



# The **Wicklow Child & Family Project** supporting children and parents with the help of the **Parents Plus** **Parenting When Separated Programme.**



## The Wicklow Child & Family Project, A History

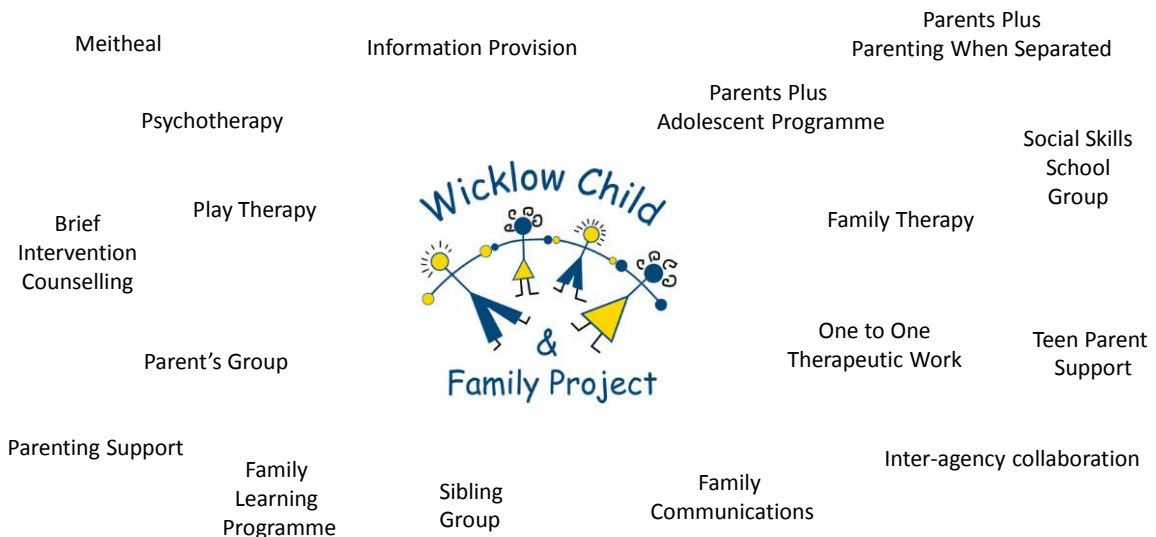
- The Wicklow Child & Family Project is a family support service established over twelve years ago by the Health Service Executive, Wicklow Working Together and members of the local community.
- The vision was to establish an imaginative, creative, quality based project that would be a significant resource for both children and parents in Wicklow Town and it's environs.
- The Project is currently funded through TUSLA, Child & Family Agency and managed by County Wicklow Partnership.

## A Little More History... ..



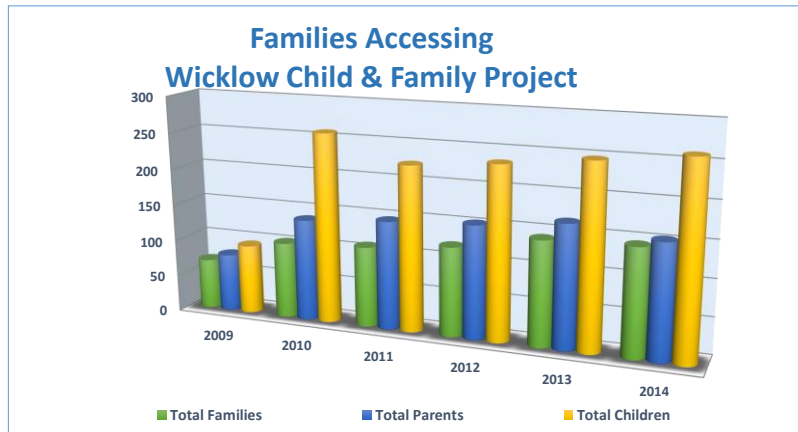
- Wicklow Child & Family Project aims to provide services and supports that will improve the quality of life for all the children and families we work with.
- We do this by engaging with families in a collaborative, non-judgemental manner. The Project supports parents by empowering them to provide a safe and caring environment for their children to grow personally, socially, emotionally, cognitively and developmentally.

## What We Do... ..



## Why the Links with Parents Plus

- Subsequent to the dramatic demise of the Celtic Tiger (2007) staff in Wicklow Child & Family Project saw a dramatic rise in referrals to the service with parental separation being one of the primary reasons.



## What About the Children?

It soon became evident within the Wicklow Child & Family Project that the impact parental separation had on the children, was significant. The children were increasingly presenting with issues such as:

- Anxiety
- Relationships
- Separation Anxiety
- Emotional/Behavioural Issues
- Anger
- Guilt
- Sense of Belonging
- Fear
- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Grief



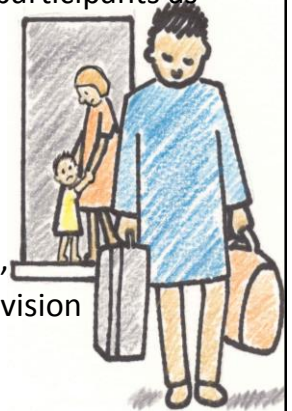
## Collaboration With Parents Plus

- In 2012 the Wicklow Child & Family Project applied to Parents Plus to be part of a study to develop a programme which would enable separated parents to positively co-parent their children.
- The study focused on parents preparing for or going through separation/divorce.
- The content of the study was developed using international evidence, best practice and with input from Irish separated parents in order to provide social relevance.



## Parents Plus Parenting When Separated Programme.

- Parenting When Separated is delivered over the course of six weeks.
- Child Centred Approach
- Prior to the course being delivered, the facilitator meets with participants as part of a screening process.
- Participants consist of residential and non-residential parents.
- It is recommended that parents of the same children attend different programmes.
- Two topics are covered each week.
- Sessions consist of peer support, interactive group discussions, group & individual work, facilitated exercises, information provision and practical homework.





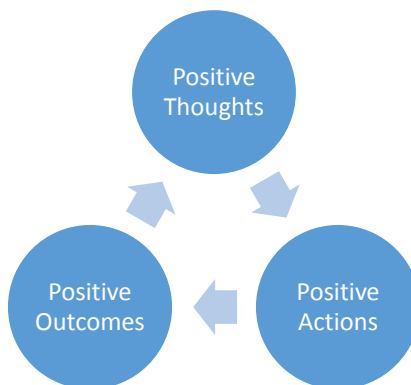
## Collaboration To Date



- The Wicklow Child & Family Project has currently delivered five Parenting When Separated programmes. One programme was delivered in partnership with Arklow Springboard, with the remaining four being delivered independently.
- To date a total of 33 parents have successfully completed the programme and received certification through our service.
- The Wicklow Child & Family Project is now committed to delivering the programme twice a year not only to Project clients but to other voluntary and statutory agencies and their clients.

## The Outcomes

The participation of these **33 parents** and their commitment to making changes for their families had a positive impact for **71 children**



## Parental



*"My teenage daughter's mental health was seriously affected due to our separation. Since taking part in the Parenting When Separated programme I have made a conscious effort to open the lines of communication with my ex. At the moment we are both supporting our daughter while she attends Pieta House."* **Mother, PWS 3.**

*"It suddenly became obvious that my kids were struggling and that I needed to do something"* **Father, PWS 4.**

## More



*"When I started this course I was looking for a happier more content child and I think I am on my way to getting there".* **Mother, PWS 5**

*"Taking a step back and focusing on the good, made things better for me and the kids".* **Father, PWS 1**

## And Even More... .. feedback

*"I have had no access to my girls for over a year and a half due to the breakdown of my marriage. While this has been incredibly difficult for me the programme has provided me with options which will assist me in communicating more positively with me ex-wife which will hopefully lead to my seeing my girls again"* **Father, PWS 2**

*"I did this course cause the Social Worker told me to. At the start, I sort of felt it was going to be "\*\*\*\*\*" but now I see how it will make things better for me and the kids"* **Mother, PWS 5**



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Thank  
You!

*Deirdre O'Sullivan*