



## Report from Roscommon County Childcare Committee re: 2023 Ukrainian Supports

January – Dec 2023

Roscommon County Childcare Committee CLG (CCC) as part of Roscommon Ukrainian response forum both nationally and at County level, support Ukrainian families and children to gain access to play resources and/or childcare, supporting their transition to Ireland and children's overall development.

Nationally, Roscommon CCC is a member of DCEDIYs Ukrainian WG, attending WG meetings and supporting the national rollout of actions by CCCs nationwide.

Locally, Roscommon County Councils Ukrainian Community Response Forum was established in County Roscommon to enable the various organisations and agencies at local level, to work together in the delivery of services for Ukrainian refugees relocating to County Roscommon. Roscommon CCC participated in local forum meetings in 2023. Roscommon CCC is a member and attended monthly meetings of the local Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Ukrainian Forum.

As of December 2023, Roscommon CCC were aware of 84 children between the ages of 0-9 and 106 children aged 10-19 living in accommodation centres in County Roscommon. Roscommon CCC note that it is often difficult to keep an up-to-date number of children in the county as this number fluctuates on a weekly basis. This can be due to new arrivals and departures as well as, the number of children living in private accommodation who are not listed.

Roscommon CCC team delivered 75 Play & stay sessions with children and their accompanying parents/guardians in Ukrainian refugee accommodation centres, family resource centres (FRCs), local libraries and local community halls throughout the county. Roscommon CCC collaborated with FRCs and libraries to support integration of families into the community by way of play and stay sessions by inviting parents from local accommodation centres to the sessions.



Roscommon CCC in collaboration with Roscommon County Library developed a resource pack 'Play, Stay & Story-time' for children. The bag which had signposting information from the two agencies as well as books in different languages including Ukrainian was given to children who attended the Play and Stay sessions with their parents/guardians.

Source: Roscommon CCC

The Play and Stay sessions were approximately 60 mins long with parents and children in attendance. The goal of the sessions is to support children's development through play. These sessions are important to children aged 0-6 who are not accessing ECCE or childcare. For these children who are isolated from accessing the national childcare programmes, these sessions offer crucial learning and development opportunities to support transitions to their new environment.

Through observation, session facilitators learned about the children's interests and used this in planning for consecutive sessions. For children in accommodation centres, 1:1 play sessions were carried out when older children were at school approximately at least once a month. These sessions catered for children's development stages and provided children with opportunities to enjoy age-appropriate resources. For example: Using resources available to facilitate an arts and crafts session which supported the child's interests and provided the child with an opportunity to develop their language skills by talking with both the facilitator and parent about the materials available to them.



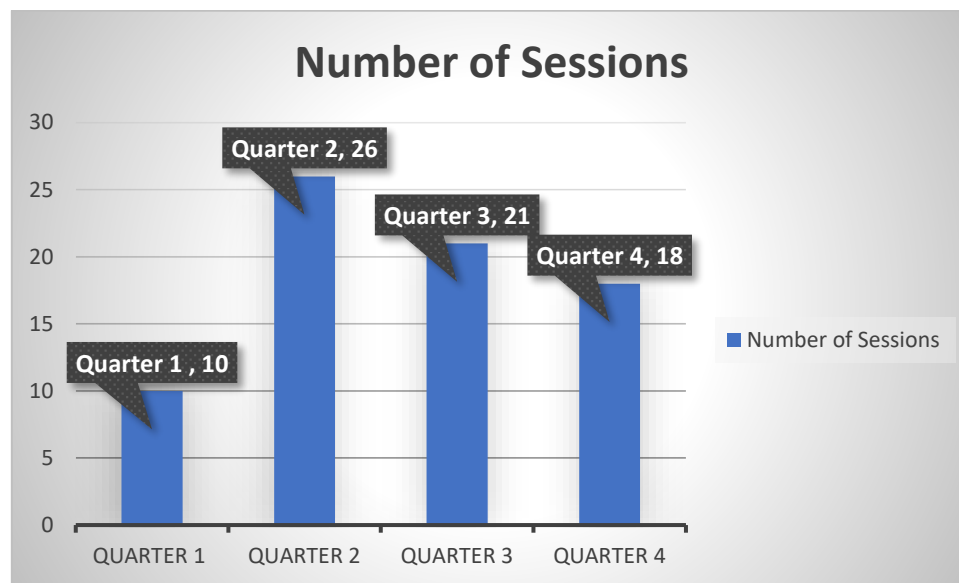
**Source: Roscommon CCC**

DCEDIY Ukrainian funding enabled Roscommon CCC to resource part time qualified staff to carry out the sessions, buy age-appropriate resources and travel to the locations across the county. Hours were also allocated for follow up support with parents, preparation for the sessions, data collection on capacity in the county and reporting to DCEDIY via CCI. Funding was also allocated to Roscommon County Childcare Committee's Childcare and Me app. Funding enabled the app to be translated to Ukrainian to support families coming to Ireland who are looking for childcare and/or Tusla supports. A full launch of the app is planned for early 2024.



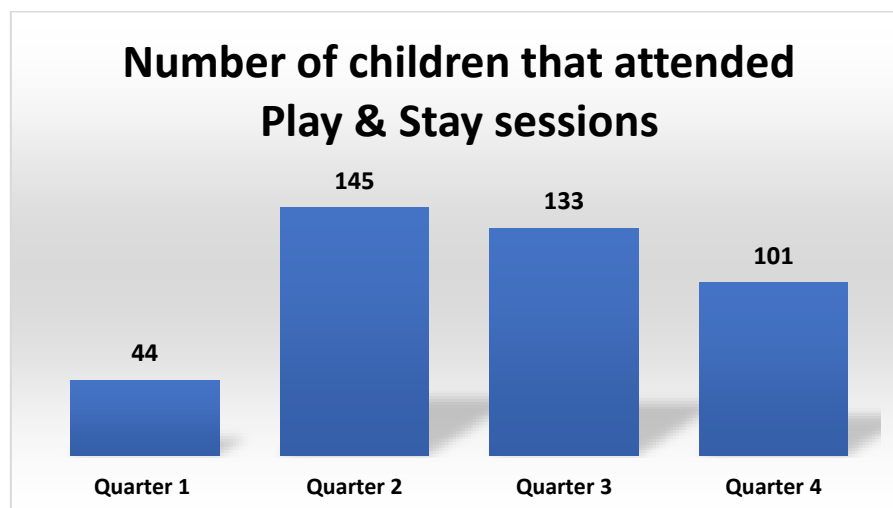
**Source: Roscommon CCC**

A total of **423 children** aged 0-15 years benefited from **75 Play and Stay sessions** carried out in the county in accommodation centres, local Family Resource Centre's, and libraries in 2023.



**Source: Roscommon CCC**

As some Play and stay sessions were held during Easter, summer and mid-term breaks, older children got involved to support their younger family members or friends. Roscommon CCC also collaborated with Roscommon Sports partnership to hold 2 sport Play and stay sessions during the summer. This was very well attended by the older children who were off for summer. It can also be seen in the graphs above and below that the number of sessions and children that attended increased during holiday time.



**Source: Roscommon CCC**

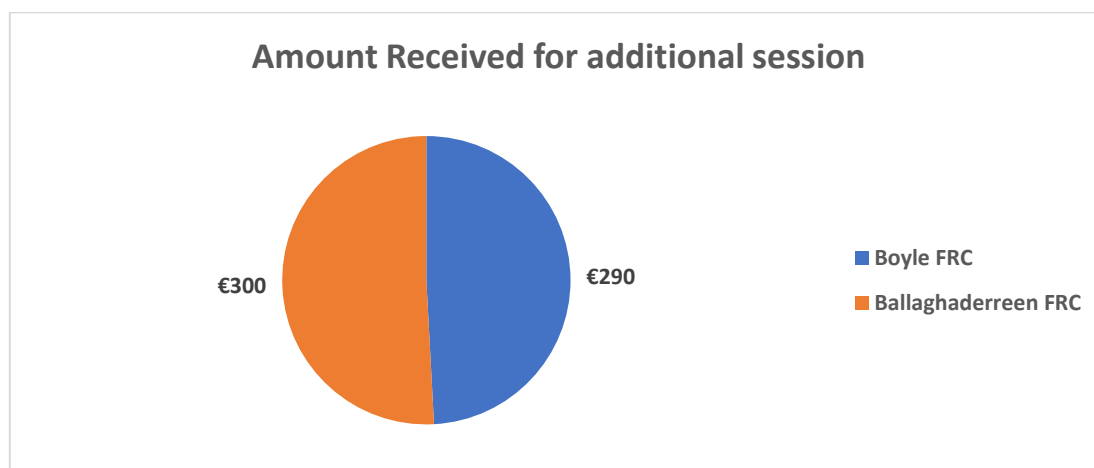
Roscommon CCC invited all children and their families in accommodation centres to attend Roscommon County Playday in July 2023. This collaborative action is to support play in the county and the theme for 2023 county play day was Wonder and Discovery.



Source: Roscommon CCC

Roscommon CCC also supported parent and toddler groups with the parent and toddler group grant applications to provide additional sessions to accommodate new families in their communities.

2 P & T groups in County Roscommon were successful in grant funding to support additional sessions to accommodate new families.



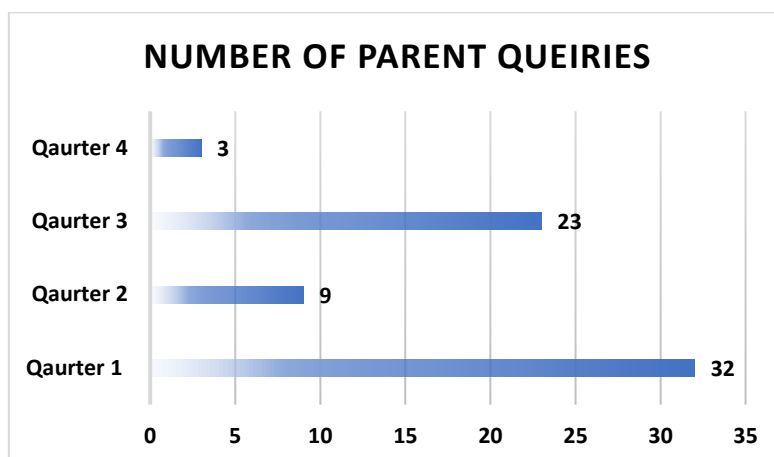
Source: Roscommon CCC

Following play and stay sessions, parents were offered support and information on the National Childcare Programmes. Roscommon CCC also attended events to support Ukrainian families with Childcare queries. E.G: in Q1, Roscommon CCC attended a recruitment networking event and supported many parents with childcare queries.

Follow up support by way of email was sent to all parents who received support/information. As part of this support, Roscommon CCC identified county childcare capacity and matched available places with parents seeking childcare. Roscommon CCC liaised with childcare services to identify vacant places and supported parents with ECCE or NCS applications.



Roscommon CCC seen an increase in 1:1 parental support coming up to September 2023. Follow up support allowed the parent to contact Roscommon CCC with further queries. **67** parents were signposted to National Childcare Programme information. Roscommon CCC supported parents on a 1:1 basis with their NCS application so that they could generate their CHICK required by the childcare service. 3 families were supported to access childcare through the National Childcare Scheme as a result of 1:1 support.



*Source: Roscommon CCC*

In September 2023, 5 children were supported to gain access to ECCE places through Roscommon CCC signposting and support. 1 child was supported to attend National School.

Roscommon CCC signposted Childcare services to the First 5 website with supports available. Supports were also available on Roscommon CCC website. A specific area in Roscommon CCC weekly bulletin was established to signpost local and national updates and signpost upcoming Play and Stay sessions in the County.



Roscommon CCC also signposted services to DCEDIY minimum qualification list and Tusla information to enable services to meet regulations and employ Ukrainian staff in their services.

In conclusion, Roscommon CCC looks forward to progressing this work into 2024. Roscommon CCC will continue to support parents with childcare queries, signpost services to relevant information/guidance and facilitate Play and Stay sessions with a focus on integration into the community.