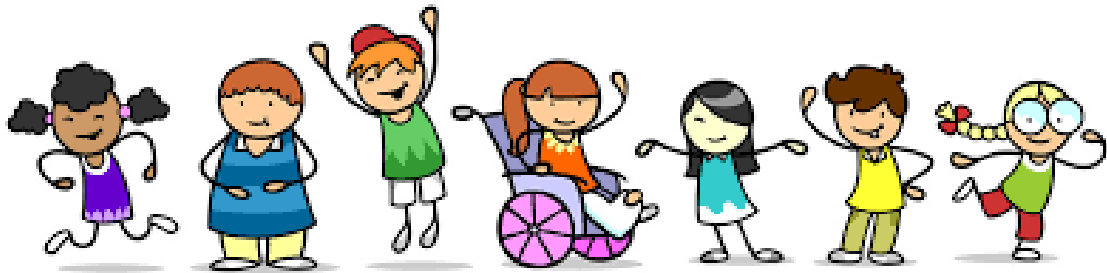




Galway West Children's Disability Network Team 4  
Foireann líonra do Pháistí faoi Mhíchumas in Iarthair na Gaillimhe



# Parent Handbook

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# Purpose of the booklet

This booklet was originally designed in response to feedback received from families on the Galway South & East Early Intervention team in 2020.

Families told us that, based on their experience, a written package of information upon their introduction to the service would have been helpful to them. They also told us what content they felt would be most useful to other families starting off their journey with the team.

The aim of this booklet is to provide information to families about the supports and services available to them, including what a journey through our community disability team might look like. By using this booklet, families can also choose when best suits them to seek out certain information and move at their own pace.

We recognise that children's therapy services have changed over the years. These changes have been based on research evidence and family input. This means that services may look different to what families might expect. This booklet will provide consistent, up-to-date and evidenced-based information about how services are now provided.

With the reconfiguration of services this booklet is being redesigned to reflect the information needs of older children and young people. We will continue to develop the booklet in response to your feedback so please let us know what you think...



Finally, and most importantly, we would like to say a huge thank you to all of the families who have contributed to this booklet. This includes families who generously gave up their time to give us feedback on what matters to them, to every family we have met along the way.

*Information in this booklet was adapted from: "Choosing Quality Early Childhood Intervention Services and Supports for Your Child: What you need to know" Early Childhood Intervention Australia (2017)*

## Getting to know each other...

# What is a Community Disability Network team?

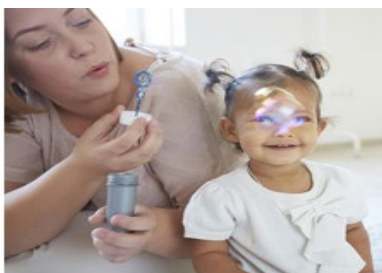
A community disability network team (CDNT) provides **specialised support and services** for children and young people, aged from birth to 18 years, who have a disability and/ or developmental delay, and their families.

The CDNT team supports a child's **development, well-being** and **participation** in family and community life.

We recognise that childhood is a time when learning and development can flourish. The early experiences and opportunities provided early in life shape a child's development.

It is the role of the CDNT to **share knowledge, information and skills** with families so that they can further support their child's development. This will help children and young people to develop, learn, and participate in everyday activities.

The support and services provided by the team go beyond "therapy". Our aim is for every child to have **a childhood of inclusive experiences** where they can **have fun, develop interests, and form relationships with others** in every environment.



# Community Disability Network team

There are nine community disability network teams across counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. Our Galway West Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT4) is located in the Old Schoolhouse (An tSean Chéibh) in Spiddal. Team members meet children, youths and their families in locations across the network including home, school and clinics.

Our team members work for the HSE, Brothers of Charity, Enable Ireland & Ability West and includes Community Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Preschool Liaison Teacher, Psychology, Social Work, Speech & Language Therapy, and Administration support/ Reception.

A short description of all of their roles along with an up-to-date list of our team members and their contact details are included in Appendix A.

## Getting to know each other...

### Families at the centre of all services

As parents you are the main people who are, and will continue to be, involved in your child's life. You know your child and family best and you will have the **biggest impact** on your child's development.

Therefore, your family can work together with the team as **active and equal partners**. Our aim is to partner with you to support your child to thrive, grow, and learn. We will do this by building on your **family's strengths and interests**, and supporting your **skills and abilities**.

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*Everyone who supports  
your family and your child  
is part of your team*

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Along with your family, the team also considers your **extended family and support network**. This can include siblings, grandparents, cousins, family friends, community supports and other formal supports such as your GP. The team will work together with your family network to ensure the best outcomes for your child and family.

When meeting with you initially, we will be getting to know you by asking questions about your family and the people in your child's life. This is a good opportunity for you to let us know who you want to include and plan for how to do this.

Getting to know each other...

## All families are One-of-a-Kind

We recognise that each family is **different** and each family is **unique**. Supports and services within the CDNT team will be as responsive and flexible as possible to meet your family's needs.

We may ask questions about your family's **culture, values and beliefs** so that we know what is important to you and make sure we are respectful of your values.

Additional supports such as **interpreters and/ or translation of information** can be provided to help your family and the team to communicate with each other effectively. Please ask us if you would like to avail of an interpreter or translation of information so we can organise this in advance of visits/ appointments.

The team can work with families in different places such as within the home, preschool or school settings, in the community, or in the clinic. You can tell us if you have a **preference for which location works best for your family** and we will accommodate you where possible.

We also recognise that many families can find it hard to access services if **transport** is an issue. Please let us know if this is a worry or concern for you and together we can make a plan around this.

## What to expect...

# Your child at home and in the community



Your team will support your child to take part in a meaningful way in their daily life at **home**, at **preschool** or **school**, and in the **community**.

This leads to an important feeling of being part of things and to a sense of belonging. We will **work together** with preschool staff, teachers, and other service providers to build an **inclusive routine and setting** that will enable your child to take part and develop new skills.



The team will help your family to access **specialist support and resources** if this is required so that your child **can participate, engage, and succeed** in their **home**, their **preschool** setting, their **school** setting and in the **community**.



Some of the supports available in preschool and school settings are included in Appendix B.

The team will work together with you and your family in planning for your child's **transitions** to preschool, school and adult services and will share any information and knowledge you need to enable you to make informed decisions.

## What to expect...

# Your child practises and learns new skills everyday

Your child learns through **everyday experiences** with familiar people and activities they are interested in.

Your daily family **routine** and activities are the nuts and bolts of both your day and your child's day. These routines and everyday activities are a perfect **opportunity** for your child to **practice and build their skills with your support**.



Most routines happen every day or even many times in the day providing **lots of repetitions** for your child which has been shown to help with learning and remembering new skills.

Team members on the Galway West team will be asking you about you and your family's daily routine to they can naturally build on what's happening now.





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*...use the  
everyday to  
develop skills you  
are working on...*

---



What to expect...

## Your child practises and learns new skills everyday

Research shows us that children learn best **when they are relaxed and having fun.**

When children are **interested** and **engaged**, they **learn.**

---

### *Play is children's work*

---

**Play** is the main activity your child engages in and your child will learn best through play.



We will be asking questions about what your child **does best** and what your child is **most interested in.** This will help us to **develop a plan with you** on how to support your child's development through play and everyday routines.



What to expect...

## Team around your child

Intervention has been shown to work best for children when everyone **works together as a team around your child**.

There will be 1 main person from the team, called a **key worker**, who will be working with your family. A key worker is your family's **main point of contact** with the team and can be from any discipline.



Your key worker will:

- **work closely** with you and your family in identifying goals and developing strategies
- **coordinate** information, services and supports
- **share information, knowledge and skills** to enable you to make informed decisions and support your child
- act as a **link** with the other members of the team and the people who spend the most time with your child including preschool / school staff
- help with the **transition** of your child to community groups, childcare, preschool, school or adult services.



If you ever have any questions, concerns, or worries, then please contact your key worker. If we don't hear from you, then we may not know if you need information, advice, or support.

## What to expect...

# Building everyone's knowledge and skills

Your family, along with other important people in your child's life such as childcare staff, spend the most time with your child.

**Building your knowledge, skills and confidence** is much more effective and will have the **biggest impact** on your child's learning and development.

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*It is what happens outside the early intervention sessions that makes the difference*

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### For families this means:

All team members will start by finding out **what you already know, what you have tried that works, and then working with you to achieve your family goals.**

They will use **coaching** (where they will talk you through the situation giving you suggestions in the moment) and **modelling** (e.g. showing you a specific strategy) to enable you to build your skills. Our team will do this through conversations over the phone, home visits, community visits, or in group interventions.

Who has the greatest impact on a child's development?

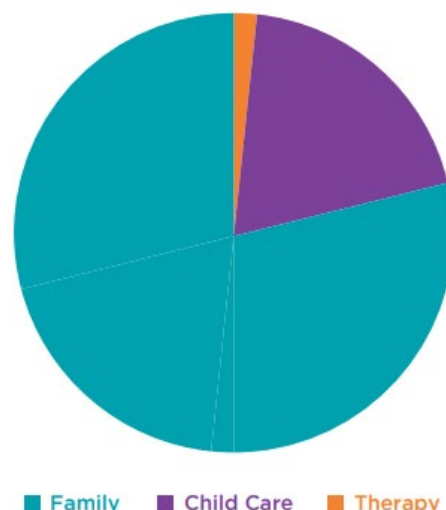


Diagram: 3 year old – average week – family – up to 80 awake hours (up to 10 hours sleep per night), 20 hours in child care/ preschool and 1 hour of therapy

**Parent information and education groups** happening in the team are also an opportunity to gain knowledge on different areas (e.g. toileting or communication) and to **share skills and connect with other parents.**



What to expect...

## Building everyone's knowledge and skills

**For preschool staff, school staff, and community partners this means:**

Your team will use **coaching, collaboration, and consultation** to help staff in supporting the inclusion of your child at crèche, preschool, or school. This can happen on a **1:1 basis**, through phone calls, preschool or school visits, and on a **group basis** through education / information sessions.

*Catch me a fish  
and I'll eat for a day.  
Teach me to fish  
and I'll eat for a lifetime*

All of the relevant people supporting your child will be involved in **looking at the issues and learning opportunities throughout your child's day.** In this way, we identify a plan that works well for everyone and so will have the best outcomes for your child.



Please refer to Appendix C for details on some of the **supports** available within the team for families and community partners.

## What to expect...

# What you want for your child and family

Every family on the team has a **Family Service Plan** (FSP) where their goals are written down. The team will come up with a plan for supporting the goals in your FSP which will **fit in with your everyday life** and so work best for your family and your child.



Your family goals may focus on things like:

- Your life and family experience (e.g. eating breakfast in the morning, going to the supermarket, visiting grandparents, being able to go for a walk outdoors)
- Your child's developmental and learning needs (e.g. for your child to roll or crawl, for your child to communicate what they want, for your child to explore and play with toys and develop friendships)
- Your health and wellbeing (e.g. to find some time for yourself, to return to education, to get better quality of sleep, to learn English, to re-establish or maintain important social networks)
- Your child's health and wellbeing (e.g. to help your child to cope with change, toilet training, for your child to sleep well)
- Your child's inclusion in community settings (e.g. to play/hang out with a friend, to decide on the best education setting for your child/young person, to join a club/sport)



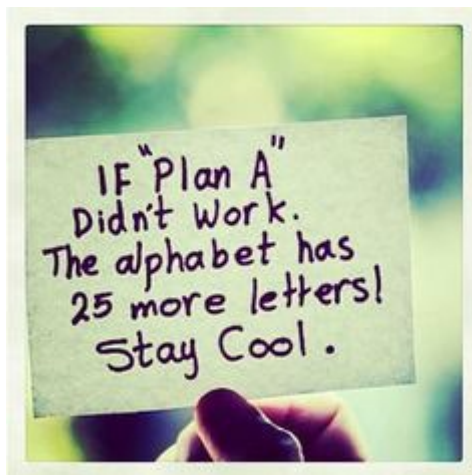
## What to expect...

# What you want for your child and family

It's important to remember that **big goals can be achieved through success at lots of smaller goals**. Sometimes parents aren't sure of the immediate goals for their child or how to break down long term goals into more manageable goals. Your key worker and other team members can guide you through this by **providing relevant information you need to make informed decisions**.



These goals are reviewed on a regular basis to see **what's going well, what has worked or not worked for your family, and what's most important for your family at this time**.



When problem-solving together, the first solution doesn't always go as planned. However, everything you try will provide more information and help us to **learn, adapt, and eventually come up with a plan that works best for you and your family**.

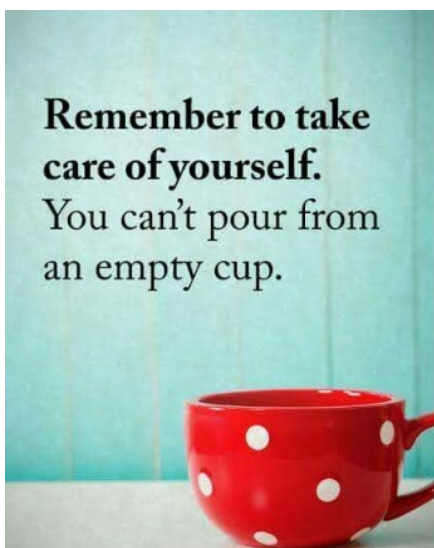
## Community supports...

# Emotional supports

Parents have told us that providing **emotional support**, along with supporting families to access other resources and services which specialise in this area, is very important to them.

All too often, parents share their struggle with **finding time for themselves**. They have told us that **making time for their own health and wellbeing** is often sacrificed for the needs of others in their family.

Research has shown that parents raising children with developmental or medical needs **often experience high levels of stress**. With this in mind, it's very important to acknowledge the importance of **finding time for yourself** and to consider small ways you can support your wellbeing and re-charge your batteries or **"fill your cup"**.



The phrase **"you can't pour from an empty cup"** reminds us that we can't offer what we don't have. If our cup is empty, we can't give to others.

Families have told us about the importance of **"filling their cup"** so that they are able to support their child. If you would like more support from the team in this area, please let us know.

More information on supports available to promote your emotional wellbeing is included in Appendix D. There are also many community-based groups and networks which can be a source of support to parents. These are listed in Appendix F.

## Community supports...

# Financial benefits and entitlements

Families have told us of the importance in sharing information about financial benefits and entitlements. This information is useful to support families with looking at the different **options** available to them and making an **informed decision about what will work for them as a family**.



Various financial benefits and supports are all included in Appendix E. If you want to discuss any of these then please contact your key worker.



## Community supports...

# Community groups

Community groups can be both a practical and/ or emotional support for families. They can provide **opportunities to connect** with other families who are on their own journey.

There are many organisations and groups which **provide information and advice** to parents and families. This can include general information and/or advice, for example information on children's therapy services or more specific information and/or advice, for example a parent group for children with autism.



We have included some links and contact details of community groups and organisations in Appendix F. We will make every effort to keep these accurate and up-to-date but please let us know if there are any issues with them.

As you can imagine, there are a lot of organisations and groups available. If you or your family have experience of a group/ organisation which has been useful for you, and which is not included in the list, then please let us know and we will add it in.



## Community supports...

# Other therapies and supports

Families who are being supported by the team often attend other private therapies or appointments. We ask that you let us know if your child is attending private therapies to ensure that we are all working together to **achieve better outcomes** for you and your child.

Our team is always happy to **link and work together** with other professionals involved in you, your child, and your family's life. With your permission, the team can share their knowledge and expertise with other professionals and take the opportunity to learn from the experience of others involved in your family life.

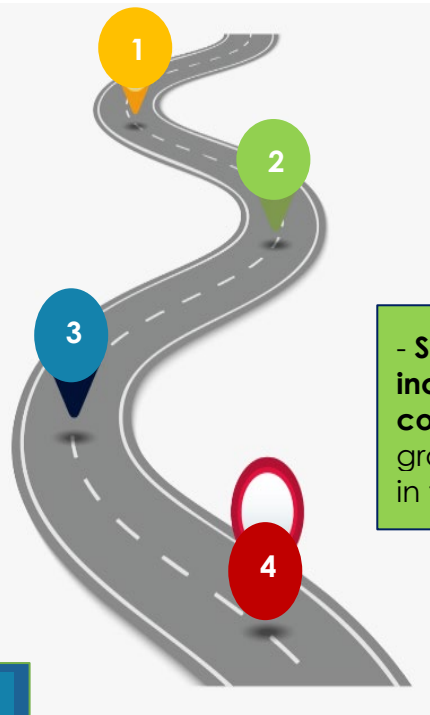


There is some **guidance** on what to look out for if deciding to work with private therapists in Appendix G. This is general information including where to check if a professional is registered to practice. If you have any questions about any of this information then please talk to your key worker.

# A journey through Children's Disability Network team...

1

- Meeting your **key worker and the team**
- **Sharing information** about your child and your family
- Telling us about your **daily life and routines**
- Thinking about **what's most important to you and your family**...what are your priorities?



2

- **Supports & Services including coaching & consultation** on a 1:1 or group basis, at home or in the community

3

## Your child's world begins to grow and expand...

- Thinking about **preschool** & asking for information on preschool supports available
- Key worker and team will **work together with preschool staff** to support your child's participation; this can include preschool visits

4

## Your child's world gets bigger and bigger...

- Thinking about **school** & asking for information on school supports available
- Working together with the team to **support your child's transition to school**
- Key worker and the team will **support your child's participation in school**; this can include school visits

Support with moving on once your child reaches 18 years of age

## Appendix A

# Team Members

### **Receptionist & Admin Support**

We welcome families who come to the clinic for meetings and appointments. We provide support to families by sharing information on the phone and often act as a link between families and the team by finding out information and sharing phone messages. We support the team in co-ordinating information, training, and intervention groups with families, preschool staff, and school staff. We provide administration support to team members in lots of different ways including sourcing documents, copying & creating resources and information, and liaising with other professionals and agencies such as Paediatrician clinics.

### **Community Nurse and Preschool Liaison Teacher**

As community nurses, we support families with babies, toddlers. We provide information and suggestions to your family to enable you to support the development of your child. We are also committed to supporting you, as parents, at an emotional and practical level. We provide advice and support on your child's medical needs and work closely with your child's Paediatrician and other health professionals. In our role, we work together with families until your child moves to preschool.

### **Occupational Therapist (OT)**

In occupational therapy, "occupation" is an everyday activity that occupies time and brings meaning and purpose to life. It includes things people need to, want to, and are expected to do. Therefore, we support achievements in everyday activities such as eating, playing, making friends or homework, in the environment where these activities take place. Our aim is to support you to enhance your child's independence and self-confidence to enable new learning and promote their participation in social and leisure activities.

### **Physiotherapist (PTs)**

We will support you in understanding how your child learns, plans, and uses movement and how this influences your child's overall development. We will be looking at how your child moves and plays in their different environments and will work with you and your child to facilitate the development of these skills. We aim to provide your family with information and ideas on how to support your child's movement, with activities that can be easily incorporated into your family's daily routine.

### **Psychologists**

Our aim is to provide your family with information and support which strengthens your family's ability and confidence in caring for your child. We will share information on particular areas of strength and areas which are more challenging for your child and recommend approaches to support your child's development and wellbeing. We will work with your family to promote your child's social, emotional, and behavioural skills, both at home and in your child's preschool and school. We also provide support to your family when planning for your child's preschool or school placement.

### **Speech & Language Therapists**

We work with your family to support your child's communication skills. By sharing our knowledge and skills, we will facilitate you to maximise your child's ability to communicate. We focus on communications skills that are pre-verbal, such as turn-taking and gestures (e.g. waving bye-bye), early language skills (e.g. understanding words), speech sounds, and alternative communication approaches such as use of signs, pictures, or electronic devices that enable a child to communicate a message. We also provide support to your family if your child has any feeding, eating, drinking or swallowing (FEDS) difficulties.

### **Network Manager**

As the Team Manager I oversee the running of the team and provide support to families and team members as required. I ensure all relevant administrative work is completed for your child when they are first referred to the team and that all appropriate team members have received this information in a timely manner. Part of my role is to ensure your family has a keyworker. In the absence of a keyworker, it is my role to act as a liaison person on the team. I am available to support you if you are experiencing any difficulties on your journey with our service.

## Appendix B

# Preschool and School supports

Preschool services and supports in the community include:

### **ECCE** Programme:

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme provides early childhood care and education for children of preschool age. The programme is offered in early years settings (preschools, Montessori's, crèches, playgroups) for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week, 38 weeks of the year. All children are entitled to 2 full academic years on the ECCE programme.

More information available at:

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/information-parents/choosing-childcare/ecce-free-preschool-year/>

### The **Access and Inclusion Model** (AIM):

This is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the ECCE programme. AIM is a child-centred model, involving seven levels of progressive support, based on the needs of the child and the preschool service (e.g. sharing information with staff to access to a piece of specialised equipment or a reduced ratio of children to adults in the room).

More information available at: <https://aim.gov.ie/>

### **Child Development Centres (CDC)**, Brothers of Charity Services & Ability West

These provide an educational service to children with significant learning disabilities from 3 to 5 years of age, some of whom are on the Autism Spectrum and/or may have physical / medical needs. A joint placement with a child's local mainstream preschool is also possible if indicated as the most suitable for the child's needs. The CDC's which children in our area access include Tigh Nan Dooley Preschool, Fairlands CDC, and Burrenview CDC.

More information available at:

<http://www.brothersofcharity.ie/galway/services/childrens-services/springfield-child-development-centre/>

## Appendix B

# Preschool and School supports

### **Early Intervention Classes**, Department of Education & Skills:

Early intervention classes are available for children aged 3-5 years with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These classes are intended to provide early support for children with ASD before they start school. This does not mean that the child will be required to attend a special class once they move on to school. Transport is available to your nearest Early Intervention class. More information available at: [https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Pamphlet-3-Autism-01\\_09\\_14.pdf](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Pamphlet-3-Autism-01_09_14.pdf)

### **Home tuition**, Department of Education & Skills:

A home tuition grant scheme for children aged between 3 and 4 years of age with a diagnosis of ASD can be applied for when a placement in an Early Intervention setting is not available.

Home tuition is also provided for children with ASD aged between 2 ½ and 3 years of age as they cannot enrol in school. More information available at: [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or link to nsce.ie as shown above

### **Summer Programme/ Provision**, Department of Education & Skills:

The scheme provides funding for an extended school year for children with a severe or profound general learning disability or children with autism. Where school-based provision is not feasible, home-based provision may be granted; 40 hours home-based provision may be grant aided. More information at: [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [Summer Programme 2023 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

## Appendix B

# Preschool and School supports

### School services and supports available include:

#### The **National Council for Special Education (NCSE)**:

The NCSE service is delivered through a national network of Special Education Needs Organisers (SENOs) who interact with parents and schools and liaise with the HSE in providing resources to support children with special educational needs.

This is a very useful information booklet for parents on all of the school supports available:

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Web-Ready-03178-NCSE-Children-SEN-InfoBook-Parents2-Proof17-VISUAL-ONLY.pdf>

More information is available on the NCSE website: <https://ncse.ie/for-parents>

#### **Primary school mainstream setting:**

Children can attend their local mainstream primary school. They may require additional supports in the form of assistance of an SNA or Special Education Teaching. More information available at both links above.

#### **Autism Unit in a Mainstream School:**

Some mainstream schools have special classes for children with ASD within their school. These classes have approximately 6 pupils with a teacher and 2 special needs assistants (SNA's). Further details can be found at links above.

#### **Special Schools:**

Special schools support students with more severe and/or complex special educational needs. Classes tend to have small numbers of students. For more details, please see the NCSE website and refer to the booklet as mentioned above.

## Appendix C

# Emotional supports

- Aware – offers services for people affected by depression including a confidential phone line service at 1800 80 48 48. More information available at: [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)
- Barnardos - offers a wide range of services for children, families and communities and can be contacted on (01) 454 9699. More information available at: [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)
- Counselling in Primary Care (CIPC), HSE – this is a short-term counselling service that provides up to 8 counselling sessions with a professionally qualified and accredited Counsellor/Therapist. It is a service for medical card holders, who are 18 years of age or over at: [Counselling in Primary Care - HSE.ie](http://Counselling in Primary Care - HSE.ie)
- Family Resource Centre Programme - More information available at: [www.familyresource.ie](http://www.familyresource.ie)
- Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy at <https://iacp.ie/page>
- One Family (Ireland) - offers services and support to one parent families including training, education and a confidential helpline on (01) 662 9212 or 1890 662 212; email: [info@onefamily.ie](mailto:info@onefamily.ie) or more information available at: [www.onefamily.ie](http://www.onefamily.ie)
- Parentline - confidential helpline for parents under stress or who are worried about any aspect of their parenting; contact: (01) 873 3500 or 1890 927 277; email: [info@parentline.ie](mailto:info@parentline.ie) or see more information at: [www.parentline.ie](http://www.parentline.ie)
- Pieta House – provides a free, therapeutic approach to people who are in distress and those who engage in self-harm. They also offer a free phone number for anyone who is in distress and needs someone to talk to at 1800 247 247 or you can simply text HELP to 51444. More information available at [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie)
- Rollercoaster - an online resource which provides practical advice on the challenges parents experience. More information available at: [www.rollercoaster.ie](http://www.rollercoaster.ie)

## Appendix D

# Financial benefits and entitlements

Further information on all of these benefits and entitlements are available on the Citizen's Information website at [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

### **Domiciliary Care Allowance:**

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment for a child aged under 16 with a severe disability, who requires ongoing care and attention, substantially over and above the care and attention usually required by a child of the same age. It is not means tested. More information is available at:

[https://www.gov.ie/en/service/30fac9-domiciliary-care-allowance/?referrer=https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/1078\\_Domiciliary-Care-Allowance.aspx](https://www.gov.ie/en/service/30fac9-domiciliary-care-allowance/?referrer=https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/1078_Domiciliary-Care-Allowance.aspx)

### **Medical Card if in receipt of DCA:**

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/schemes-allowances/medical-cards/other-types-of-medical-card/domiciliary-care-allowance/>

### **Carer's Allowance:**

Carer's Allowance is a payment to people on low incomes who are looking after a person who needs support because of age, disability or illness. If you qualify for Carer's Allowance you may also qualify for free household benefits and a Free Travel Pass. More details available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social\\_welfare/social\\_welfare\\_payments/carers/carers\\_allowance.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/carers/carers_allowance.html)

### **Carer's Benefit:**

Carer's Benefit is a payment made to insured people who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention.

If you get Carer's Benefit, you are eligible for a GP visit card. More information is available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social\\_welfare/social\\_welfare\\_payments/carers/carers\\_benefit.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/carers/carers_benefit.html)

### **Disability Allowance for Children over age 16**

Disability Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to people with a disability. You can get it from 16 years of age. If you are in education when you turn 16, you can continue to attend school while receiving this allowance: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/df6811-disability-allowance/>

Appendix D

# Financial benefits and entitlements

## Family Support and Respite Services:

- Brothers of Charity (Services offered by Turas) –
  1. Family and Community Support
  2. Self-Directed funding/ Respite Grant
  3. Home Sharing (Children and Adults in partnership with Ability West)

Further information available through your local CDNT and [www.west.brothersofcharity.ie](http://www.west.brothersofcharity.ie).

- Enable Ireland Community Connections and in Home Family Support.  
Further information available through your local CDNT.

**Carer's Support Grant:** The Carer's Support Grant is an annual payment made to carers by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. It was formerly called the Respite Care Grant, but was renamed the Carer's Support Grant to better reflect how it is used by carers. It is paid on the first Thursday in June of each year. More information available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social\\_welfare/social\\_welfare\\_payments/carers/carers\\_benefit.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/carers/carers_benefit.html)

**Carer's Leave:** Your right to carer's leave from employment complements the Carer's Benefit Scheme. Carer's leave allows you to leave your employment temporarily for up to 104 weeks to provide full-time care for people in need of full-time care and attention. The leave is unpaid but people who take carer's leave have their jobs kept open for the duration of the leave. You do not have to be eligible for Carer's Benefit to get carer's leave. More information at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social\\_welfare/social\\_welfare\\_payments/carers/carers\\_benefit.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/carers/carers_benefit.html)

**Incapacitated Child Tax Allowance:** You can claim an Incapacitated Child Tax Credit if you are the parent or guardian of a child who is unable to support themselves and you are "maintaining them". This means you have day-to-day responsibility for the child and their care. More information available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money\\_and\\_tax/tax/tax\\_credits\\_and\\_reliefs\\_for\\_people\\_with\\_disabilities/incapacitated\\_child\\_tax\\_credit.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money_and_tax/tax/tax_credits_and_reliefs_for_people_with_disabilities/incapacitated_child_tax_credit.html)

## Appendix D

# Financial benefits and entitlements

### **VAT Refunds on Aids and Appliances used by People with Disabilities:**

You may get a refund of VAT on certain special aids and appliances that you need for your child or items recommended by professionals or which are necessary to support your child at home. More information is available at:

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/vat/repayments-to-unregistered-persons/disabled-persons/how-to-reclaim-vat-on-aids-and-appliances-for-persons-with-a-disability.aspx>

### **Medical Expenses:**

You can reclaim some of the medical expenses you and your family incur. You generally receive tax relief for health expenses at your standard rate of tax (20%). You can only claim for medical expenses if you have the receipts to prove your claim. If your child has additional needs, you may claim additional tax relief on professional fees, hygiene products, excessive hospital travel and overnight accommodation. More information is available at:

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/health-and-age/health-expenses/index.aspx>

### **Home Carer's Tax Credit:**

You can claim this tax credit if you are married or in a civil partnership, and one of you is a stay-at-home parent to care for your child. You can only claim one credit regardless of the number of people you care for. More information is available at:

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/health-and-age/home-carer-credit/index.aspx>

## Appendix D

# Financial benefits and entitlements

### **Homemaker's Scheme:**

If you have given up work to provide full-time care for your child then you can claim credits towards your PRSI. In this way, years spent out of the workforce while caring for your child are credited with credits awarded at the same rate as your last paid PRSI contribution. This will then contribute to your future state pension. More information available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social\\_welfare/irish\\_social\\_welfare\\_system/social\\_insurance\\_prsi/homemakers\\_scheme.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/irish_social_welfare_system/social_insurance_prsi/homemakers_scheme.html)

### **Housing Adaptation Grant:**

A housing adaptation grant is available for your local council if you need to make changes to a home to make it more suitable for a child with a physical, sensory, or intellectual disability. The grant can help you to make changes and adaptations to your home, for example, making it wheelchair-accessible, extending it to create more space, or adding a ground-floor bathroom or toilet. If you require minor work, then you can apply for the means-tested Mobility Aids Grant Scheme. More information available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing\\_grants\\_and\\_schemes/housing\\_adaptation\\_grant\\_for\\_people\\_with\\_disability.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing_grants_and_schemes/housing_adaptation_grant_for_people_with_disability.html)

### **Mobility Aids Grant Scheme:**

The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme provides grants for works designed to address mobility problems in the home such as installation of a level access shower, ramps to access the home, or a downstairs toilet. More information available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing\\_grants\\_and\\_schemes/mobility\\_aids\\_grant\\_scheme.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing_grants_and_schemes/mobility_aids_grant_scheme.html)

## Appendix D

# Financial benefits and entitlements

### **Local Property Tax Relief:**

If you have completed adaptation works on your home to make it more suitable for your child, you may be eligible for a reduction in your local property tax if the works resulted in an increase on the value of your home. More information available at:

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/property/documents/lpt/guidelines-reliefs-disabled-incapacitated.pdf>

### **Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme:**

This provides a range of tax reliefs linked to the purchase and use of a specially adapted vehicle for your child. Under the scheme, you can claim for remission or repayment of vehicle registration tax (VRT), or VAT on the purchase of the vehicle or cost of adapting a vehicle. If you avail of this scheme, you may also get additional exemptions and benefits including an exemption from motor tax, toll road fees, or a fuel grant. More information is available at:

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel\\_and\\_recreation/transport\\_and\\_disability/tax\\_relief\\_for\\_disabled\\_drivers\\_and\\_disabled\\_passengers.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel_and_recreation/transport_and_disability/tax_relief_for_disabled_drivers_and_disabled_passengers.html)

### **Free Nappy Scheme:**

This scheme provides nappies free of charge to children who have a disability and are 3 years of age or older. The scheme is overseen by your local health centre in conjunction with your local Public Health Nurse (PHN). Please contact your local PHN if you think you are eligible for this scheme.

## Appendix E

# Community groups and supports

### General information and supports for parents:

- Citizens Information website at <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/>
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia at [www.ecia.org.au](http://www.ecia.org.au) – includes useful resources and booklets for parents such as “Every Possibility A Parents Guide: Early Childhood Intervention”
- Family Carer’s Ireland – providing support for those caring for loved ones at home - details at <https://familycarers.ie/> or Tel: 093 30060
- Inclusion Ireland at <http://www.inclusionireland.ie/> which is a national association for people with an intellectual disability promoting advocacy for people with an intellectual disability
- Informing Families at <http://www.informingfamilies.ie/> – independent information for families where they have concerns that their child has a developmental delay and/ or disability
- Clann Resource Centre Oughterard- Family Support Services, Play Therapy, Art Therapy, Therapy Services at <http://clannrescentre.com/>
- [Mychild.ie](http://Mychild.ie) – HSE website with information for parents
- Progressing Disabilities for Children and Young People website at <https://www.hse.ie/progressingdisabilityservices/>
- Special Needs Parents Association – at <https://specialneedsparents.ie/> has links to national support organisations, local support groups, and clubs and activities across the country

## Appendix E

# Community groups and supports

### A-Z of community groups and supports:

#### Autism groups and supports

- As I Am at <https://asiam.ie/> – national autism charity and advocacy organisation which has links to all local supports on main page: “Find Support in Your Local Area” at <https://asiam.ie/interactive-map/>
- Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland (AADI) – [www.autismassistancedogsireland.ie](http://www.autismassistancedogsireland.ie)
- Autism Speaks at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/> which have very useful information booklets such as A Parent’s Guide to Autism or A Sibling’s Guide to Autism
- Galway Autism Partnership (GAP) which has information on supports they provide locally @ <https://www.galwayautismpartnership.com/>
- Irish Society for Autism – [www.autism.ie](http://www.autism.ie)
- Middletown Centre for Autism at <https://www.middletownautism.com/> which was established by the Dept. of Education and Skills in Ireland and Dept. of Education in Northern Ireland to support the promotion of excellence in the education of children and young people with ASD.

## Appendix E

# Community groups and supports

### A-Z of community groups and supports:

- ADHD Ireland at <https://adhdireland.ie/>
- Angelman Syndrome Ireland at <http://www.angelman.ie/>
- CanChild at <https://www.canchild.ca/> which focuses on supporting children, families, young people and adults with cerebral palsy and developmental coordination disorder (DCD)
- Down Syndrome Galway at <https://downsyndromegalway.ie/> with local branch – Down Syndrome Galway East Centre in Claregalway
- Down Syndrome Ireland at <https://downsyndrome.ie/>
- Dyspraxia DCD Ireland at: <https://www.dyspraxia.ie/> which includes details of parent support groups in Galway
- Epilepsy Ireland at <https://www.epilepsy.ie/>
- Genetics and Rare Disorders Organisation (GRDO) at <http://www.grdo.ie/>
- Hand in Hand at <http://www.handinhand.ie/> which supports families affected by childhood cancer and is based in Loughrea
- Irish Fragile X Society at <http://fragilexireland.org/>
- Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) including IWA sport pages at: <https://iwasport.com/>
- Jack & Jill Foundation at <https://www.jackandjill.ie/> is a nationwide charity that offers support, advocacy and an in-home nursing service to help children and their families under 5 years who have a significant neurodevelopmental delay involving severe learning difficulties

## Appendix E

# Community groups and supports

### A-Z of community groups and supports:

- Lámh at <https://www.lamh.org/> which is an organisation that supports communication
- Muscular Dystrophy Ireland at <https://www.mdi.ie/>
- Prader Willi Syndrome Association of Ireland (PWSAI) at <https://pwsai.ie/>
- Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Ireland (SPHI) at <https://www.sbhi.ie/>

### Sports Organisations

- Special Olympics Ireland at <https://www.specialolympics.ie/> including details on how to join local clubs
- Sports Ireland at: <https://www.sportireland.ie/participation/local-sports-partnerships> including details of Sports Inclusion Disability Officers in each area
- Judo Assist Ireland at <http://specialneedsjudo.com/>

### Vision and/or Hearing challenges

- Irish Guide Dogs National Headquarters and Training Centre at [www.guidedogs.ie](http://www.guidedogs.ie)
- NCBI at <https://www.ncbi.ie/> who work for people with sight loss
- Féach at <http://www.feach.ie/> for kids with low or no vision
- The Anne Sullivan Centre for people who are deafblind at <https://www.annesullivan.ie/>
- Irish Deaf Society at <https://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/>
- Chime at <https://www.chime.ie/> a national charity for deafness and hearing loss

## Appendix F

# Other therapies and supports

Our team are happy to work together with any private therapies or supports you and your family are attending, with your consent. We do ask that you let us know if your child is attending private therapies elsewhere so we can all work together to ensure positive outcomes for your child.

For families who wish to explore additional services for their children, it is important to know about CORU which is the health regulator for Health & Social Care Professionals in Ireland.

Their role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration.

You can ensure that a therapist has met these standards and is safe to practice in Ireland by checking the CORU register at <https://www.coru.ie/public-protection/>

In addition to CORU, there are professional organisations which represent each area to ensure appropriate governance and practice standards. These professional bodies also hold details of private therapists available around the country. Further information is available at:

Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland: <https://www.aoti.ie/>

Irish Association of Social Workers: <https://www.iasw.ie/>

Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists: <https://www.iaslt.ie/>

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists: <https://www.iscp.ie/>

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland: <https://www.nmbi.ie/Home>

The Psychological Society of Ireland: <https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/>