

Parents Plus

Strategic Plan

2015 - 2018



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Parents Plus is committed to developing high quality therapeutic and educational materials for families and to providing support to professionals working with children and families in the community. Parent Plus particularly wishes to support families affected by significant challenges such as disability, mental health problems and disadvantage with the mission of improving long term outcomes for children.

Parents Plus was established as a registered charity under the auspices of the Mater Hospital in 2001 (Charity No. CHY 13664) and a company limited by guarantee in 2013 (CRO 530105). All profits from sales of programmes and training are re-invested in developing new materials and sponsoring facilitator training.

Values

- Evidence-Based Service – committed to researching outcomes and developing effective programmes as well as encouraging facilitators to continually evaluate their practice to ensure their groups meet their family's needs
- Collaborative Practice – working closely with families to ensure the programmes meet their goals and to ensure their experience and knowledge is central to the content of the materials
- Empowerment – the programmes are focused on encouraging children, adolescents and parents to achieve their potential and the professional training is focused on encouraging professionals to achieve the highest standards of excellence and to build sustainable family support projects within their local communities

Key Achievements

1) Programme Development

In collaboration with Irish families, Parents Plus have developed a series of educational and therapeutic programmes that teach communication skills, behaviour management, and relationship building to families. Delivered by trained and supervised professionals over 8-12 weeks to families, the courses illustrate communication skills with DVD footage, backed up by group exercises and discussion and homework in order to support participants to manage problems and to improve the quality of family life. Currently Parents Plus offer five flagship programmes:

- *The Early Years Programme* (parents of children aged 0 – 7 years)
- *The Children's Programme* (parents of children aged 6 – 11 years)
- *The Adolescent's Programme* (parents of older children and adolescents)
- *Working Things Out* (A structured therapeutic and educational programme for adolescents on dealing with depression and other mental health problems)
- *Parenting When Separated Programme* (psycho-educational course for parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through a separation or divorce)

2) Extensive Dissemination

First developed in 1998, the Parents Plus Programmes are used throughout Ireland with over 2500 professionals across several hundred agencies from all 32 counties in Ireland having received training and support in the last ten years alone. Further, Parents Plus has a growing international presence, with programmes used in Europe, Australia and the Far East. In particular in the last year, six agencies in England have received onsite training in last year.

3) Professional Training

Parents Plus have an established Quality Implementation protocol to ensure a quality delivery of the programmes that lead to positive outcomes for families. The Parents Plus Quality Protocol includes facilitator training, post-training supervision and an accreditation process for professional and community agencies working with families.

This Parents Plus Quality protocol has been successfully used in some major initiatives in Ireland such as the Early Learning Initiative, run by the National College of Ireland, the Early Childhood Services run by the CDI in West Tallaght, the Fingal Parenting Initiative supported by the NEYAI and national school based programmes run by the National Behaviour Support Service.

4) Research Basis

There is now a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the high impact of the Parents Plus Programmes in terms reducing emotional/behaviour problems for children, alleviating parental stress as well as improving children's learning within the home. Positive outcomes have consistently been demonstrated in a variety of contexts including preventative parenting programmes within primary and secondary schools (Hand et al, 2013 Nitsch, et al 2011), and early years prevention services (Kilroy et al 2010, Hayes et al 2012) as well as within mental health and disability settings (Hand et al 2013 , Coughlin et al, 2009, Griffin, et al, 2010) and with separated parents (Keating, 2013). See www.parentsplus.ie/research.

5) Independent status

Up until 2014, Parents Plus was sited within the Mater CAMHS and in July 2014, Parents Plus secured funding and a premises that allowed it to be established independently of the local HSE. This facilitates Parents Plus to more freely adopt a national and international brief and to work with agencies within education, justice, community development as well as health.

Strategic Goals 2015 - 2018

- 1) To continue to meet the needs of the many multi-agency groups working with disadvantaged families who are requesting training, programme materials and implementation support where the challenges to engage parents are more complex.
- 2) Extend the roll out of the Parents Plus Quality Implementation Protocol that has been so successful in many pilot sites. Specifically, the goal is to increase the provision of structured post training and implementation support to agencies who seek Parents Plus training. This might mean allocating a Parents Plus Trainer to support agencies over extended periods (2-3 years) to ensure a successful bedding down of the evidence based practice so it is sustainable in the long term and thus maximizes outcomes and benefits families on an on-going basis.
- 3) Continue to innovate and develop the Parents Plus Programmes in response to new emerging needs and societal problems.
- 4) To increase the infrastructure of Parents Plus so that we can respond to requests for training supervision and implementation support, through provision of more regional and onsite training to meet the needs of local communities and professional networks.
- 5) To collaborate with funders to increase the level of sponsorship available for the many agencies willing to provide evidence based programmes to families.
- 6) To consolidate the research base of Parents Plus, by publishing papers on the outstanding studies and through the publication of a review and meta-study that reports on the entire research base.
- 7) To continue growing the range and quality of post training supports to trained Parents Plus Facilitators via creative online and real resources, increased communications and provision of a range of face to face supports through supervision and support networks.
- 8) To deliver a biannual practice conference to support Parents Plus facilitators and to showcase the work of Parents Plus to service commissioners and prospective facilitators.

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