



BALLYFERMOT STAR



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**Presentation**

**NACD Seminar**

**A Family Affair?**

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# Vision Statement



**Ballyfermot STAR is a community response to drug use**

**We provide non-judgemental support, guidance and education to drug users, their families and the community, enabling them to cope with and overcome the effects of drug use in their everyday lives.**



## Who does Ballyfermot STAR work with?

### **Individuals who are :**

Using illicit drugs e.g. heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, cannabis etc.

Abusing alcohol

Abusing prescribed medications including over the counter tablets.

Stable on methadone and connected to HSE services

Drug free needing aftercare support

### **We also work with:**

Family members including, parents, partners, siblings, grandparents and the children of our Substance misusers.



# Different Sections of Ballyfermot STAR at a Glance



**Realt Nua - Our Rehabilitation, Education and Training Section**

**Realt Na Clann - Our Family Support Services**

**Realt Beag – Our Child and Family Services**

**Realt Solus – Our Cocaine Initiative Programme**

**Realt Eolas – Our Entry/ Assessment Programme**



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# Interagency Work



**Interagency work is an essential part of the work in Ballyfermot STAR because it supports us to:**

- a) Enable our Service Users to access mainstream services**
- b) Develop progression paths for individuals and families**
- c) Develop protocols in order for individuals and families to move seamlessly through relevant agencies**
- d) Develop programmes that supports all of our work e.g. Strengthening Families.**
- e) Proactively working with all local and national agencies**



## Working From Evidence Based Programmes and Techniques



### **We offer a range of evidence based programmes and approaches these include:**

1. Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA)
2. Community Reinforcement Family Therapy (CRAFT)
3. Motivational Interviewing
4. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – “Reduce the use Programme”
5. HighScope Curriculum
6. Aistear and Siolta
7. Strengthening Families Programme
8. Hannen – You Make the Difference Programme
9. Incredible Years Programme
10. Key Working and Care Teams



## Why did Ballyfermot STAR develop an early learning centre

- In 2006 Ballyfermot STAR commissioned Dr. Kieran McKeown to do a study on “The Impact of Drugs on Family Well Being”

- A specific finding from the study is that:-
- Parents who were on our Special Community Employment Programme had
- “serious deficits in setting appropriate limits on their children”

The challenge was and is - how do we support parents who obviously love their children but have difficulties with their parenting skills?



# Ballyfermot STAR's Challenges

- Realt Beag working with children and parents
- Realt Nua Rehabilitation Programme working with Substance Misusers
- Realt Na Clann working with Parents, Grandparents and Guardians

How do we as a multidiscipline staff team with different training backgrounds come together to support the whole family?





# Realt Beag's Aim



To provide quality affordable childcare and family support to our target group of drug misusers which is critical to their ability to engage in rehabilitation programmes

## PHILOSOPHY

We work to a child centred approach of learning at its earliest stage which includes bringing in the voice of the child.



# *Realt Beag – Child and Family Centre*



**Realt Beag Child and Family Centre is part of Ballyfermot STAR and is housed in a brand new, purpose built facility on Drumfinn Park with funding through the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme under the National Development Plan. Realt Beag provides a number of services to the children and their families.**



# Our Value Base



- ❖ Children should feel strong
- ❖ Children should feel able to question
- ❖ Children should feel able to choose
- ❖ Children should feel in control
- ❖ As Care Givers we create a culture of high expectations in early years education
- ❖ As Care Givers we recognise the parents role as the child's first and most consistent educator and support this role.
- ❖ As Care Givers we identify and support any additional needs that come to our attention with the children in our care



# Early Learning Centre



## PROVIDING QUALITY CHILDCARE

At present we have twenty five children on a full time basis and an average of four children per week who attend for drop in care. Future plans include Afterschool Project, a Siblings Group, a Parents Programme and a Saturday Morning Service.

So what does quality childcare look like and does it make a difference for vulnerable children and their families?



# Quality Childcare does make a difference



**YES! Quality childcare can make a difference for vulnerable children and their families.**

**Research evidence from longitudinal studies of high risk families in the United States shows that children who participate in early childhood education**

- ❖ Have higher rates of school completion**
- ❖ Are socially connected to families and friends**
- ❖ Are less violent**



# Why Must it be High Quality?

**BUT! Childcare must be high quality**

## Structural features

- ❑ Ratio of staff to children **(above average)**
- ❑ Fully qualified staff training in child development and early childhood education **(FETAC Level 5 to Degree)**
- ❑ Group sizes **(smaller than regular service)**

## Process Features

- ❑ Staff provide stimulating and supportive care, spend less time managing their rooms, are more responsive and less restrictive.
- ❑ Using Evidence Based curriculums and programmes e.g.. HighScope Model, Parents Plus, Incredible Years and Strengthening Families.
- ❑ Understanding of the target group and their additional needs. **(staff members have completed Community Addiction Studies Course)**



# Curriculum Used



## **Curriculum used in Realt Beag is High Scope**

**We use this because of its emphasis on “active participatory learning”.** Active learning means children have direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas.

Children’s interests and choices are at the heart of HighScope programs. They construct their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. Children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions.

Teachers, caregivers, and parents offer physical, emotional, and intellectual support. In active learning settings, adults expand children’s thinking with diverse materials and nurturing interactions.

The HighScope educational approach is consistent with the best practices recommended by Siolta and Aistear.



# HighScope's Goals for Young Children



HighScope is a comprehensive educational approach that strives to help children develop in all areas. Our goals for young children are:

1. To learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas
2. To become independent, responsible, and confident — ready for school and ready for life
3. To learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with others about what they have done and what they have learned
4. To gain knowledge and skills in important academic, social, and physical areas
5. HighScope provides children with carefully planned experiences in reading, mathematics, and science.
6. Teachers support social development by helping children learn how to resolve interpersonal conflicts.





# What Research Says!

## Research also shows that :

Children in centres that demonstrate high quality childcare are happier, have closer attachments to their caregivers and perform better on cognitive and language tests

They are more able to initiate, understand and participate in conversation, are more co-operative, show less hostility and conflict.

They are more ready to start school, have better language, pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills

Children most at risk make the greatest gains  
(Watson et al., 2005 p.23-24)



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## By Providing Childcare We Offer Consistency



- By providing quality childcare we take away the effects of an unstable childcare environment and offer a service that will enhance the lives of the children who attend the service.
- By providing a full range of early education initiatives (e.g. **Siolta, Aistir and HighScope**) we are ensuring that their psychological and physical needs are met and indeed fulfilled
- By ongoing monitoring and development of individual care plans through our key working and weekly care team meetings we are able to detect any extra supports needed and refer to outside agencies if necessary
- By engaging with the parents we are able to ensure that the parents have a say in the ongoing daily care of their children
- We ensure links with the Statutory Agencies and we network locally and nationally.



# Why Offer Childcare



**Children from families affected by addiction have a greater genetic vulnerability and exposure to factors that place them at-risk for substance misuse. Because of this it is essentially that addiction services like Ballyfermot STAR address the need of the whole family including the children in order for us to have any success in breaking the cycle of inter generational substance misuse.**