

Preparing For Life (PFL) Northside Partnership

A Programme to Promote School Readiness



The Identified Need

Research carried out in 2004/2005 confirmed that 50% of children in some Northside communities identified were not ready for school.

The Response

Design a programme to support parents & families leading to better outcomes and improved levels of school readiness for children.

What did we come up with?

- An early intervention/prevention programme called Preparing For Life.

Key Features of PFL

- Emphasis on Prevention & Early Intervention
- Focus on Outcomes – School Readiness and Child Development
- Planning using Logic Model
- Delivering Tailored Activities/Services
- Use of Evidence of what works
- Facilitates integration of services
- Rigorous Evaluation to measure progress

Programme at a Glance

- Jointly funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.
- 5-Year programme supporting families from pregnancy to when child starts school
- Main activities are promoting child development and supporting effective parenting.
- Other activities include: Public Health Promotion, Interagency Co-ordination & Promoting Síolta Framework.
- Programme is being rigorously evaluated using multiple approaches including a Random Control Trial; Annual School Readiness Surveys & Process Evaluation.

Benefits of PFL in promoting family involvement in education

- Parents are the primary educators of their child and PFL proactively supports them in this role.
- Good early year experiences for both parents and children will lead to improved school readiness and will heighten parents aspirations for their child.
- Supporting and affirming parents in their parenting role in the early years will encourage continued parental involvement in child's education.
- Up-skilling parents in the areas of Child Development and Parenting will leave a legacy both in participating families and also the wider communities.

How is PFL an effective approach to Family Involvement in Education from a social inclusion perspective?

- PFL is located in an area of high socio-economic need and is endeavouring to address the early education needs of children thus combating educational disadvantage.
- A significant number of the participating families will be one parent families or come from the Traveller community.
- By supporting parents to improve outcomes for their children PFL will empower families to become the architects to overcome social exclusion within the community.

Future development in promoting family involvement within PFL

- Family involvement is the corner stone of PFL as without family involvement the programme cannot work.
- If the programme is successful in achieving outcomes the model can be extended to other families in the local communities and also rolled out in other locations.