

**enable  
ireland**

Empower • Include • Enable  
Action on Disability

**NORTH EAST**

# **EARLY SERVICES HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS/CARERS**



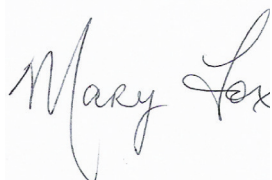
## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Enable Ireland Early Services.

This handbook provides you with the basic information you require to help you make the most of your time with us.

Our aim is that you receive the information you need to know, at the best time for you. Additional information will be given to you as your child progresses through the service.

In the meanwhile take the time to read this booklet or use it as a quick guide. For more information contact your Key Worker or a member of the Early Services Team.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Fox". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Fox  
Director of Services  
Enable Ireland North East



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## WHO ARE ENABLE IRELAND?

Enable Ireland is a national voluntary organisation which provides services for children with a range of disabilities and their families, and for adults, throughout the country. The organisation was founded in 1948 and Enable Ireland North East was established in 2000. Our underlying philosophy is to work in partnership with service users and their families.

Services are provided from a combination of family home, centre and community bases.



## ENABLE IRELAND IN THE NORTH EAST

Enable Ireland north east covers the counties of Meath, Cavan and Monaghan.

We currently provide services from six main locations – Cavan, Monaghan, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Navan and Trim.

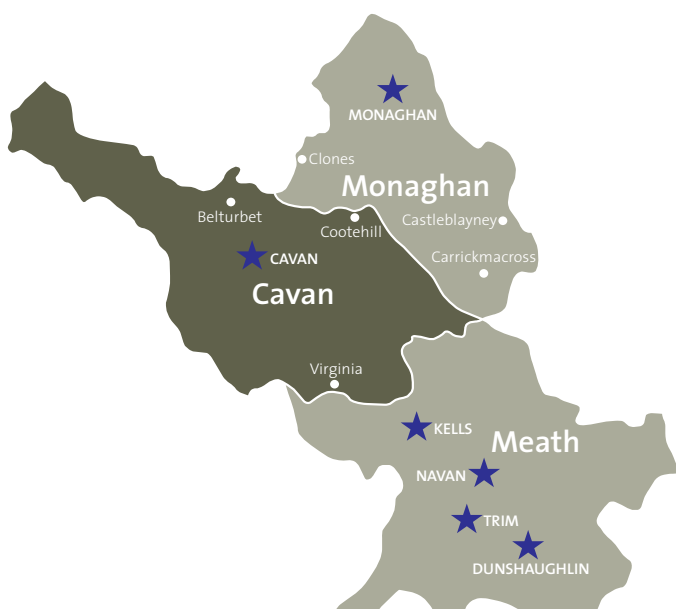
We provide services to young children up to the age of six with a wide range of needs.

We also provide support and training to parents of the children who are in our service.

We aim to help children and their families to participate as fully as is possible in their local communities.

Services are provided in the North East in partnership with the HSE Dublin North East.

## AREA MAP



- ★ **North East Early Services:**  
 Meath Early Services, Dunshaughlin  
 Meath Early Services, Trim  
 Meath Early Services, Navan  
 Meath Early Services, Kells  
 Cavan Early Services, Cavan  
 Monaghan Early Services

## WHY HAS MY CHILD BEEN REFERRED TO ENABLE IRELAND SERVICES?

Your child has been referred to our service because:

- they have a named disability or a concern in their development
- they require ongoing team based services
- they are under six years of age
- they live in our catchment area

We have a wide range of children in our service including children with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, developmental delay to name but a few.

Our approach is always 'child first' and our aim is to meet as many of your child's needs as possible so that they can reach their full potential.

If you are unsure why your child has been referred to our service it is important to discuss it further with the referrer.



## THE WAY WE WORK

Our priority when working with your child is to develop their potential as fully as is possible.

We do this by working in an inter/transdisciplinary team way.

This means that all team members have highly developed individual skills and share their skills with other team members.

Our intervention includes:

- individual sessions e.g. physiotherapy
- joint sessions e.g. a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist working jointly with your child
- groups (see below)
- home practice time - this allows for work, carried out in the centre, to be consolidated at home and in other settings.

We also provide parent information and training to develop your skills when working with your child.

Groups are a very natural way for your child to learn new skills and for you to meet other parents. Some examples of groups we run are: Parents Plus, Early Bird, Hanen, Getting Ready for School, to name but a few.

## MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

### THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST (OT)

The Occupational Therapist looks at how your child is developing the skills which are used in everyday life, for example eating and dressing skills.

The OT will help your child to develop their skills in the following areas:

- Basic play and learning skills e.g. attention, turn taking, problem solving
- Co-ordination and effective use of hands
- Self care skills such as feeding toileting and dressing

The OT may also help your child's independence by assessing their need for equipment for use at home or school, such as:

- Supportive seating, specialised buggy or wheelchair, bath seat.

### THE SOCIAL WORKER

The role of the Social Worker is to work with you and your family to build a supportive relationship and offer practical and emotional support by:

- Providing parent training and parent/child support programmes
- Providing information around benefits, entitlements and legislation
- Linking you in with other service providers that may be relevant to you and your child
- Empowering you and your family to support the needs of your child

### THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST (PT)

The Physiotherapist will look at your child's balance, co-ordination, muscle strength and overall physical development and mobility. They will work with you to help you understand your child's physical



condition and needs, and teach you specific techniques and exercises to support your child's health and development. The physiotherapist will look at your child's postural needs both during the day and at night, and will identify specific equipment that your child may need, for example a walker, orthotics, sleep system.

### **THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST (SLT)**

The Speech and Language Therapist aims to help your child to develop their communication skills and eating, drinking and swallowing skills. Communication skills include understanding of language, how your child expresses themselves with words or by gesture or pictures and how they use speech sound and how they combine them into words.

They may assist your child with alternative forms of communication where required, for example sign language or using pictures.

### **THE CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER (CFSW)**

Child and Family Support Workers offer a supportive role to families and the team. They assist therapists and support families in implementing, adapting and reviewing individual programmes for your child. The CFSW may work jointly with the therapists or carry out individual sessions with your child. They also take the lead and assist in running groups which will benefit children and parents, e.g. Buntus, Parent and Child Groups etc.

### **THE PSYCHOLOGIST**

The Psychologist will look at your child's overall development including strengths and areas of difficulty that may affect their learning and development. This may include cognitive abilities, play skills and social, emotional and behavioural development. Information may be gathered in a number of settings, for example home or playschool.

## **THE NURSE**

The nurse provides a home based service from birth to pre-school age. They support families in understanding their child's difficulties and they liaise with services outside of the team to help obtain all that your child or family may require depending on your needs.

They promote good health care and help to develop parenting skills.

They will also assess your child for pre-school and home support and may hold clinics with the paediatrician.

Please note, not all services have a Nurse.

## **ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT**

The administration support on the team is your first point of contact for the team. They deal with your calls and queries, and anything they cannot answer will be directed to the relevant team member. They have a role with regard to information, data collection and administration support to the team.

## **THE EARLY SERVICES MANAGER**

The Early Services Manager has overall responsibility for the coordination of services to children and families in their geographical area. They are responsible for planning, developing and managing both services and staff as well as ensuring/supporting models of good practice.

## **THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICES**

The Director of Services manages all of the Enable Ireland services in the Dublin South and North East areas. The Director of Services is responsible for ensuring that quality services are delivered at all services in line with the philosophy of Enable Ireland and has overall responsibility for the development and management of the services in these areas.

## KEY WORKER

Each child/family accessing the service will have a named key worker.

The overall role of the key worker is to act as a link person between the family, the rest of the team and other professionals/services/agencies, where appropriate.

The key worker can also:

- Provide you with information
- Help deal with any queries about the service
- Help deal with any issues you might have about the service for your child
- Assist you in preparing for family meetings
- Provide support
- Help you in identifying the needs of your child

Your key worker takes this role on alongside their normal duties as a team member.



## YOUR ROLE AS PARENT/CARER

In Enable Ireland we see parents as experts on their child and equal members of the team. We like to hear your views on the service we provide and respect your right as parents to make and be involved with decisions relating to your child. We want you to work in partnership with us by:

- asking questions
- seeking clarification
- looking for any information that you need
- by participating as fully as you can in implementing your child's programme.

As parents you have an important role in supporting your child's play and development in all sorts of everyday activities and during specific play time with your child.

Play is central to all early learning experiences. In play children learn about the world, about how other people live and feel, about creating things and ideas, making decisions and solving problems.

The most important learning environment for your child is your home where he or she has the opportunity to explore, experiment, learn new skills and understand more about him/herself and others.

The Enable Ireland team members will divide their time between working with your child directly and sharing skills with you as parents so that you can use these new skills when your child is at home and in other environments.

## PLANNING FOR YOUR CHILD

Shortly after joining the service a planning meeting will be held. The purpose of the planning meeting is to bring the parents and the team together to share information and put in place a plan to meet your child's needs.

You may be asked to fill out a questionnaire prior to the planning meeting. Your key worker may assist you when completing this.

Review meetings will take place during the course of your child's time with Enable Ireland, to review goals and plan for further intervention. You will receive a copy of the goals agreed at the planning meetings.

## REVIEWING YOUR CHILD'S PLAN

The opportunity to review goals set at the planning meeting can take place at any stage. It may be done at the end of a period of sessions, over the phone or at the end of an individual session. The regular reviewing of goals is important to ensure that the goals remain relevant, achievable and that they can still be met in a timely manner.

## WHAT INFORMATION DO WE HOLD ON YOUR CHILD?

Enable Ireland are committed to protecting your privacy. Information/ data in relation to service users and their families which is held by Enable Ireland North East Services is treated with the strictest confidence, and only shared by Enable Ireland personnel within the Early Services Team on a 'need to know' basis. Information may also be shared in part with the HSE.

Prior to assessment or service intervention commencing, Enable Ireland must seek the permission of the legal guardian(s) of the child to provide the service. We do this by asking the guardian(s) of the child to sign relevant consent forms before assessment or intervention commences.

We will then ensure that we keep the guardian(s) informed and consulted on the delivery of services to the child.

### WHAT INFORMATION DO WE KEEP?

We will record your child's name, gender, address and date of birth as well as the Guardians' names and addresses and the source and date of the referral. We also record details of your child's needs and family circumstances.

### WHY WE KEEP RECORDS.

- To assess your child's needs and plan their service.
- To document the history of service intervention and monitor your child's progress.
- To follow the law – for example we need to keep accurate and up to date records on any action we have taken under the Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003) and Freedom of Information Act 2014.
- To review the services we provide to make sure it is of high quality.
- To investigate complaints or legal claims.

## **WHAT TYPES OF RECORDS DO WE KEEP?**

We keep a paper file and an electronic file.

We will not collect sensitive information about you without your explicit consent, and the information we hold will be accurate and up to date. All personal information is held securely in accordance with our internal security policies and procedures around file management. Enable Ireland's electronic data system is a secure system and can only be accessed by relevant Enable Ireland employees.

**If you have any queries in relation to the information we hold on your child or you wish to check that information, please contact your local service manager. If you find any inaccuracies we will delete or correct it promptly.**



## UNABLE TO MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT?

### IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

We really do appreciate you not bringing your child into the service when they are sick as they cannot perform to their best and they may pass on their sickness to other children or staff members. Ring us as soon as you can to cancel the appointment.

### OTHER REASONS FOR NOT ATTENDING

We do understand that it is not always possible to attend your appointment for genuine reasons.

To ensure that we can offer your appointment to someone else, do give us plenty of notice. By doing this you are helping to prevent waiting lists for services.

### ARRIVING LATE FOR APPOINTMENTS

If you are more than 20 minutes late for an appointment then it may not proceed (at the discretion of the staff member).

### IF YOU REGULARLY FAIL TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS

Failing to attend appointments on a regular basis can be seen as being neglectful towards your child's needs. This will be discussed with you and ultimately may result in you being reported to TUSLA, Child and Family Agency.



## DISCHARGE FROM ENABLE IRELAND NORTH EAST

We aim wherever possible to discharge your child before they are six years of age. For some children this will not be possible due to their particular needs.

Your child will be discharged from our service when:

- They are six years of age
- They no longer have ongoing needs or a disability that require a team based service
- You move from the area
- At your request if you can show that your child is receiving services elsewhere e.g. from private providers

Following discharge whether at six or sooner, a referral will be made to the service that your child requires e.g. school age team, Primary Care teams, etc.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Enable Ireland aims to provide and maintain safe and healthy conditions at all of our services. This includes safe use of equipment as well as safe systems of work for employees, visitors, service users and their families.

Our health and safety statement is available for you to see in the reception area of your local centre.

Safety precautions in use at our services must be adhered to by everyone if we are to prevent accidents. The role of parents/carers in this is to report any defects in our buildings or equipment/toys to a member of staff as soon as possible.

### **KEY POINTS FOR PARENTS/CARERS TO NOTE WHEN BRINGING YOUR CHILD FOR SERVICES:**

- Familiarise yourself with the fire exits in the building you are attending on your first visit.
- Please sign in and out each time you visit the centre.
- Remain in the centre while your child is attending intervention services.
- Don't leave child(ren) alone in your car, in the reception area, or in the playground.
- All accidents or incidents which occur at our services should be reported to a member of staff as a matter of priority.

### **HOME VISITS**

Enable Ireland has a policy with regards to home visits that includes clear guidance for staff that they may not meet with a child in their home without the presence of a parent or carer. The policy also clearly states that staff cannot supervise children in the absence of a parent/ carer for any reason.

**Please talk to any member of staff if you have a question in relation to health and safety at your service.**

## OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Enable Ireland aims to work in the best interests of children at all times and to promote children's welfare and dignity.

Enable Ireland has a duty of care in this regard. We wish to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in our services.

We do this by:

- Giving parents and workers relevant information about what we do and what to expect from us.
- Making sure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and, where necessary, supervised.
- Letting parents know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy with.

We also have a duty to notify TUSLA, Child and Family Agency if we see or hear anything we are concerned about in terms of a child being protected and safe e.g. children left at home alone, children regularly not being brought to appointments and children who are being physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

One of our goals is to provide services in a child centred way. Some of the ways we do this include:

- Valuing and respecting children as individuals
- Where we can, listening to children
- Encouraging and praising children
- Where we can, involving children in decision making
- Ensuring children get equal rights and protection no matter what sex, race, disability, religion and nationality they are.

It is important for the protection of all concerned that staff, volunteers, children and families have guidelines on what is expected and what is acceptable with respect to their behaviour.

A copy of our staff code of behaviour and our child protection policy are displayed in the reception/waiting area of all our buildings.



## DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Enable Ireland has a dignity and respect at work policy. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to protecting the dignity of employees and to encourage respect for others at work.

This is done by creating a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or sexual harassment and by welcoming diversity.

There are clear outlines for dealing with any breaches of behaviour in this regard.

This policy extends beyond that of protection from other employees to all individuals within the work place. Thus the policy applies to all employees, service users and their families, contractors, suppliers and visitors.

The policy applies at our premises and in community based locations.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like to see a copy of this policy.

## COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Our aim is to provide high quality services to children and their families.

Our role is to provide these services in a professional, respectful and courteous manner.

We value and welcome any feedback you have about our services.

### HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

We love to hear how well we are doing, so do tell any member of staff if you are happy with your service, leave a comment in our comments box or send an email or card to us.

If at any time you are not satisfied with any element of your service, our aim is to 'nip things in the bud', so do let your key worker know by phone or in person as soon as possible so that we can resolve your concerns quickly.

If you are still not satisfied then ask to speak to the team leader or, failing that, the Early Services Manager.

You can also fill in a complaints form which is located in your local services' reception or write, email or fax us.

## NATIONAL DISABILITY DATABASES

There are two national disability databases –the physical and sensory disability database and the intellectual disability database.

The databases help provide a picture of the specialised health and personal social service needs of people with disabilities.

The purpose of the databases is to

- Plan service developments
- Prioritise service needs
- Help the decision making process when deciding on how to allocate resources
- For research in trends around people with disabilities

Consent for your child's information to be put on either database will be sought.

All information that is put on the databases is confidential and cannot be accessed by anyone outside the Health Research Board. Your child's information can be removed from the databases at any time.

## RETAIL AND FUNDRAISING

Enable Ireland raises funds throughout Ireland through a variety of projects.

Since 1987 a network of charity shops have provided much needed profits that have contributed to Enable Ireland services nationally. All proceeds from the sale of items in the shops go towards Enable Ireland's capital expenditure programmes, ensuring that we are in a position to provide services when and where they are needed. There are two shops in the north east – one in Navan and one in Drogheda.

We would encourage any donations you can make to the shops of clothing, linen, shoes, books and bric-a-brac.

All donated clothing not of a quality for resale is exported for recycling.

We have fundraising programmes more locally as well including bike runs, sponsored cycles, mini marathon runners, to name but a few. These are all organised by enthusiastic parents and the money raised at these events goes directly to your local service. Please speak to any member of staff about any ideas you may have for raising money for us. All donations for the charity shops can be left into your local centre.





# **ENABLE IRELAND NORTH EAST EARLY SERVICE LOCATIONS**

## **MEATH EARLY SERVICES**

### **NAVAN**

Unit 13 Mullaghaboy Industrial Est., Navan,  
Phone: 046-9092530 • Fax: 046-9059027  
Email: [admin.navan@enableireland.ie](mailto:admin.navan@enableireland.ie)

### **KELLS**

Climber Hall, Oldcastle Road, Kells, Co. Meath  
Phone: 046-9282829 • Fax: 046-9282839  
Email: [admin.navan@enableireland.ie](mailto:admin.navan@enableireland.ie)

### **TRIM**

Lisieux House, St. Joseph's Hospital Complex ,  
Trim, Co. Meath  
Phone: 046-9481852 • Fax: 046-9481853  
Email: [admin.meath@enableireland.ie](mailto:admin.meath@enableireland.ie)

### **DUNSHAUGHLIN**

Unit 2 Aerbridge House, Dunshaughlin Business Park,  
Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath  
Phone: 01-8240696 • Fax: 01-8240785  
Email: [admin.meath@enableireland.ie](mailto:admin.meath@enableireland.ie)

## **CAVAN EARLY SERVICES**

Hillside, Rathcorrick, Cavan.  
Phone: 049-4326990 • Fax: 049-4326991  
Email: [admin.cavan@enableireland.ie](mailto:admin.cavan@enableireland.ie)

## **MONAGHAN EARLY SERVICES**

Errigal House, St Davnet's Campus, Rooskey, Co. Monaghan.  
Phone: 047-82238 • Fax: 047-82224.  
Email: [admin.monaghan@enableireland.ie](mailto:admin.monaghan@enableireland.ie)



## **ENABLE IRELAND NORTH EAST SERVICE**

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Navan, Co. Meath

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