

Please post this newsletter on your parent association/school notice-board/website for all parents

Supporting your child's reading

Throughout 2010, NPC looked at the issue of parental involvement in children's literacy. This included a:

- **Conference for parents** in June 2010 (see Newsbrief Issue 64)
- **Summer Book Review** where parents were asked to take an active part in their children's reading (see Newsbrief Issue 65) and
- **Survey for parents** 'Your child and their reading' (see Newsbrief Issue 65).

At the time of compilation 615 replies to our survey had been received. A big **THANK YOU** to all of you who participated in our survey, either online or by sending in a hard copy.

The age ranges of children we asked about were 0-4, 5-8 and 9-12. The main findings of the survey are listed here:

Parents reading with their children:

As could be expected a high percentage (91%) of parents of 0-4 year olds read with their children, with this percentage diminishing as the children get older. Reasons offered by parents include - the children no longer need or want their parent's participation, they have become confident and independent readers.

Frequency of reading:

Throughout the age categories the majority of children seem to read daily, 82% of 0-4 year olds, 92% of 5-8 year olds and 81% of 9-12 year olds. However, parents note that lack of their time and the number of children they have does affect their participation in their children's reading, in that, if they are busy reading time with their children does become diminished.

Library visits:

55% of 0-4 year olds visit libraries, 80% of 5-8 year olds and 83% of 9-12 year olds. The frequency of these visits varies greatly, we asked whether the children visit libraries weekly, fortnightly, monthly or other; the other brought in many differing replies from a number of times a year (5-6 or 6-8 etc), to occasionally, haphazardly and not as frequently as the parents or children would like. Again time constraints are an issue, as parents note that when they aren't working it is easier. Other issues to contend with are opening times of smaller libraries and the sometimes limited choice of books available. In many cases parents note that they have a large selection of books at home, so they feel there isn't any real need to join a library.

School Libraries:

We tried to get a picture of the number of schools with libraries, 55% of parents of 0-4 year olds said there is a library in their child's school, 75% of 5-8 year olds and 83% of 9-12 year olds. A suggestion by one parent is that schools could compile libraries from books donated by families; others would like to see more Government funding aimed at school library facilities.

Learning difficulties:

We asked about learning difficulties which might affect children's literacy, 9% of parents of 5-8 year olds referred to learning difficulties or other reasons why their children's reading was affected and 11% of 9-12 year olds. Those reasons include: speech and language delay, dyslexia, missing school due to illness, dyspraxia, growing up in a dual language household, difficulty spelling which takes away the enjoyment of reading, autistic spectrum disorder, development co-ordination disorder.

Books as gifts



Christmas is coming and for many parents this is a difficult time financially. It is worth remembering however that books make great gifts for children. Remind relatives and friends who may be buying presents for your children that books are great gifts. Book shops and libraries have recommended books for children of all ages and reading abilities.



Training for Boards of Management

Did you know this is the last year in the term of office for all primary school Boards of Managements (BOM)? Do you know the make-up of a Board? Who is on your Board? Do you know that every Board has two parents who play an equal part in the management of the school? Now is a really good time for your school community to understand the roles of all members on your Board of Management. If you would like to understand the role and function of the BOM, Board legal issues, Child Protection, Board Finances, and Appointment Procedures you can download an application form, go to www.npc.ie or phone Sharon or Deirdre in the Training and Development Programme at 01-8874475 / 01-8874481, email: training@npc.ie.

Relationship and Sexuality Workshops for Parents

As part of the Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) curriculum your child will have information and support regarding:

- The different stages of Life and what happens at each stage
- Different kinds of communication and listening skills
- Feelings and Adolescence – body awareness – body care – body image
- The words we use – self esteem – friendships
- Puberty - relationships – family – peer pressure
- How to develop a positive relationship

Are you interested in knowing more about the Relationships and Sexuality element of the SPHE curriculum, or would you like support on how to discuss these issues with your child, if so you can download an application form, go to www.npc.ie or phone Sharon or Deirdre in the Training and Development Programme at 01-8874475 / 01-8874481, email: training@npc.ie

National Parents Council Primary wins the European Parents Association - Alcuin Award 2010

The Alcuin Award was launched in 1991 by the European Parents Association (EPA) to highlight the role of parents in the education of their children. The Award honours the best educational innovation in Europe by giving recognition to a person, school, group or an activity nominated by EPA members, Ministries of Education in the EU countries or the European Commission.

This year the Alcuin ceremony took place at the AGM of EPA in Barcelona on the 16th of October 2010.

National Parents Council Primary's winning project entitled "**Supporting Migrant Parental involvement in the Irish Primary Education System**" aimed to provide information and support to third-country national parents of children in primary education. The project allowed migrant parents to engage with the services of National Parents Council Primary and provided training to migrant parents. This project was co-financed by the European Commission, the Department of Education and Skills and was supported by the Office of the Minister for Integration and Póbal.

New NPC Information Leaflet - Bullying

As highlighted in Newsbrief Issue 66, with the financial support we received from the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme National Parents Council Primary now has a dedicated Helpline for queries regarding Bullying.

We have also developed an information leaflet for parents to help them deal with the issue of **Bullying** should it arise.

This leaflet:

- describes the different forms bullying can take
- highlights the signs that may suggest a child is being bullied
- gives reasons as to why a child might be a bully
- highlights how to deal with bullying behaviour in schools
- gives information on what to do if a child is being bullied
- suggests how to cope if your child is the bully
- describes Cyber-bullying and ways to deal with this if it is happening to your child

Cyber-bullying is something which is new to many parents, but unfortunately with all the modern technologies available it does happen all too frequently. Our Helpline Officers are trained to help you, as a parent, cope with this if it is happening to your child.

The Bullying Helpline can be contacted:

Monday – Wednesday 10am – 5pm

Thursday – Friday 10am – 4pm

Tel: **01 887 4477** or email: helpline@npc.ie

Remember help is just a phone call away!

NPC Board

The new NPC Board held their first meeting at the beginning of October, when they elected their Officers.

Philip Mudge was re-elected as **Chairperson** of NPC, with Paul Stevenson being re-elected as Vice Chairperson.

Complaints Procedure

The Department of Education and Skills has recently updated the procedure which should be followed should parents wish to make a complaint about a teacher or other staff members of a school. This Complaints Procedure is available from the Department's website www.education.ie or from the NPC website www.npc.ie or by contacting the NPC office Tel: 01 8874488 email: info@npc.ie.

While the Department does not pass judgment on individual complaints it can clarify for parents and pupils how their grievances and complaints against schools can be progressed. If you require any further clarification please contact **Parents' and Learners' Section**, Schools' Division, Department of Education and Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Tel: 090 - 6484266, 090 - 6484267, 090 - 6484268, Fax 090 - 648 4058.

Winter weather conditions and Schools

The Department of Education and Skills would like to clarify the position in relation to the opening of schools during bad weather conditions; at present it is a matter for individual boards of management to decide whether local circumstances warrant the closure of a school.

NPC urges all parents to ensure that your child's school has your up to date contact details in case the school needs to close.

NPC Irish medium Schools Group

The NPC Irish interest group is currently preparing a list of recommendations on Irish language policy to put to the NPC Assembly. If you are interested in participating, please contact Deirdre Tel: 01-8874481 email: dsullivan@npc.ie

Tá Grúpa Sainspéise Gaeilge CNT ag réiteach liosta moltaí faoi pholasaí i leith na Gaeilge chun é a chur faoi bhráid an Tionóil. Má tá spéis agat, fáilte romhat dul i dteagmháil le Deirdre Fón: 01-8874481 Rphost: dsullivan@npc.ie

Christmas wishes

NPC would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a very happy, healthy and fun filled Christmas.

Enjoy the school holidays with your children.

