



## *IFDCO Christmas News Sheet*

16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2009

*Dear IFDCO Members,*

*As we head into the festive season, it can be a fitting time of the year to pause and enjoy some perspective on how far we've come as an organisation. IFDCO has changed and grown so much since its inception. The recent conference in Cork, showed how we offer a strong educational component in the care that is provided to young children through play based learning. High expectation is placed on Care Providers to increase their skills and the Co-ordination Unit staff to maintain a professional development focus. It has been another year of significant changes both here and internationally for many. The major change in Australia has been the recent introduction of the Early Years Learning Framework. Some countries may already be using a similar framework to achieve excellence in early care and education for their youngest children. I will describe this system in more detail at a later time.*

*Every country has experienced at least some part of the global financial crisis, Australia is no different. Apparently we are out of the worst of it now but we can certainly sympathise with those countries who are still feeling the effects in so many ways. We also feel for those countries, like Ireland, and parts of the UK, that are so badly affected by flooding and other climatic devastation.*

*It makes it difficult to be thinking of Christmas for some folk who are experiencing any type of hardship at this time . I'm sure that we can all take the time to hope that things will improve for them in the near future.*

*I would like to take this opportunity of wishing everyone in our Family Day Care community, a safe and peaceful holiday season and a year of happy days in 2010.*

*Grace McDonald  
President IFDCO*



### **Christmas Greetings from Patricia Murray, Ireland**

My colleagues in *Childminding Ireland* join me in wishing you all a very happy Christmas. Enjoy the break from your busy lives and start a happy new year, well refreshed!

I have made some progress in my role exploring linkages between IFDCO and other sister international organizations. I know Grace McDonald, our World President 2009 – 2012, will be a fine ambassador for IFDCO in following up those connections. We will keep you, our members, posted on international conferences which are relevant to our work with children and hope as many of us as possible can attend and hold IFDCO meetings alongside.

There is very exciting news from Ireland! Our Government has introduced an Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme, providing *all* 3 – 4 year-olds with a free place in an early learning pre-school setting. Appropriate family day care providers may participate in delivering this free pre-school year, subject to training level, suitable environment and compliant with Pre-School Regulations requirements. The national organizations such as *Childminding Ireland*, The National Children's Nurseries Association and the Irish Pre-school Playgroups Association have been given the responsibility to implement the National Quality and Learning Frameworks (see [www.siolta.ie](http://www.siolta.ie) and [www.aistear.ie](http://www.aistear.ie) In the Irish Language, Siolta means journey, in this case, the journey to "quality" and Aistear means a pathway – in this case, a pathway to "learning!") This work has insured our funding level into 2010 and the funders agenda coincides with *Childminding Ireland* 's role in promoting and supporting quality in family home care.

**On a lighter, Christmassy note!**

**If you are responsible for preparing the festive meal – and have family capable of helping, then try this! I got the tip a few years ago – and it has worked for me!**

- **Get Buy-in from those who will be eating the Christmas Meal, that it is a collaborative effort**
- **Tell them about the Tasks Raffle**
- **List the items that need to be done on raffle tickets**  
(such things as - peel spuds, set table, prep vegetables, clean bathroom, put out rubbish over the period 24, 25, 26<sup>th</sup> Dec; maintain the lighted fire, including bringing in fuel, cleaning and lighting as agreed; candles and nightlights, Christmas tree lights, etc. etc. Make stuffing; stuff the turkey; heat and present the pudding; Stack the dishwasher; unstuck the dishwasher etc. etc)
- **Put the Tasks into a hat**
- **Each person takes a Task**
- **Small households will have to take on more than one Tasks Raffle ticket out of the hat, until all the tasks are covered!**
- **Persons mutually agreeable may swap Tasks**
- **Display a list of who's responsible for what!**
- **Don't be critical of how a task is done – there are many ways to skin a cat!**

with every blessing at Christmas and wishing you every success in 2010!

**Patricia Murray, BA., Dip. Ed.,  
Outgoing President IFDCO  
Chief Executive,  
*Childminding Ireland***

