requires time, resources and commitment. I feel that this is the way forward as parents and toddlers gain a lot from their groups. There have been positive outcomes and benefits to families who participate in the groups.

Ante-Natal Visits

The antenatal visiting has increased. I speak each week with the mums-to-be attending the Rotunda Clinic in Wellmount Health Centre. Approximately 10-20 attend each week.

Breast Feeding Support

Ann Bradley, who facilitates the Group, has written her own report. Breastfeeding is doing well in Area 6. This is due to the commitment and dedication of the new mothers, the Community Mothers and the Public Health Nurses in Finglas. It has been very hard work but together we have increased the number of mothers who start breastfeeding. Also we have mothers continuing to breastfeed for one year. Two mothers have breastfed into the second year and one mother into the third year.

Meetings

We have monthly meetings in the Community Mothers' own homes

with five to seven mothers attending each group.

I have two monthly meetings in Park House with the Director, Brenda Molloy and the Family Development Nurses.

I also have meetings in Park House with the facilitators of the Breastfeeding Support Groups and with the Family Development Nurses and Community Mothers working with the Travellers. Brenda also visits me locally on a two monthly basis.

Social Events

The Finglas and Ballymun Community Mothers joined for Summer Lunch and Brenda Molloy and Mary Glennon attended. Eighteen Community Mothers from Finglas received certificates from Brenda.

The Christmas Party was more of a success this year. The disco appears to have pleased most of the Community Mothers.

I would like to thank the following: The past and present Community Mothers of Finglas and the Public Health Nurses for their constant support and help; Mr O' Shaughnessy, Chief Librarian, and the staff of Finglas Library, Mr McCarthy, Principal of St. Malachy's National School; and Marion Farrelly, School Liaison Officer of St Kevin's National School, for their help and the rooms which they make available for the Parent and Toddler Groups; Brenda Molloy and all the Family Development Nurses for their support to me and also, Miss Weir, the Superintendent Public Health Nurse. Finally, my thanks to

Sylvia Jenkinson and the clerical staff and Lisa in Community Care Area 6.



Bernie Rooney

Family Development Nurse
Community Care Area 7

1997 was a successful year for the Programme in Ballymun. The motivation and commitment of the Community Mothers has enabled us to reach our targets and make a tangible contribution to our community. We continue to visit 120-140 families per month. We visit (i) antenatal women, (ii) new-born infants, (iii) children to the age of two years, (iv) breastfeeding mothers and (v) families of Travellers.

Breast Feeding Support

Breastfeeding continues to be popular. Mothers now choose to breastfeed for longer and often breastfeed until the baby is aged 12 - 18 months.

Our fortnightly groups have been well attended. The home visits, where information is exchanged between the Community Mothers and the breastfeeding mothers, remain the most popular.

We continue to lend breast-pumps and these are vital in many cases as they often facilitate the mother to breastfeed for longer.

Our strategy to increase our breastfeeding rate remains unchanged. We target antenatal women with the help of videos and leaflets but most importantly by word of mouth. We give them

information on the advantages of breast milk/breastfeeding for the babies and themselves.

The Mother and Toddler Group

This group has done very well meeting weekly in the Women's Resource Centre. The children play and learn and the mothers exchange ideas on local issues and mothering.

We continue to have a health education input e.g. Topics include guidelines on meningitis, first aid, information on dealing with pyrexial infants in the hope that these will be reduced.

The toy library is a great success. Our Christmas Party, and the very welcome arrival of Santa was the highlight of the year.

Travellers

Our visits to St Margaret's campsite continue. The site has been completely revamped and this has made a huge difference to the self-esteem of the Travellers. They now have service bays for the caravans and an excellent community centre. Two Community Mothers Siobhan Ormond and Rachel Cullen visit twenty travelling families with me. We really enjoy our visits as they really make us very welcome.

We hope to commence a Parent and Toddler Group there this year.

I completed my Community Addiction Study Course organised by Youth Action Project in Ballymun. It was very interesting. My choice of project was The Effect of Heroin Addiction on the Expectant

Mother, her Unborn Baby and Infant. I chose this as Heroin addicted mothers were receiving the Programme, and we needed further information on it.

The big event of the year was the appearance of Siobhan Ormond, Tina Mullen and myself on live television. We appeared for fifteen minutes on "P.M. Live" with Mary Kennedy. She interviewed us on the philosophy of the Programme and implementation of the Programme in Ballymun. It was a rather nerveracking experience, but it went very well and the response was positive.

We also gave a talk on the Community Mothers Programme to the nursing degree students in Dublin City University.

Meetings in Park House

Brenda Molloy, our Director and the team of Family Development Nurses meet twice monthly in Park House. These are interesting ongoing training sessions. This year we had great speakers discussing "The Childcare Act", "Teambuilding" and "Group Dynamics".

We continue our Breastfeeding Support Group meetings for Community Mothers who specialise in breastfeeding support. These are invaluable for exchanging ideas, dealing with problems and offering solutions.

Visitors Day

The Ballymun group co-facilitated the Visitor's Day on Wednesday on the 24th of September with Brenda Molloy. The visiting group were from Cork and had

many questions regarding the Programme.

Re-development of Ballymun

Dublin Corporation now plans the regeneration of Ballymun and people are very excited at the prospect. It is planned that several of the tower blocks will be demolished and that newly built houses will be available for local tenants.

I wish to thank the following for their dedication and support during the year: The Community Mothers in Ballymun, The Womens Resource Centre, The staff and volunteers in Geraldstown House, Ms Brenda Molloy, Director of the Programme, and Shelia O' Malley, Superintendent Public Health Nurse, Area 7.



Maire Bolger

Family Development Nurse
Area 8

1997 was a busy year for the Community Mothers and myself in Area 8. There continues to be a big turnover of Community Mothers but the ones who continue in the Programme are a great asset with the dedication and enthusiasm which they bring.

Parent and Toddler Group

The Parent and Toddler Group is a great success. It is held on a Monday morning for the local young mums. They are always prepared for any social events like celebrations and birthdays of both mothers and toddlers. In

the Summer, we went to Malahide Castle playground for, our summer picnic. At Hallowe'en, we had a fancy dress party and Santa visited with presents for everyone at Christmas.

In the Summer we also took part in the third Coolock Arts Week. We designed a Celtic Snake for the children to walk underneath. After our previous experience of getting wet last year we thought that this would protect the children from any rain. However fellow participants were not as well prepared and pulled out, leaving ourselves and a few others to do a mini-parade around the Stardust Park to the Glin Centre.

Breast Feeding Support Group

The Breast Feeding Group was also a great success with a couple of mothers continuing to feed successfully after returning to work. One mum named Debbie takes a half day's holiday each month in order to continue to attend the group. We have a few mums attending from other areas who got our contact number from the Rotunda or Holles Street Hospitals. We were also invited to talk at the Association of Lactation Consultants of Ireland Study Day in the Rotunda Hospital in September on Supporting Breast Feeding in disadvantaged areas.

Traveller Visits

Noreen Mitchell continues to visits the Travellers in Cara Park and Grove Lane. She visited twelve families last year and also does ante-natal visits. She links up with the Mobile Clinic from time to time and informs the

families when it will be visiting the site.

We seem to be spreading a bit more every year with new estates 'erupting' like Clare Hall. The new motorway gives me easier access to Donaghmede and Baldoyle and which is developing well and also to the Travellers at Cara Park.

At the end of the year, the Christmas Party was enjoyed by everyone. Thanks for all the commitment given by all Community Mothers and best wishes for 98.



Martina O Kelly
Family Development Nurse
Community Care Area 9

I joined the Community Mothers Programme in November. My predecessor, Ruby Johnson, will be 'a hard act to follow'.

I am originally from Sligo and have lived in Kildare for the last three years. Having worked previously in the area was of immense benefit because I knew the geographical area and many people here.

The Community Mothers in the area were a great support to me and I feel we are all learning new ways and information together, to the benefit of parents, the Programme and ourselves. It is the Community Mothers who make this Programme possible. Their contribution to other parents makes a significant difference to parenting skills, support for mothers and the

sharing of up-to-date information about health, nutrition, safety and child development. It is health promotion and education in a natural environment.

In my opinion the beauty of the Programme is that it is voluntary and this helps to maintain the non-threatening, non-directive partnership that influences change at 'grass-root' level. Everyone involved in the Programme gains but not financially. Although they may not know exactly what they hope to gain when they start, they develop individually as the programme progresses.

As a Family Development Nurse, I appreciate the teams I work closely with, Brenda and my Family Development Nurse colleagues are an inspiration. Our belief in the Programme, its challenges, influences and achievements are common ideals, which link us together.

There are many challenges to be met by the Programme in Kildare, Newbridge, Naas and the Curragh. I look forward to the year ahead and to being part of the Community Mothers team. I wish to thank all those who make this Programme possible, those who are presently involved and those who will join in the year ahead.

It is our initial efforts that make the difference. The accumulation of little things that becomes something big. At a time when family dynamics are changing so dramatically I am glad to be part of a team that nurtures and supports family development.

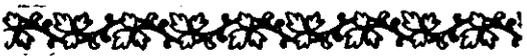
Section v

*Reports from Breastfeeding
& Ante-natal Support Groups*

Breastfeeding Support Area 7

My name is Nuala. I have three boys and one girl. My boys are 10 years, 7 years and 6 years old. My little girl is 6 months old. I never breastfed my boys, so I decided to breastfeed this time as it was my last baby. I breastfed Amber for 5 ½ months and am still feeding her at night. Both Amber and I took to breastfeeding like a duck to water. I found it extremely relaxing and fulfilling and so did Amber. I went back to work a few months after each of the boys was born but I feel that breastfeeding has created a much stronger bond between myself and Amber than I have ever had with the boys, so I don't feel the urge to go back to work just yet. The boys also thought the breastfeeding was great and found it very interesting that milk came from my breasts. When I gave up during the day I found I got slightly agitated and missed the comfort of it. I would encourage any woman to try breastfeeding as I found it less stressful and more beneficial to both Amber and myself than bottle-feeding. If I were to have ten more children I would breastfeed them all.

Nuala
Parent
Area 7



Breastfeeding Support Group Area 7

This year has been the best year for breastfeeding and ante-natal visits. Bernie Rooney, Family Development Nurse, and I have been facilitating the Breast

Feeding Group. The discussions vary from week to week. We encourage the ante-natal mothers to come along and to see other mothers breastfeeding their babies and see how discrete it is. With ante-natal mothers we try to guide them on how to hold their babies and position them. We do this by using a doll or one of the mothers attending may show them. It is also great that mothers who live in Ballymun who are breastfeeding can come together twice a month and that the numbers attending and breastfeeding have increased.

We also call to the homes to see how the mothers are doing. We have two electric breast pumps and also some hand pumps and videotapes on breastfeeding topics. These are continuously in circulation, which is good news.

We attended a very interesting talk by Professor Howie of the University of Dundee in Holles Street Hospital this year. He informed us that breastfeeding improves the child's immune system until the age of seven years. We also manned a stand in the Rotunda to mark World Breastfeeding Week.

Tina Mullen
Community Mother
Area 7



Breastfeeding Support Group Area 8

The year 1997 saw a good strong Group with many mothers attending regularly. Their camaraderie set this year apart from all others. This was a positive affirmation for all the efforts of our Family Development

Nurse, Maire Bolger, and the Community Mothers. Many years we spent with only one or two expectant mums, giving each one our individual attention and back-up at home. With the increased numbers we had only limited time to deal with each mother, yet the Group did thrive and flourish and the mothers collectively were more successful at breastfeeding. The support they gained from each other made an immense difference.

Perhaps our isolation as breastfeeding mums is the greatest problem. The fact that this year the mothers felt part of a movement made them feel more normal and less the 'oddball' or 'crank' rejecting bottlefeeding. The mothers finally understood and felt proud rather than ashamed.

We learned about 'Returning to work' from Geraldine, Deirdre and Debbie and how smoothly it can go. Some mothers have incredible supplies of milk and are delighted to combine feeding with work. Once the routine is established, it 'swims' along. Great friendships were made between the most unlikely combinations. For example Grainne, our artistic single mother, who, at the age of eighteen, was able to give great support to Mandy, a mother of seven! Mandy ended up continuing to breastfeed for an extra six months.

Rebecca, with her premature Luke and dreadful problems, has been an example to all of us. She fed Luke through a tube attached to her finger after expressing. The new mums learned that

where there is a will there is a way. Many mothers had the archetypal mother-in-law to deal with and her often incorrect advice. Friends with correct advice truly do support you when you're going 'against the tide'.

In addition, Marie organised a talk from a dietician on 'Weaning'. Weaning often gives us great concern. A representative from Baby Matters came along to give us a baby massage session. Sessions like these complement our interest in breastfeeding as we have a holistic approach to the well-being and parenting of our children.

Hopefully, our Group will continue to blossom and grow in 1998, and we shall continue to learn more from the mothers and develop our own "Old wives tales" which we can look back on and pass on to the next generation of mothers in Area 8.

Lisa Ryan
Community Mother
Area 8



Breastfeeding Support Group Area 6

My name is Ann Bradley. I am a Community Mother in Area 6.

Teresa Keegan, Family Development Nurse, and I are available every Wednesday morning from 11.00am to 12.30pm in Wellmount Health Centre to give support and information to mothers who are breastfeeding and to mothers who want information. We also do

ante-natal visits and give mums-to-be information on breastfeeding. I feel a lot of young mums are really giving breastfeeding a good try.

Since the time the Group started there has been a huge increase in the number of breastfeeding mothers. If a mother needs help or support at any time, they just have to phone Teresa or myself. I really feel the Group has been a great success in 1997 for breastfeeding mothers.

Ann Bradley

Community Mother

Area 6

**Breastfeeding Support Group
Area 9**

February 1998 will, at last, see the starting up of a Breastfeeding Support Group for Newbridge and the surrounding area. I have looked forward to being involved with this exciting project for a long time now and I really hope the wait will have been worthwhile. I feel it is very important to offer as much support to breastfeeding mothers as possible.

We have a team of three to facilitate the meetings. There is of course, firstly, Martina O Kelly, our Family Development Nurse, whom I would like to take this opportunity to welcome as she has only been with us for the last few months and is already doing a wonderful job. Secondly, there is Ann O Reilly, our Public Health Nurse, who has two children and is an experienced breastfeeder herself, and thirdly, there is myself, a Community Mother with plenty of breast feeding

experience, having spent almost seven years of my life feeding my four children.

At the moment we are putting up posters in relevant places and advertising to let pregnant women and breastfeeding mums know we are here to support them. Anne does great work in reminding her colleagues to tell all new mums of our existence. So with the amount of commitment and enthusiasm we have in our facilitators I hope to be able to report a great success by this time next year.

Kitty Ryan

Community Mother

Area 9



**Breastfeeding Support
Area 6**

My name is Paula. I have two children. When I was pregnant with my son now aged five, I was determined to breastfeed.

I went along to all my ante-natal classes and found them very helpful. I read every book I could get my hands on and I found the information very valuable when I had my baby.

I was nervous, like most new mums. My baby didn't take to breast-feeding straight away. It took almost three days for him to get the hang of it. I was upset and I almost gave up. I tormented the nurses until we succeeded. The problem was that he just was not 'latching on'. I was so proud that we made it.

When I came home from hospital I had the usual problems with

sore nipples. I did not know about the Breastfeeding Support Group at that time but I found it an excellent facility and I now encourage mothers to go whenever I can.

When I had my little girl, now two, I felt more relaxed and confident and established a routine more quickly. I am proud to say I am still breastfeeding her.

I couldn't imagine bottle-feeding as breastfeeding is very rewarding and less hassle and I try to encourage as many mothers as I can to breastfeed.

I would like to thank my sisters, all four of them, who gave me great encouragement and support.

Paula Hughes
Programme Parent
Area 6



Breastfeeding Support Area 5

Over the past year many Breastfeeding Support visits were carried out and there were also a lot of phone calls. The majority of these calls were about either sore nipples or increased frequency of nursing.

Over the summer months we were able to hold our weekly meetings in Bawnogue thanks to being able to use the crèche for the older children who were on their school holidays. Many thanks to Ann who was able to arrange this for us again this year. The members of the Group were delighted to be able to

attend for on-going support. We have five or six who come each week and another five who attend quite regularly. We also have women who drop in occasionally to discuss difficulties, which arise or just to enjoy the atmosphere. A lot of women have told me that the Group is the one place they feel totally able to relax and breastfeed their babies. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be any improvement in the perceived public reaction to breastfeeding in public places.

Among the various topics raised at the meetings were; "Continuing breastfeeding while going on holiday", (we all agreed it made life easier - no worries about the possibility of contaminated water, etc., as well as being a sure-fire method of calming a fractious infant's upset caused by a changed routine and environment), "Combining working and breastfeeding", "Introducing solids", etc.

We continued meeting weekly in Neilstown during July as we were able to use the crèche of Ronanstown Women's Group free of charge but, unfortunately, they close during August and, while the Christy Melia House welcomes infants in arms, older children are not usually permitted for insurance reasons. After a quiet time we have three first time mothers in the area. All of these mothers received breastfeeding support visits and are enthusiastic about the group. Two of them are young single girls (both 16) and the other is a refugee from Zaire.

We have noticed that while the number of breastfeeding mothers

attending the Groups has not increased, the mothers who either attend or receive Support visits are breastfeeding a lot longer. This would seem to indicate that support is not only important for the early months but also later in the nursing relationship, particularly when breastfeeding continues beyond the perceived 'norm'. It takes a lot of confidence to combat the negative reactions often received from friends and family. The support of other nursing mothers who know what it's like is really invaluable for your morale.

In September I started working part-time while my children are in school and so Karen is facilitating both Groups. I hope that the Groups will continue to grow with their own momentum and even though I am no longer directly involved, I will always be

there to offer whatever support and encouragement I can. I wish the very best of luck and success in the future to the many wonderful people I met through the Group, both locally and in the wider network of the Programme. A special word of thanks goes to Ann Savage whose hard work and friendly determination has been an inspiration, to Brenda Molloy for her ability to guide people in the right direction, to Shelia, Maureen, and all the nurses in the Clinics for their unflagging support of breastfeeding and a final work of thanks goes to Karen, who I would never have met but for the Group and who has proved to be a loyal and true friend in good times and bad,

Thanks for everything.

Cathy Donnelly
Community Mother
Area 5



**Christmas Party
Breastfeeding Support Group Area 8**

Section vi

*Reports from the
Traveller-Initiative*

Traveller Report from Area 5

I visited up to ten families in 1997. The majority of the families on the Programme are doing very well. We covered a lot of issues this year. Some of the families I have been visiting for a couple of year. These families are doing extremely well. Most of the families would have taken on board at least one idea from the Programme. For example, two of the families I visit would have lot of books for their children and they would have contact with the children's school. Others would see education as important. Others would see nutrition as important and others development. They would all have got something from the Programme.

One of the mothers I am visiting is expecting twins. Her husband takes her two girls out for an hour each morning so she can get a rest. A number of the Traveller women are doing courses. Two of the mothers would like to do something in the line of work. I think that the lack of crèche facilities and transport prevents the Traveller women from working.

The Travellers are always glad to see me. They usually come up with ideas themselves. I always remind them they have what is takes and are the experts with their own children and I am only there to support them in any changes they want to make with their children.

I would say in another ten years there will be huge changes for the better in the Travelling community.

I look forward to that day.

Christine O Toole
Community Mother
Area 5



Traveller Report Area 7

At the start of this year our visits to the Travellers were strange. The Travellers were moving in and out of St Margaret's site at an alarming rate. The original site was being revamped and the Travellers had to move to a temporary site nearby or move away.

The families we were visiting were welcoming, but often missing on our next visit. Sometimes a new family had moved in and so we spent a lot of time searching for families. However, now that the new service site has opened, we don't know ourselves.

The women are very happy with the parking bays and utility room. Their morale has been greatly boosted and they are very welcoming to use.

We now have twenty Travellers on the programme and we are visiting three ante-natal women. Due to the expansion in the number of Travellers we are visiting, we have been joined by Rachel Cullen who I would like to welcome. We are hoping to start a Parent and Toddler Group here in the summer.



Traveller Report Area 8

1997 was a good year for me in the Programme. I have been

visiting ten Traveller families in Cara Park, Grove Lane and St Dominics.

I am now visiting seven Programme families and three antenatal mums. The mother of two of the Travellers I visit is involved in the Traveller Health Project in Pavee Point.

One of the parents I visit and her one year old son were delighted when I recently took a teddy bear book on my visit. This little boy has a vision and hearing disability and has to use a hearing aid and wear glasses. His mum was delighted when he identified the teddy and dog in the book. She said she would now get him a book from Santa.

The older children always look for my crayons and jigsaw picture when I arrive. Some of them call me "Teacher" which I find amusing.

Sr. Marie, who is involved with the Travellers, recently suggested that I visit the training centre in the New Year so that I can meet other expectant Traveller women.

Marie, the Family Development Nurse, gives me the timetable for the visits of the Mobile Clinic to the sites. I am able to give the mums information on the days they can attend the clinic for weighing, immunisation and to talk to Therese, the nurse. From time to time I meet Therese myself at the Mobile Clinic and sometimes I also meet Maureen Quinn, the Public Health Nurse, when she visits.

I am looking forward to the New Year and to continuing my visits

and maybe increasing the number of ante-natal mums I visit.

Noreen Mitchell
Community Mother
Area 8



Traveller Report Area 4

I contacted Sr. Maud who is the visiting Public Health Nurse for the Travellers in the Tallaght area to introduce the Programme and myself to two selected families. Both families were interested in the uniqueness of the Programme and the material available especially the pictorial information.

I commenced visiting the Travellers in November 1997. One family has one infant and the second family have an infant and a toddler. The visits include many of the family members because everyone is curious when someone strange arrives at the halting site. I believe the experience has been positive for myself and the families, who enjoy describing what the new babies are doing and 'how they are so clever'.

Sr. Maud liases with me on a regular basis. This has helped me to communicate more effectively to the families as the difficulties experienced by Travellers are very different from those in the settled community.

Mary Reid
Family Development Nurse
Area 4

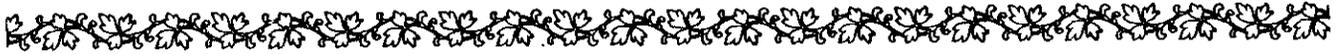
Traveller Report From Area 6

I have continued monthly Programme visits to six Traveller parents this year. Their commitment to, enthusiasm for and level of participation in the Programme has been heartening.

The informational social support and child development aspects of the Programme appear to have been of benefit to all the parents.

I hope to continue the Programme visits to these parents in 1998.

Brenda Molloy
Director



Section vii

*Reports from Parents
& Toddler Groups*

**Tallaght
Parent and Toddler Group**

The Parent and Toddler Group is going very well. We still meet in the Rathminton Clinic. We have a regular group of parents and children who come every Thursday morning.

The children who attend would range in age seven months to three years. One of our boys is attending the group before going to the Early Start Pre-school.

Jackie, who helps to run the Group with me and who is also a Community Mother, had a baby boy on January 8th. We are looking forward to having her back soon and hopefully she will bring Carl along too.

Marie Murray
Community Mother
Area 4



**Drimnagh
Parent and Toddler Group**

The group has been running since September 1996. We meet every Wednesday morning from 10.30am - 12.30pm in St John Bosco Youth Club, Davitt Road, Drimnagh.

We look forward to our cup of tea and a chat. The children enjoy playing. It is a great opportunity for them to mix and learn how to share. It is also a good opportunity to get the mums away from the house for a while and make new friends too.

We started out in a small room in another Centre in the Parish with

three mums, their children and a kettle. Since then the Drimnagh Group has grown in strength and numbers so much so that we have attracted people from Walkinstown, Harold's Cross and Inchicore.

Our Christmas Party was a great success. We had Santa pop in for a chat with the boys and girls and with presents for the children. We had twenty families attend the party this year. Some of the children have moved on to bigger things like playschool. It was great to see them all again.

I really enjoy my work with the Parent and Toddler Group. I have met a lot of great people and made a lot of good friends. In the beginning it was hard work trying to establish the Group in the community and now, thanks to the support of the committee of the St John Bosco Youth Club, we have a new home with kitchen facilities and the Group's future looks good.

Patricia McCann
Community Mother
Area 4



**Bawnogue
Parent and Toddler Group**

Bawnogue Parent and Toddler Group had another successful year. We continue to meet every Tuesday morning at 10.30am. We start with a cuppa in the reception area of our local Community Centre and then at 11am we head for the big hall. This works out very well as the hall affords plenty of space for the toddlers to run around if they

wish. We also have an area where the little ones can sit and play so all tastes are catered for.

In the Spring we ran an I.P.P.A. Course paid for by a grant we received from the Department of Social Welfare under the scheme for locally based Women's Groups. Some nineteen mothers successfully completed the course which included five Community Mothers, ten Programme mothers and four mothers who attended our Tuesday session.

Our Group continues to flourish. In September we lost some regulars as their children began playschool but since then they have been replaced by new members. We held a little informal meeting at the beginning of our break after the summer holidays to get some idea of what the mothers wanted. We encourage everyone to mix and regularly pass on information about different courses that are being held.

We ended 1997 with a lovely Christmas Party with a guest appearance by Santa. Our continued thanks to Ann Savage, our Family Development Nurse for her encouragement and support.

Deirdre Gargan
Elizabeth Myers
Community Mothers
Area 5



Finglas
Parent and Toddler Group

I am a Community Mother for the last nine years and I have been

running the Parent and Toddler Groups for the last seven years with the help of the other mothers.

We have for the last year been running a Parent and Toddler Group in St Kevin's Boy's School on Friday mornings but it is slow in picking up. We have a large classroom with plenty of toys for the toddlers to play with such as a slide, seesaw, trampoline, sand, prams, dolls, a kitchen unit and lots of other activities. There are two to three mothers some weeks and five toddlers but despite advertising, etc. we just can't get new members to attend but we will keep trying.

We also run a Parent and Toddler Group in Finglas Library and it is running very well.

I enjoy every moment of it - watching the toddlers growing up and making friends. Thanks to all the parents who attend, only for them it would not be a success.

Shirley Carroll
Community Mother
Area 6



Ballymun
Parent and Toddler Group

Our weekly sessions are well attended. However, in September, due to a few mothers getting places on Community Employment Schemes and two children joining Playschool we needed to recruit mothers to join. This we did by asking the Public Health Nurse and some Community Mothers to give



**Halloween Party
Parent and Toddler Group Area 8**



Parent and Toddler Group - Area 4



**Christmas Party
Parent and Toddler Group Area 7**



**Christmas Party
Parent and Toddler Group Area 6**



**Christmas Party
Parent and Toddler Group Area 8**



**Christmas Party
Parent and Toddler Group - Area 6**



Parent and Toddler Group Area 5



Parent and Toddler Group - Area 4

information to mothers about our Group. The mothers are often too shy to come by themselves and instead like to come with somebody on the first visit.

Our format is the same as always. All are welcome. Tea and doughnuts are the order of the day. We give orange juice or milk to the children. Then we have free play when possible, a group game such as dancing or doing exercises or a music session. Every session includes a number and rhyme session.

Bernie, the Family Development Nurse is also at the Group so we often discuss health problems or childhood illnesses. The morning flies by. The cleaning up is the least enjoyable side of it.

We had a great Christmas Party with the mothers enjoying Santa as much as the children.

Siobhan Ormond
Community Mother
Area 7



Coolock
Parent and Toddler Group

My name is Pauline Kavanagh and, along with Alison Purcell, we run the Parent and Toddler Group in Area 8.

The Group meets every Wednesday morning from 10.30am to 12.30pm. We have ten children who attend on a regular basis and really enjoy the activities such as painting, singing songs, story time, crafts, etc. The mums also enjoy the group as it gets them out of the

house and gives them a chance to meet with other mums, have a cuppa and a chat.

We all look forward to every Monday and hope we continue to do so for a long time to come.

Pauline Kavanagh
Community Mother
Area 8



Ballymun
Parent and Toddler Group

My Community Mother, Stella suggested that I join the Parent and Toddler Group.

I have found it to be useful for my child and myself in many ways. We both enjoy meeting other mothers and their children. My older child has been welcomed into the Group and is able to attend anytime he is not in school.

We all enjoyed the Christmas Party and the visit of Santa.

Grainne McSherry
Parent
Area 7



Kilnamanagh
Parent and Toddler Group

The Kilnamanagh Parent and Toddler Group continues to go from strength to strength. We meet every Tuesday morning in the local school. We have our own room, which is decorated very nicely and provides a comfortable atmosphere, which is

