



*Christmas Greetings and  
Best Wishes for the  
Coming Year*

*Beannachtaí na Nollag is  
gach dea-ghuí i gcomhair  
na h-athbhliana*

## Happy Christmas Wishes from the President!

Dear IFDCO Members,

We have come to the end of another year – and judging by the amount of interest in the Conference in Ireland in July – IFDCO goes from strength to strength!

The Conference will start on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> with delegates meeting up in Dublin and experiencing one of Dublin's famous theatres. On Tuesday, we will travel by coach to Cork and settle in for the official opening of the conference on Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

We have the on-line registration form up and working. Go to "Register Now" on [www.ifdco.com](http://www.ifdco.com) You will also find the Keynote speakers there and information about the events and tours associated with the conference. We have the benefit of professional conference organisers, thanks to funding for the conference from the National Lottery in Ireland, so any questions may be addressed to [orlac@conferencepartners.ie](mailto:orlac@conferencepartners.ie)

I hope that all those who are excited about the possibility of coming to the conference will be able to do so – many countries are experiencing a startling down-turn in economic terms and that is impacting already on the Childminding providers' income. But certainly, a warm Irish welcome awaits you here. The Keynotes and presentations for the seminars all relate directly to family home childcare. They will be of great interest to providers and policy makers. We will also provide the opportunity for round-table discussions which will enable us to share ideas for the development of quality in our home care sub-sector.

I have been honoured to be invited to Greece for the OMEP meeting in April, and offered the opportunity to speak about how our International Family Day Care Organisation and OMEP, the Worldwide Organisation for Pre-school Children, can work together into the future, for the benefit of all child in childcare and pre-school settings. This is an exciting development and will certainly be a high point of my presidency.

May I wish you all a very happy Christmas holiday. I hope you get time to relax with you own children and families – and hopefully – you will be on the *receiving* end of some loving care at this important time.

With every good wish,

Beannachtaí na Nollag – Christmas Blessings from Ireland

Patricia Murray  
IFDCO International President  
2006 - 2009



Patricia Murray, President, IFDCO and Bernie Griffiths, Manager,  
*Childminding Ireland*

## Conference Programme



Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July  
19:30 Theatre Dublin

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July  
10:00 Coach To Cork and Visit to An Cosan & Rock of Cashel

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July  
10:00 Blarney Castle & Woollen Mills  
16:00 Conference Opening and Address  
Barry Andrews T.D., Minister for Children  
16:30 Keynote Address: Francis Douglas, Professor of Early Childhood Studies in University College Cork and also Director of the B.A. Degree in Early Childhood Studies. His main interest is in early years education and care having published at national and international levels in the area. As patron of IPPA, he has a particular affinity with the playgroup movement.  
He co-directed the externally funded UCC Early Years Curriculum Project (Project EYE) and co-directs the Early Years Postgraduate Studies Programme.  
17:30 Social Reception

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July

8.30 Registration  
9:00 Lord Mayor of Cork – Welcome Address  
9:15 Keynote Address: Sylva Langford  
Director General, Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in Ireland and is a well known Champion of children and young people.  
10:00 Keynote Address: Professor Guy Claxton  
Professor of the Learning Sciences, Co-Director: Centre for Real-Work Learning, University of Winchester, UK. He is the originator of the highly practical and innovative *Building Learning Power* approach to the creation of learning cultures in schools.  
11:00 Tea/Coffee  
11:30 Choice of Seminars / Master Class – Guy Claxton  
13:00 Lunch  
14:15 Keynote Address: Erik Sigsgaard  
Senior researcher, assistant professor in institutionalisation of modern childhood. He wants to share his views on what makes a good family day-care good. The good family day-care deinstitutionalises itself, in the good family day-care the children are assisted more than they are raised and in the good family day-care the children assist the provider.  
15:15 Choice of Seminars / IFDCO AGM / Cobh Tour  
16:30 - 17:45 Choice of Seminars

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July

8:30 Registration  
9:00 Keynote Address: Dr. Thelma Harms,  
FPG Child Development Institute, University North Carolina. USA. The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale - Developed and Revised  
10:00 Keynote Address: Ronnie Hill,  
Director Children's Services Regulation, Care Commission. Scotland. Do Childminders make the Grade? A risk based proportionate approach to the regulation of Childminders in Scotland.  
11:00 Tea/Coffee  
11:30 Choice of Seminar / Master Class – Dr Thelma Harms  
13:00 Lunch  
14:15 Keynote Address: Judy Layland,  
University of Otago College of Education, Dunedin, New Zealand. Affordance of Participation Rights for Children in Home-Based Education and Care: An Interactive Process Model of Participation  
15:15 Choice of Seminars  
16:30 -17:45 Choice of Seminars  
19:30 Gala Dinner or Food, Drink & Music Trail, Cork City.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July

8:30 Registration  
9:00 Keynote Address: Malene Karlsson  
Children's photo-documentation of family day care. How do young children in family day care see their every-day life? We have developed a method to give them tools for expression and will present results from studies in Denmark, Sweden and Ireland.  
10:15 Keynote Address: Jan White  
"Providing movement-rich outdoor play"  
11:00 Tea/Coffee Break  
11:30 Choice of Seminar  
13:00 Lunch  
14:15 Choice of Seminar  
15:30 Keynote Address: Jeff Johnson  
Keynote Title: Finding Your Smile Again. Children deserve happy, fulfilled, and passionate care givers, who love their jobs, but the work is often so stressful and challenging that it quickly steals your smile. This address looks at finding lost smiles, refreshing faded smiles, and keeping existing smiles bright.  
16:30 Conference Closing Ceremony and handover of IFDCO Presidency.

The full programme and booking form can be downloaded from [www.ifdco.com](http://www.ifdco.com) or [www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)

## News

### Childminders come top in Care Commission quality report

Latest figures released by the Care Commission reveal that Scotland's childminders are top of the league with higher inspection grades, on average, than nurseries and other daycare establishments.

The Care Commission regulates registered care facilities throughout Scotland and since April has begun grading all services to determine quality of service. All Early Years care service providers are assessed on 4 quality related criteria and subsequently receive a grading based on each so areas for improvement can easily be determined.

The grading system has revealed that Childminding is at the forefront for quality childcare. From quality of care and environment to staffing, management and leadership; Childminding services swept the board with the greatest proportion of high grades.

In terms of quality of care and support, Scotland's nurseries and other daycare providers show a higher proportion of poorer grades and a lower proportion of higher grades than childminders. Similarly, when grading quality of environment, childminders attained a much higher proportion of high grades and a much lower proportion of low grades than daycare providers.

Childminding's clean sweep continued with childminders outshining nurseries and other daycare providers by achieving a higher proportion of the highest grades for quality of staffing and also for quality of management.

The Care Commission report on the grading results details:

**“Childminding services show the largest proportion of any service category achieving grades 5 or 6 for EVERY theme”.**

This has come as no surprise to the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). Spokesperson Maggie Simpson, Director of Childminding Development said:

*“We are delighted that the new grading system implemented by the Care Commission has revealed what we have long known; childminders offer a consistently high quality of service with an environment perfectly suited to ensure children are best cared for, stimulated and happy. Parents should feel confident that childminders offer not only a flexible, home-from-home service; but also one that is second to none in terms of quality of care”.*

The inspection gradings are seen by Childminders as proof that their ethos of the importance of family-based care experiences for children's care and development is indeed valid. With Scotland's childminders top for quality of care, who could argue with them?

#### Notes:

Originally set up in 1985, the structure of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) is based upon a network of volunteer members from 32 local authority areas and around 60 staff who work to promote the organisation. Through this structure, SCMA aims to provide registered childminders with a strong support network that provides qualifications, training, advice, support, information and an elected member in each area.

SCMA has a membership of almost 5,000 childminder members each offering a family-friendly and flexible home-based childcare service. Childminders are registered and inspected by the Care Commission and have access to a wide range of training courses to ensure their service quality is maintained.

**Contact:** Leigh McEwan (SCMA, Communications Co-ordinator) on 01786 445 377 or email:

information@childminding.org

www.childminding.org

The Care Commission findings can be found at:

[http://www.carecommission.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=6531&Itemid=152](http://www.carecommission.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6531&Itemid=152)

If you have any items of interest you would like included in the next newsletter, or added to the website [www.ifdco.com](http://www.ifdco.com), please email [pmurray@childminding.ie](mailto:pmurray@childminding.ie)