

Katherine Harford –Manager Young Knocknaheeny

Launch of Young Knocknaheeny Document:

An Introduction to Young Knocknaheeny.

Getting every child's life off to the best possible start. Prevention and Early Intervention for Early Childhood. Development, Relationships and Environments.

I would like to start by Congratulating Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald on his recent appointment as Lord Mayor of Cork City.

I have been a colleague of Tony's for 10 years through NICHE, HSE, Healthy Cities, and many other initiatives. I know he is hugely committed to the improvement of all our lives as citizens of the city.

I would like to thank you Lord Mayor for inviting us to the chambers today to launch this document.

We are very honoured to be here as one of the first official engagements of your appointment.

And wish you and your family the very best for the year ahead.

So why launch an introductory book about YK, when we have been around for 2.5 years now?

Well, thanks to a lot of development work in the preceding years, we hit the ground running, but it takes time for that to settle, find its rhythm and its place.

But now, we are in a position to put it all together as a record of the model we have developed.

It also gives us the opportunity to reflect on how much has been achieved in such a short period of time.

The Programme model is evidence based, innovative, collaborative and respectful.

In the book you will see that the work is tied to every government policy/strategy of the last 5-8years. But this is policy in action from the ground up. With our interagency colleagues we set high standards for ourselves. We want outcomes for all children which were better than they were ever before. Parents want the best for their child. It's a child's right to reach their potential to fully participate in society.

It all starts at the beginning, in pregnancy, we are very privileged to meet families in their home, establishing relationships with them and in turn supporting their relationship with their baby. This is the key to building the necessary brain development, for social and emotional development as a key task for self-regulation, equal to physical development.

It doesn't stop there, our language programme introduces communication strategies with parents of babies at 9 months, we are assessing and supporting language development of every junior infants class in the area.

We have supported our colleagues in Early Years Care and Education settings, in their aim to become the best publically funded centres you can be. The transformation has been astounding.

We support teachers to have strategies for behaviour management, social and emotional development, language development.

We promote reflective practice, interagency collaboration, and change.

As a flavour of the scale, through our partner organisations and our direct work 2.5k children will have benefited from the programme by Christmas.

We have provided IMH masterclasses to nearly 200 practitioners, trained 45 early years' staff, over 60 teachers in Teacher Classroom Management, 17 people to deliver IY parent programme. We have provided groups for 150 parents and 65 parents at any one time avail of our home visit programme.

Our evaluation is showing up some very promising results. We have overcome siloed working, and developed new partnerships which ensure families get the right support at the right time.

YK is funded until December 2017. There have been some promising indications regarding funding 2018.

But Ireland spends less on education, childcare and the first years of life than most other European countries. Richard Layte has done some really good work on this.

Research also tells us we need prevention and early intervention programmes that are effective and locally available within the community,

Policies such as Better Outcomes brighter Futures need to be fully translated and implemented into services across all levels.

My vision is that this huge body of work –YK being small but reaching far, becomes the norm. Prevention and Early Intervention is fully invested in over the

long term, and becomes the fabric of supporting families and children to have the best chance of a bright future.

This document is important too because it lays out that work, and sets a framework for investment into the future.

I would like to thank everyone here today, community representatives, families, staff, interagency colleagues, NICHE, education, early years, health & maternity services, UCC, City Council. I can't name you all, because I always get into trouble for leaving people out, for being part of the story and for showing ongoing commitment to the work.