

Lifestart Foundation

Belfast Recruitment – May 2010

Background Information for Candidates

The Nursery School Pilot Project

The Nursery School Pilot Project is a new departure for Lifestart in that the delivery of the Lifestart *Growing Child* programme has traditionally been carried out by affiliated projects based in local communities. The pilot arose out of concerns about the gap in educational provision for children between birth and three years of age and the low levels of school readiness noted in some children entering nursery school.

The Lifestart Foundation working in partnership with Edenderry Nursery School in the Shankill area and now with St Thérèse Nursery School in Poleglass aims to address these issues by offering local parents the Lifestart *Growing Child* programme.

Model:

- A Lifestart Family Visitor has been based in Edenderry Nursery School since April 2009.
- A Lifestart Family Visitor will be based in St Thérèse Nursery School.
- These family visitors are/will be working with parents in the schools' catchment areas.
- Providing in Year 1-2: The Lifestart *Growing Child* programme
- As the pilot project develops they will also deliver additional Lifestart services:

The Lifestart *Growing Child* 'At Home in School' programme

The Lifestart Parent Education Programme (OCN accredited)

The Lifestart Play Days programme

Purpose:

- Parents learn about child development and how best to support their children's learning.
- Parents are involved in their children's learning in very practical ways.

Outcomes

- Basic learning and social skills are stimulated and developed.
- The home-learning environment is enhanced and learning is embedded in the family.
- Children are ready for school.

Lifestart Foundation

Since its inception in 1989 the Lifestart Foundation, an all-Ireland charitable body, has been working to produce better child development outcomes by educating parents on how young children develop and learn in order that they might better help their own children to reach their full potential. It provides parents with age-specific

knowledge and information on child development not normally available to them but available to health and other professionals working with children or providing children's services.

The primary impact of the Lifestart programme is on parenting outcomes which in turn impact positively on child development outcomes. Outcomes for parents include increased knowledge, competence and parenting skills and enhanced efficacy, wellbeing and self-esteem. Lifestart children are better developed – physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially. They have fewer behavioural problems and are better prepared for formal learning and schooling than other children and they have better connections with their peers and their community.

St Thérèse Nursery School

St Thérèse Nursery has 52 pupils ranging in age from two to four years. In addition, SureStart run a programme for 12 two year olds in the afternoons. The Rainbow Parenting Group is affiliated to the Nursery and work out of the parents' room. They offer accredited and non-accredited courses for parents both on and off site. The school also supports the Parents Support Group for children with ADHD and Autism and the co-ordinator of this group is based at the school.

The school runs an after-schools club and a summer scheme. A cross community partnership was established two years ago which involves rural and urban schools, Catholic Maintained, Controlled and Integrated schools and the Rainbow Parenting Group. The activities involve parents and children from both communities.

A recent Department of Education inspection of the school deemed it to be 'outstanding'. The school also holds an Investor in People Award and has held this continually through re-assessment over the past nine years. The Co-ordinator of Rainbow Parenting was awarded a National Training Award for her work with the parents. The school is very proud of its focus on pastoral care and promotes wellbeing among its pupils, the parents and staff.