



**ombudsman**  
for children & young people

# What do you say?

Exploring children's rights with children

First & Second Class



# What do you say?

Exploring children's rights with children

'What do you say?' is an Ombudsman for Children's Office resource.



**www.oco.ie**

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The new activities in these resource materials were also written by **Anne-Marie Herron, Anne-Marie Kealy** and **Owen McCarthy**.

The OCO would like to acknowledge the important contributions made by Clíodhna Ní Ghiollagáin and Kate Mitchell to the development of these materials.

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# Preface

Dear Teacher,

I am delighted that you have decided to use these resource materials to learn more about some of the many issues that affect children and relate to children's rights.

My job, and statutory responsibility, is to promote the rights and welfare of children up to the age of eighteen and to ensure that in law, policy and practice their best interests are considered. People often ask me where children's rights are defined. There are two key reference points: the Constitution, which is the basic legal instrument in Ireland, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a set of internationally agreed human rights standards for children, ratified in Ireland in 1992.

In 2007, we carried out the 'Big Ballot', a project where 74,000 children voted on the key issues affecting them. 560 primary and post-primary schools, Youthreach Centres and Senior Traveller Training Centres throughout Ireland supported these children and young people to participate. It is the largest consultation with children in Ireland to date and, needless to say, could not have happened without the support and enthusiasm of teachers across the country.

Feedback on the project indicated that the principal benefits of participation for children included the opportunity to explore children's rights; to form and express opinions; and to learn about and take part in a democratic process. Teachers spoke very positively about their experience of using the resource materials and many have since requested further materials on children's rights.

The team of teachers who developed the original resource materials for primary schools agreed to work with us again on these materials. We appreciate the expertise and creativity of Owen McCarthy, Ann Marie Herron and Anne-Marie Kealy.

I know the significant role that teachers play in children's lives. Our own experience of participative work with children reminds us that, like all those working directly with children, we are learning every day.

I hope these materials will support your work and that you and the children you work with will find them not only educational but fun.

If you would like to find out more about the OCO and our work to promote the rights and welfare of children in Ireland, please visit our website - **[www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie)**

Many thanks,



Emily Logan, Ombudsman for Children  
2010

# Introduction

Welcome to 'What do you say?'. This resource consists of activities that explore issues relating to children's rights. It includes references to rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Constitution.

These activities were created by a group of practising teachers and have been developed to facilitate implementation of aspects of the curriculum.

The materials introduce the role and work of the Ombudsman for Children's Office and give children the opportunity to explore and discuss the following issues:

- **Having a voice and being heard**
- **Family and care**
- **Health and wealth**
- **Education**
- **Play, leisure and recreation**
- **Inclusion**

Exploration of these issues will need to be treated with sensitivity. Teachers will need to consider the particular situations and experiences of children they are working with and adapt materials as required.

Drawing on the previous activities and open to adaptation by teachers, the final activity in this resource focuses on supporting children to make their voices heard and views known by organising and/or taking part in a ballot.

Participating in these activities will support children to develop a broad understanding of the importance of having a voice in matters affecting them.

**Constitution Article 40(6)(1)(i):**  
Citizens have the right to express their opinion freely.

**UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 12:**  
Children have the right to have a say about things that affect them.

# How to use this resource

## CORE ACTIVITIES

This resource comprises a manual for teachers, which includes photocopiable activity sheets, and an accompanying DVD, which provides a focus for several of the activities. This format aims to give children an opportunity to take part in enjoyable activities, which develop their understanding of rights and citizenship.

The first activity introduces the Ombudsman for Children. The remaining activities examine issues relating to children's rights in ways that develop knowledge, skills and values associated with citizenship education. These issues provide a focus for the final ballot activity, an exercise in citizenship and an introduction to participation in the democratic process. We hope the activities will be interesting and fun for children.

## PARENTS

A letter for distribution to parents/guardians, from the Ombudsman for Children, accompanies this resource. To afford parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss the issues raised in the resource with their children, activity sheets have a space for a parent's/guardian's signature. Schools are also encouraged to send home the results of the ballot activity.

## SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The activities facilitate aspects of curriculum teaching and learning, in particular in the context of SPHE (see diagram opposite). The activities support children to explore and discuss the issues and content with reference to their own experiences. The use of story is a strong feature of the resource materials for primary schools, from the fairytale stories for Infant classes through to the case studies for Senior classes.

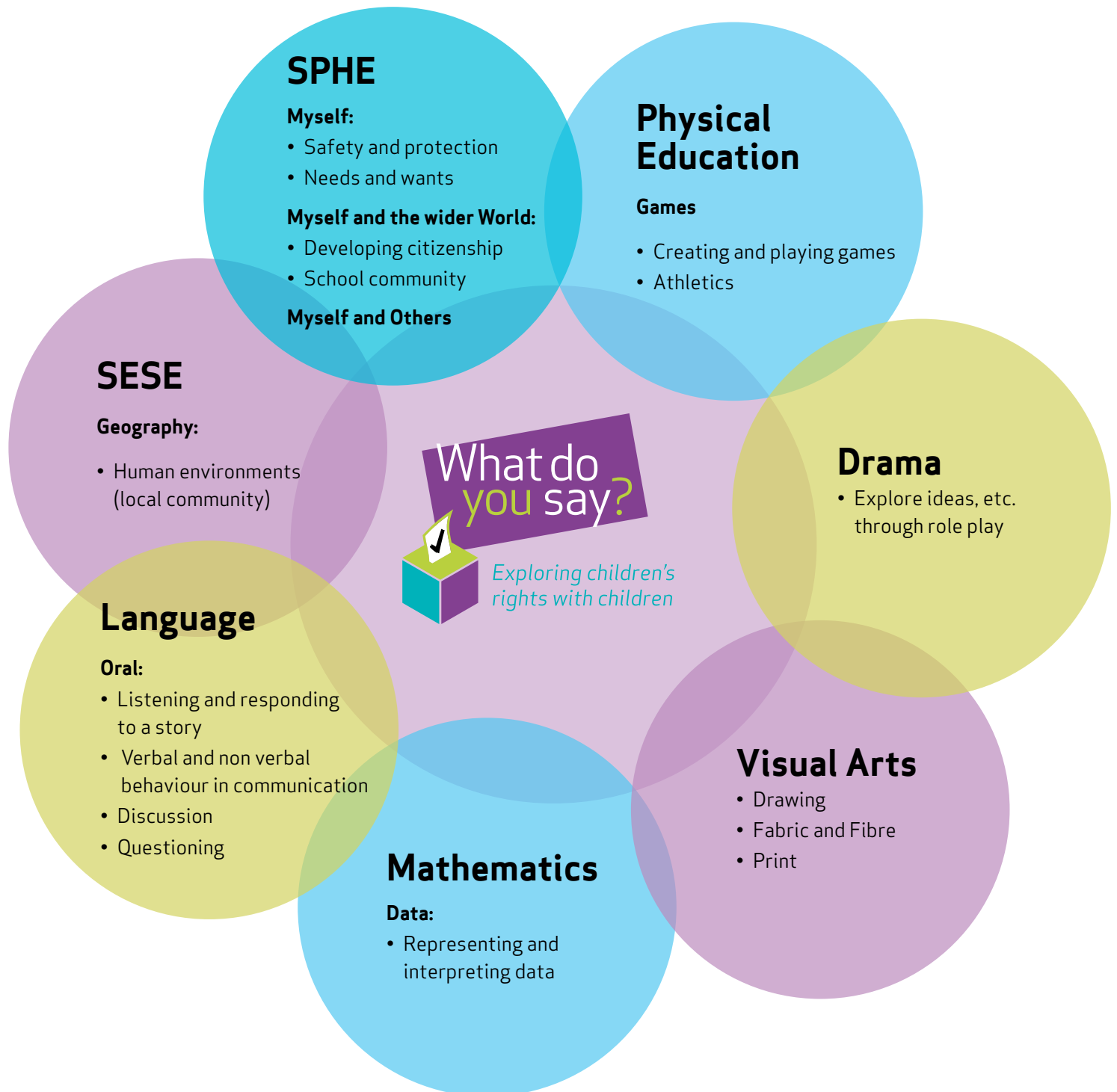
## NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Although these materials have been developed for teaching and learning in the context of children's formal education, the activities can also be used for work with children in non-formal education settings - for example, as part of a programme of activity for children attending after school clubs.

## METHODOLOGIES

The teaching and learning methodologies involved in completing the activities include discussion, debate, group work and role play. They encourage children to develop empathy and to take part in co-operative learning. Teachers are encouraged to support children to work together in mixed ability groups. Home links are fostered through actions that encourage further discussion of the issues at home. Children should feel a real sense of ownership of the work they do in the context of each activity.

## How 'What do you say?' relates to the Curriculum for First and Second Classes



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## MISSING SOMETHING?

THE MATERIALS IN THIS PACK ARE AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD FROM OUR SITE [WWW.OCO.IE](http://WWW.OCO.IE)

## KEY TO ICONS



**DVD Scene**



**Writing  
Drawing**



**Class Discussion  
Read Aloud**



**Homelink**



*The work of the Ombudsman for Children*

# ACTIVITY 1

## Meet Emily Logan





## The work of the Ombudsman for Children

# Meet Emily Logan

In this activity, children are introduced to the work of the Ombudsman for Children.

### OBJECTIVE:

To introduce the children to the work of the Ombudsman for Children

**Ombudsman for Children:** The word Ombudsman comes from Scandinavia. The 'Ombuds' part means defender of rights and the 'man' part refers to mankind. So an Ombudsman can be either a man or a woman. S/he is a person who protects the rights of individuals or a group in relation to the powers and actions of government and other public organisations. In the case of an Ombudsman for Children, the beneficiaries of his/her work are children.

### YOU WILL NEED:

- Photograph of the Ombudsman for Children
- DVD Track 1
- Activity sheet 1
- Photocopiable letter for parents/guardians to introduce the OCO

### INTRODUCTION:

Lead a discussion about the various roles of adults in the wider world. Ask the children suggest jobs/professions, which they are aware of at home and in the community. A list can be made of all their suggestions. Ask children to think of unusual jobs - e.g. zoo-keeper, tree surgeon, dog walker, steeplejack, crane-driver.

### DEVELOPMENT:

- Explain that you have discovered a person with a very unusual type of job, but a very important one.
- Play DVD Track 1 **or** read out the text of Emily's letter to the children. *(Please note that DVD Track 1 is not the same as the text of Emily's letter.)*



# Meet Emily Logan



Hi boys and girls,

My name is Emily and I want to tell you all about my very special job.

It may seem very, very strange to you but my job is to hear what children have to say about things that are important to them.

Before I got this job I worked as a children's nurse in Ireland and in a big children's hospital in England. I really liked taking care of children and spending time with them. I wanted to do more to make things better for children. And I wanted to do more to make sure children are heard.

Since I became Ombudsman for Children, I have met and heard from thousands of children all over Ireland. They have told me so many different things. Children have told me about where they live. They have talked to me about their families. They have told me about their friends and how much fun they have together. They have talked to me about the places they like to play and their favourite games. They have told about all the things they like to learn in school and all the things they like to do in their holidays. Children have told me what makes them happy and what makes them sad. What makes them scared and what makes them laugh out loud. They have told me about their wishes and what would make things better for them and the people they love and care about most.

I have learned so much from hearing what children have to say. You know something: listening is very important. We all need to listen to each other. You can practise talking and listening with your teacher.

Thank you very much for listening to me today.

Goodbye for now,

*Emily Logan*



Ask the children questions about Emily's letter or, alternatively, about DVD Track 1.

**Possible questions based on DVD Track 1:**

- What is Emily's job called?
- What is Emily's job about?
- Can you remember some of the things children in the film talk about?
- What does Emily think is important?

**Possible questions based on Emily's letter:**

- What is the Ombudsman for Children's name?
- What is her job?
- Why did Emily want this job?
- What did Emily do before she became Ombudsman for Children?
- Who has Emily met since she became the Ombudsman for Children?
- Name three things children have told Emily about.
- Who has Emily learned lots of things from?
- What does she think is very

important?

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 1:**

Ask the children to complete activity sheet 1.

**HOME LINK:**

Ask the children to bring home their completed sheets and a copy of the letter to parents/guardians.



# Meet Emily Logan, the Ombudsman for Children

Please draw a picture of Emily and use the words given to fill in the blanks.

Emily

listen

help

Children

Ireland

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am the Ombudsman for \_\_\_\_\_

My job is to \_\_\_\_\_

to children in Ireland...

...and to \_\_\_\_\_

make \_\_\_\_\_

a better place  
for children.



Ask your child to tell you what s/he has learned about the Ombudsman for Children.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Dear Parent or Guardian*

*I am writing to you because your child is learning about our work at the Ombudsman for Children's Office in school.*

*As you may know, as Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children, my job is to promote the rights and welfare of all children up to the age of 18.*

*In my role as Ombudsman for Children, I have a statutory obligation to raise awareness of issues relating to children's rights and welfare, including among children and young people.*

*In collaboration with experienced teachers, we developed a set of educational activities so that children can learn in school about what we do and explore topics that are relevant to children's lives in Ireland.*

*These activities originally belonged to a project called the Big Ballot, which our Office did in 2007. Hundreds of schools and almost 75,000 children and young people throughout Ireland took part in this project. Its purpose was to give children an opportunity to tell us what issues are important to them and, with that, to help our Office decide what issues to work on.*

*Hearing children's views, highlighting their concerns, and supporting children's participation in decisions that affect them are central to our work here at the Ombudsman for Children's Office.*

*We continue to learn a great deal from the opinions and ideas that children and young people share with us. We are very aware of the extent to which parents and professionals support children and young people to find out about, contact and engage with our Office. This support is something that we really value and appreciate.*

*If you would like to know more about the work of our Office, please visit our website [www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie), email us at [oco@oco.ie](mailto:oco@oco.ie) or phone us on 01-8656800 to request an information pack.*

*Many thanks,*



*Emily Logan*

*Ombudsman for Children*







*Having a voice and being heard*

## ACTIVITY 2

# Hello, Hello





## Having a voice and being heard

# Hello, Hello

In this lesson, children explore their right to be heard. Through a variety of activities, they can look at how they can use their individual voices appropriately to express their needs and concerns.

**OBJECTIVE:**

To introduce children to their right to be heard

**Constitution Article 40 (6)(1)(i):**

Citizens have the right to express their opinions freely.

**UNCRC, Article 12:**

Children have the right to have a say about things that affect them.

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- A baton (wand) to pass around the circle
- Activity sheet 2



# Hello, Hello

## INTRODUCTION:

Introduce the idea of using our voices to get to know each other.

### Option 1:

Ask the children to stand or sit in a circle.

Support them to pass the baton/wand:

- **Round 1:** Each child says their name in turn as the baton is handed to them.
- **Rounds 2/3/4:** Each child says their name in a loud voice / soft voice / squeaky voice / grumpy voice. (Children might suggest other voices).

**&/or**

### Option 2:

With the children sitting or standing in a circle, discuss with them how we say hello, in English, in Irish and in other languages. Ask the children if they know the word for 'hello' in any other language. See text box for some suggested ways to say 'hello'.

Support the children to practise each way around the circle:

- **Round 1** Hello
- **Round 2** Dia Dhuit
- **Round 3** etc.

Continue for as long as the children are enjoying the game.

## DEVELOPMENT:

Suggest to the children that we all have voices, can use them in different ways and can even speak different languages. People, including people who don't/can't use the spoken word, can make themselves understood in other ways.

Ask the children to suggest other ways people make themselves understood, e.g. by signing or making gestures.

Discuss how effective these alternative ways of communicating are.

Read out the scenario about Paul and then explore with the children how the way we use our voices can encourage people to listen to us or, alternatively, to ignore us.



Language	Hello	Phonetic Pronunciation
Polish	Czesc	Chesht
Mandarin	Ni Hao	Knee how
French	Bonjour	Bohn-zhoor
Czech	Dobry den	Do bry den
Spanish	Hola	Oh-la

**PAUL'S VOICE**

Paul was 7 years old and he had a baby brother called Tom who was 2 years old. Tom was always crying, shouting, screaming and throwing tantrums. Mum said it was because he was in the 'terrible twos', whatever that was. Whatever it was, it worked, because Tom got all the attention in their house. His mum and dad gave in to his cries and shouts and tantrums. Tom always seemed to get what he wanted in the end.

So, one day Paul decided that he would behave just like Tom. He would get lots of attention too. He started to cry and shout and scream. He stamped his feet in temper and threw tantrums all day. 'Now' he thought to himself, 'Mum and Dad will listen to me instead of Paul. I will get everything I want'

..... But that isn't what happened.

*Can you guess what happened? (Ask the children to predict the outcome of Paul's behaviour.)*

Mum and dad were shocked at Paul's behaviour. They were not at all pleased. They didn't give Paul lots of attention. In fact they said that his behaviour was silly. Paul didn't understand.

*Why was it silly for Paul and not silly for Tom? What should Mum and Dad say to Paul to explain? (Ask the children for suggestions.)*



## QUESTIONS

Ask the children how they get a person's attention. Explore their thinking by asking questions such as:

- If a baby wants milk what does s/he do/say?
- If you want food what do you do/say?
- If an adult wants food what does s/he do/say?

Explore this further in relation to other needs, e.g. food, sleep, warmth.

Discuss what is appropriate for children of their age by asking questions such as the following:

- How should you ask?
- How can you get attention?
- What makes others listen to you?
- What would stop them from hearing what you have to say?
- How do we know if adults are really listening and want to hear what we have to say? (e.g. eye contact, using encouraging words, doing something to help)

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

Ask the children to get into pairs. One is the parent. One is the child.

The children role play the following situations:

- a baby wants milk;
- a toddler wants a banana;
- an 8 year old wants to stay up for a little while longer.

In each case the parent must show that they are listening and respond appropriately.

## HOME LINK:

Ask the children to complete activity sheet 2 and discuss their work with their parents/guardians.



# Hello, Hello

**What do you say? Please practise using your voice:**

When I am cold I say...

When I am hungry I say...

When I am sad I say...

When I am thirsty I say...

When I want to  
play I say...

When I need help with  
homework I say...

When I am frightened  
I say...

When I fall I say...

When someone hurts  
my feelings I say...

When I am tired I say...



HOME LINK

Encourage your child to express himself/herself clearly and in a way that is appropriate to his/her age. Support your child by showing you are hearing what he/she is saying.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_





*Education and Play*

## ACTIVITY 3

# Carla's Big Adventure





## Education and Play

# Carla's Big Adventure

In this lesson, children think about their school life and their own opportunities to learn and play.

**OBJECTIVE:**

To introduce children to their rights to education and play.

**Constitution, Article 42:**

The State recognises the right to education.

**UNCRC, Article 28:**

Children have the right to education.

**Article 31:**

Children have the right to play and rest.

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- Activity sheet 3

**INTRODUCTION:**

Read out the story about *Carla's Big Adventure* to the children.



# Carla's Big Adventure



**Carla was very excited. She was going with her parents on a big adventure. Her mum and dad liked sailing and they had decided to sail around the world in a yacht. And the best thing of all was that Carla was going with them. She couldn't wait for the trip to begin. Everything was packed and ready and Carla said goodbye to her friends in school and on her road. She wouldn't see them for a whole year. And, can you believe it, she wouldn't have to go to school for a whole year? She was bringing her school books and her parents were going to teach her as they travelled. It was going to be brilliant.... And it was!... For a while.**

Carla saw the most amazing things. She saw the sun as it rose and set, the moon shining in the night sky and stars glinting all around. She saw beautiful speckled fish, marvellous dolphins and enormous whales. She saw big white birds that swooped and glided over the water. She saw the sea when it was calm like a big sheet of glass and she saw it when it was angry with waves splashing and crashing into the boat. She saw a lot and she learned a lot about the world and about nature and it was all very interesting.

But as time went on Carla began to get sad. Of course she was happy with her mum and dad and she liked the boat and the sea and sky all around her. But she felt that there was something missing.

*Can you guess what it was? (Ask the children to make suggestions.)*

Carla missed her friends and her school. On the boat she had no one her own age to play with and nowhere to play properly. She couldn't run about because it was not safe and there wasn't enough space. She just played cards and board games and drew pictures. She had no one to talk to except her mum and dad. She missed her best friend Millie and the fun they had in the school playground, skipping and playing hopscotch. She missed doing P.E. and dancing and art. She missed doing puzzles and figuring out maths problems with her class. And she missed lunchtime and chatting to her friends. Carla became very quiet and sad.

Soon her mum and dad noticed that there was something wrong and asked Carla about it. At first Carla said nothing. She wasn't sure how to tell her parents what was wrong. But then she found her voice and she told them all about it in one big breath. She said,

*'I miss my school. I miss playing with my friends. I miss skipping and playing hopscotch in the playground. I miss P.E. class. I miss dancing and music and art. I miss doing puzzles and figuring out maths problems with my class. I miss lunchtime and chatting to my friends.'*

Her mum and dad could see that Carla was unhappy and missing her friends. The family had a long discussion and they listened carefully to each other.

*What do you think they said?  
(Ask the children to make suggestions or facilitate them to role play the situation.)*

After the big discussion Carla's mum and dad said that they were a bit tired of sailing the seas too and that they would be happy to go home a bit earlier than they had planned. The truth was that they missed their home and their friends too. But they hadn't realised that Carla missed her friends and her school quite so much. They said that they were glad that Carla had spoken up and told them her problem. They said that they would sort it out together. And they did! A few months later Carla was back in her school, back with her friends telling them all about her great sailing adventure.

### DEVELOPMENT:

Discuss the story with the class.

Here are some possible questions.

- What did Carla like about going on the adventure?
- What sort of things did she see?
- What did she miss when she was away?
- What sort of things would you miss if you weren't at school?
- Why did she find it hard to tell her parents?
- Was Carla right to tell her mum and dad that she was not happy? Why?
- How did the family solve the problem?

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 1:

Ask the children to sit in a circle for talking and listening circle time.

Give examples of a range of school activities- both classroom- and playground-based. Ask the children to mime these in turn.

*Round 1:* Each child in turn mimes an activity they like in school.

*Round 2:* Each child names the activity they have mimed in the previous round.

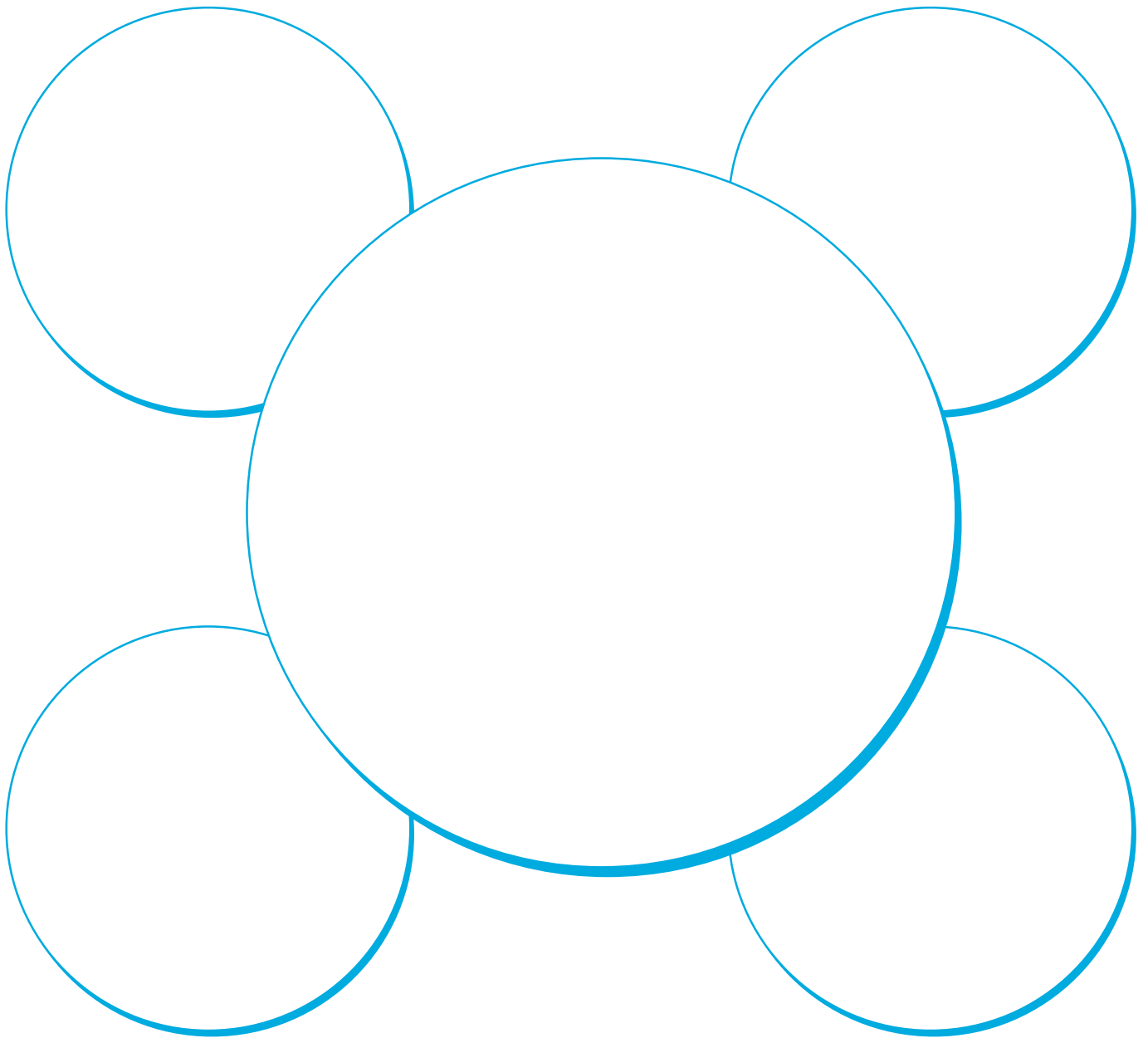
*Round 3:* Each child names their favourite school activity and says why they like it, e.g. 'I like P.E. because we play rounders and that's a great game.'

### HOME LINK:

Ask the children to complete activity sheet 3 and to bring their work home to show their parents/guardians.



# Things I like to do in school



HOME LINK

Discuss with your child what he/she likes to do in school and why.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Family and Care, Health and Wealth*

## ACTIVITY 4

# The Princess who had everything







## Family and Care, Health and Wealth

# The Princess who had everything

In this lesson children explore their rights to care and protection and to having their needs met so they can survive and thrive within their communities.

**OBJECTIVE:**

To develop awareness of the need for a good family environment where due care and protection is given to all children.

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- Activity Sheet 4

**INTRODUCTION:**

Read the story to the children.

**Constitution, Article 41:**

The family has a special place in society.

**UNCRC, Articles 7 and 9:**

Children have the right to be with their parents or those who can care for them best.

**Articles 24 and 27:**

Children have a right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, clothes, a clean and safe place to live, and to information to help them stay well.



# The Princess who had everything



**Once upon a time there was a princess called Prunella who lived in a beautiful castle in a land far away. Her parents were very important people who travelled all over the world giving advice to everyone they met. When the King and Queen were away Princess Prunella stayed at home in the big castle and was looked after by the servants.**

Being a princess, Prunella got everything she wanted. She had only to snap her fingers and the servants came running.

*'I want a new puppy,'* said Prunella and straightaway a servant ran to the petshop and got a puppy for her.

*'I want a swimming pool in the garden,'* said Prunella and straightaway workmen began digging to make the pool for her.

*'I want ice-cream for dinner,'* said Prunella and straightaway the cook began to make chocolate ice-cream for her.

*'I want a new dress,'* said Prunella and straightaway the palace dressmaker came to measure her for her new clothes.

On and on it went, with Prunella always asking for something: a diamond ring, a frisky little pony, bottles of extra-fizzy lemonade, a super speedboat, a hat with feathers, a garden swing, red high heeled shoes, a motor bike, a karaoke machine or some luscious chocolate sweets. There was no end to the number of things that Prunella demanded. The servants knew that the King and Queen wanted Prunella to be happy so they gave her everything that she asked for. All day long they scurried here and there, going to shops and markets to get exactly what Prunella wanted to make her happy.

But the truth was that Prunella wasn't happy. No matter how many puppies, how many swimming pools, how many diamond rings, how many ice creams or how many litres of extra-fizzy lemonade she was given, Prunella was not happy.

In fact, she was completely miserable. The castle was dark and rambling and cold and draughty. Her bed was old and lumpy and not cosy at all. All the wonderful food she was given tasted like sawdust to Prunella because she had to eat it all alone at the enormous dining room table.

Sometimes in the evening after her lonely dinner, Prunella walked outside the castle grounds and past the houses in the village. When it was dark and the lights were on, Prunella could see inside the little cottages. In the cosy sitting rooms she saw cheery fires crackling in the fireplaces. She saw families gathered round the table having tasty vegetable soup to keep them warm on those cold winter evenings. She saw the children reading and playing games or drinking hot chocolate before they went to their snug little beds. When they coughed, their parents gave them medicine. When they cried, they got a cuddle. And when they were sad, they got a hug. Prunella looked into the little houses and felt very sad.

One evening, as she walked past the cottages with their happy families inside Prunella started to cry. She felt sad and alone. Of course she knew that she was lucky in so many ways. She lived in a big castle. She had more clothes and toys and jewellery than anyone could imagine. She had only to snap her fingers to get anything she wanted. But there was one thing the servants could not give her no matter how hard they tried. What Prunella really wanted and needed was to have her family with her. She wanted to be with her mum and dad. She wanted to sit by a cheery fire and share tasty vegetable soup on cold winter evenings. She wanted a cuddle when she cried and a hug when she was sad and maybe sometimes a mug of hot chocolate before she went to a snug little bed. When Prunella went back to the palace she sat on her old lumpy bed and thought for a long time. Then she had an idea. She would get to work on it immediately.



The next morning when Prunella opened her mouth to say 'I want' ... the servants held their breaths and waited. 'What would it be now' they wondered, 'a boat, a plane, a flying carpet?' Where would they have to go to get what the Princess wanted?

What a surprise they got when Prunella said 'I want ..... to send a letter'.

The servants laughed. 'That's easy,' they said and straightaway they got paper, an envelope and a stamp for her. Prunella started to write. In her best hand-writing she began:

*Dear Mum and Dad.....*

Prunella wrote a long letter to her mum and dad, the King and Queen.

*Can you imagine what she said in her letter? (Ask the children to guess what the Princess might have written or write a class letter from Prunella to her parents).*

She told them she was sad and lonely on her own in the palace. She wanted to be with her family. She wanted to sit by a cheery fire, share tasty vegetable soup on cold winter evenings. She wanted a cuddle when she cried and a hug when she was sad and maybe sometimes a mug of hot chocolate before she went to a snug little bed.

Prunella posted the letter and waited for a reply. The days passed slowly... three days, four days, five days. On the sixth day Prunella got a lovely

surprise. There was a lot of noise and fussing about in the palace because the King and Queen had come home unexpectedly. They had got Prunella's letter and they had come all around the world to be with her. The King gave Prunella a hug. The Queen gave Prunella a kiss and they all sat down to have soup together at the big dining room table. They talked and talked for a long time. Prunella told her mum and dad how she felt. The King and Queen said that they were sorry to have left Prunella alone so much.

*'We have been silly,' said the King. 'We thought you would be happy here with the servants and with everything you want. We didn't understand that what you really needed was your family with you.'*

*'We won't make this mistake again' said the Queen. 'We will try to be here with you or bring you with us when we travel. That way you won't be lonely again. We will give you a cuddle when you cry and a hug when you are sad and maybe sometimes a mug of hot chocolate before you go to your new snug little bed.'*

Prunella smiled. Then she opened her mouth and said, 'I want...'

The servants held their breaths and waited. 'What would it be now?' they wondered.

*'I want ... that very much'* said Prunella. The King and Queen and all the servants laughed.

At last Prunella could have what she really wanted to make her happy.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

Discuss the story. Here are some possible questions:

- What sort of things did Prunella ask for?
- Why did she ask for all those things?
- Were they things she really needed?
- Why was Prunella sad when she looked into the little cottages?
- Do you think Prunella's idea was a good one?
- In what way were the King and Queen silly?
- How were they going to change things for Prunella?

Discuss how Prunella 'used her voice' to bring about a change. Link with the children's own ability to use their voices, as explored in Activity 2.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 1:***Happy, Healthy Me*

Ask the children to sit in a circle. Give each child 2 cubes or beads. When they contribute to the conversation they place their bead into a box placed in the middle of the circle. This gives each child two opportunities to speak and so supports equal participation.

Discuss what the children feel they need to be happy and healthy at home.

Make a list of their suggestions. Prioritise with them according to their importance as they see it. Then ask them to focus on what they really need to live a good and healthy life at home. Children identify their needs to stay happy and healthy.

Encourage all children to 'spend' their two cubes or beads.

**HOME LINK:**

Ask the children to complete and bring home activity sheet 4 and to discuss it with their parents/guardians.



# Happy, Healthy Me!

Draw a picture of yourself with the people and things that make you feel happy and healthy.

My Top 10 tips for a happy, healthy Me:

- |         |          |
|---------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 6 _____  |
| 2 _____ | 7 _____  |
| 3 _____ | 8 _____  |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____  |
| 5 _____ | 10 _____ |

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_



Discuss with your child their top ten tips and decide with them which are the most important for children to be happy and healthy.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Inclusion*

# ACTIVITY 5

## *A very big Event*







## Inclusion

# A very big event

In this activity, children explore the right of all children to be included, accepted and respected.

### OBJECTIVE:

To develop children's awareness of the possibility of children being excluded within the school environment (e.g. through isolation, bullying, thoughtlessness or lack of communication) and to enable children to identify ways to address this risk.

### YOU WILL NEED:

- Games equipment
- Art materials
- Letter-writing materials
- Activity sheet 5 (if you decide to do follow-up activity 1)

### Constitution, Article 40:

All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law.

### UNCRC, Article 2:

All children have the same rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or a girl, what their culture is, whether or not they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis

### INTRODUCTION:

Read out the story *A very big event* to the children.



# A very big event



**Sports day was a very big event in Dromadeen School. It was probably the most exciting day of the year. There were all sorts of sports: the high jump, the long jump, the egg and spoon, the three-legged race, the sack race, the relay race and a 'marathon' around the big field. Best of all the parents were invited each year and it was great fun watching the mums and dads puffing and panting and trying to win. Afterwards there were prizes and medals for those who had come first, second and third in all the races.**

This year Mrs. Murphy who taught first and second classes had been put in charge of organising the sports. She was a little bit nervous about it because she had never been involved in such a big event and she was anxious that it would be a success, maybe even the best sports day ever in Dromadeen. She decided that she would ask her class for ideas for the big day.

One Monday, two weeks before the sports day, Mrs. Murphy, instead of giving her class the usual homework, asked the children to write a letter to her, telling her the best things about sports days. This would give her some ideas about which were the most popular races.

The children liked writing letters. It was much better than normal homework and on Tuesday they all posted their letters into a box that the teacher had left on her table. Mrs. Murphy said that she would read them carefully when they had all gone home. And she did read them, very, very, carefully indeed. Sitting in the quiet classroom, sipping a cup of tea, Mrs. Murphy read them and was very surprised. These letters were not what she had expected. Listen for yourself to what the children thought of Dromadeen's big event.



I don't like sports day at all.  
I am no good at sports. My legs wobble when I try to run.  
I always drop the potato in the potato and spoon race. I fall over in the sack race and I am always last in the 'marathon'. The other children laugh at me. I feel embarrassed because I never win anything. I wish there was no sports day in Dromadeen.

Colm

Sports Day makes me sad. When I see all the children cheering on their mums and dads I feel lonely because my mum and dad are far away working in our own country. I know they think of me a lot and they are sorry that they can't be here to join in the fun but I miss them on Sports Day.

Alisha

On Sports Day I feel that I am left out. My breathing is very bad and I am not able to take part in any of the races. I wish I could do the same things as the other children but the doctor says that I mustn't. I don't like sports day at all.

Nikki

I am new in this school, but I have noticed that Sports Day is a BIG EVENT. I am not looking forward to it. I am learning English, but I don't think I'll understand the rules of the games or what people are saying to me. People will probably shout instructions at me and I'll feel silly.

Ahmad

Mrs Murphy was shocked! She had never realised that so many children did not really like Sports Day at all. Of course some children loved it, but they were the ones that won all the races and got all the medals at the end. That night she lay awake thinking about how she could make it right. There must be a way that she could make the Sports Day a day of fun! Suddenly, she sat up in bed. 'FUN!', she shouted out loud, causing the cat to get a big fright and fall off the end of the bed. 'That's it', she said, a little more quietly so that she wouldn't wake everyone in the house. 'I will turn the Sports Day into a Fun for All Day!'

And that's just what she did. She worked hard for the next two weeks, planning, buying extra equipment, marking out areas in the big field and smiling. But when they asked Mrs. Murphy what she was doing she said 'Just wait and see!'. Everybody started to get really excited. The children knew that this year was going to be different but they didn't know how.

Can you imagine their surprise when they arrived into school on the morning of the sports day? There was a big banner over the school door saying *Dromadeen Fun for All Day*. All the children were called together in the yard and Mrs. Murphy called out teams of eight, mixing children from all the classes together. Each team had some older children, some younger children, some who were fast runners and some who were not. Mrs. Murphy gave each team a funny animal name, like Happy Hippos or Cheeky Chimps. This made the children giggle as they got into their groups.

Then the biggest surprise of all came when all the teams went into the big field. There were twelve different areas numbered and cordoned off with string. In each one there was a different activity and there was a teacher at each one to help out if needed. Each team would start in a different place and after ten minutes the bell would ring so that they knew to move on to the next one.

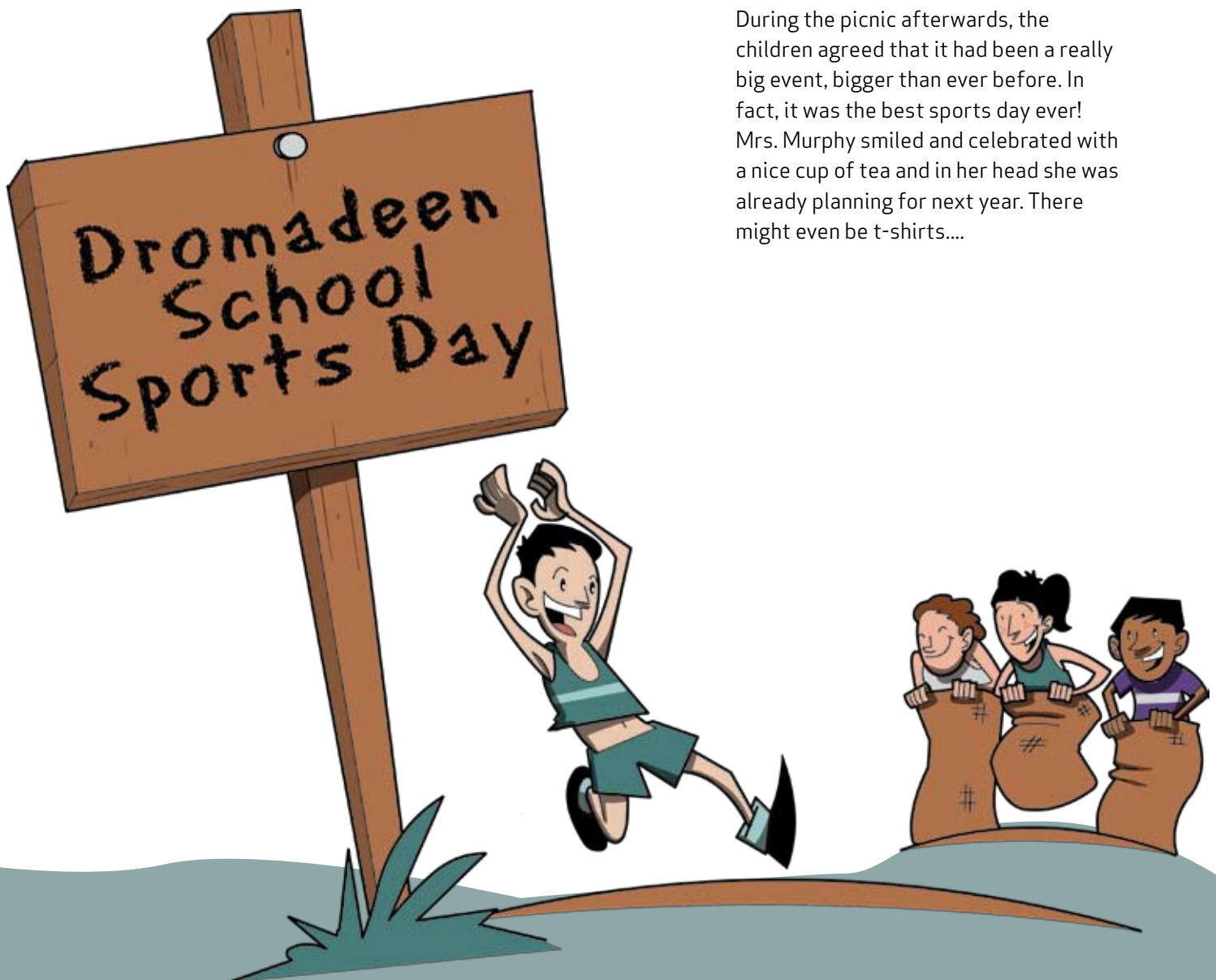


The activities were great fun. The children played with skipping, hula hoops, bouncy balls, bean bags. They balanced on benches. They threw the welly. They rolled on mats. They hopped and skipped and jumped and even had some time on the bouncy castle. And best of all, there were no races. You only joined in the activities that you could do and you got to try some things that you never had before. The big children helped the little ones and explained to

the ones who weren't sure. The small ones laughed and giggled. Everyone took part in some way. No one felt silly or was scared. No one was embarrassed and no one was left out. And there were no medals! The mums and dads cheered on the all the teams and Nikki was the photographer for the day, taking pictures of all the events. Afterwards everyone got a certificate saying...

*"I took part in Dromadeen  
Fun for All Day"*

During the picnic afterwards, the children agreed that it had been a really big event, bigger than ever before. In fact, it was the best sports day ever! Mrs. Murphy smiled and celebrated with a nice cup of tea and in her head she was already planning for next year. There might even be t-shirts....



**DEVELOPMENT:**

Discuss the story with the children.  
Here are some possible questions:

- What did Mrs. Murphy discover about sports day?
- How did she find out?
- Why did she not know all this before?
- Why did the children tell her now?
- Can you remember what Alisha, Nikki, Ahmad and Colm objected to?
- In what ways was the *Fun for All Day* different to the old Sports Day?
- Why did the children prefer this new sports day?
- Which kind of sports day would you prefer?
- What events would you include?
- How would you make sure to include everybody in the school?

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 1**

- Discuss with the children how they might organise a *Fun for All* P.E. session for everyone in the class. Place emphasis on the word All.
- With the children in a circle, give each child an opportunity to say what activity they are interested in. Record their suggestions on a chart and support the children to be sensitive to all the children's needs and abilities.
- Ask the children to list the various P.E. equipment that is in the school, e.g. hoops, footballs, tennis balls, bean bags, bats, basketball hoops, obstacles, cones, and mats.
- Discuss how, by carefully choosing a variety of equipment, there can be something that appeals to each and every child. Decide how many children will be in each team and ask the children for some possible fun team names. Each child must be able to take part in most of the activities. If a child cannot participate directly, he or she should be given a role in ringing the bell, time-keeping, etc.
- Support the children to work in pairs to design their *Fun for All* P.E. session, using the template on activity sheet 5.
- Integrating the children's ideas, organise a *Fun for All* session.

**HOME LINK:**

- Ask the children to talk to their parents/guardians about the *Fun for All* session and all the ideas they have had to make sure everyone is included.





or

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 2**

- Ask the children to write you a letter with the views and ideas on the Fun for All session. Give the children actual notepaper and envelopes so as to make it a more meaningful writing experience.
- Collate the children's ideas and share these with the whole group.
- Work with the children to organise a Fun for All session.



HOME LINK

**HOME LINK**

- Ask the children to talk to their parents/guardians about the Fun for All session and all the ideas they have had to make sure everyone is included.

or

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 3**

- Ask the children to design a t-shirt to celebrate a school fun day.
- Discuss possibilities for t-shirt slogans with the children, e.g.:
  - *Our fun day was cool*
  - *Fun, fun, fun at (insert name of school)*
  - *All in the Fun*
  - *Fun for All*
- Decide how the children could present these designs, based on the art materials you have available – for example, support the children to:
  - cut out templates of t-shirts and colour or paint their design;
  - paint or draw a picture of a t-shirt;
  - print on old, plain t-shirts using fabric paints or crayons.



## Fun For All!

The pieces of equipment we have chosen are:

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

The team names are:

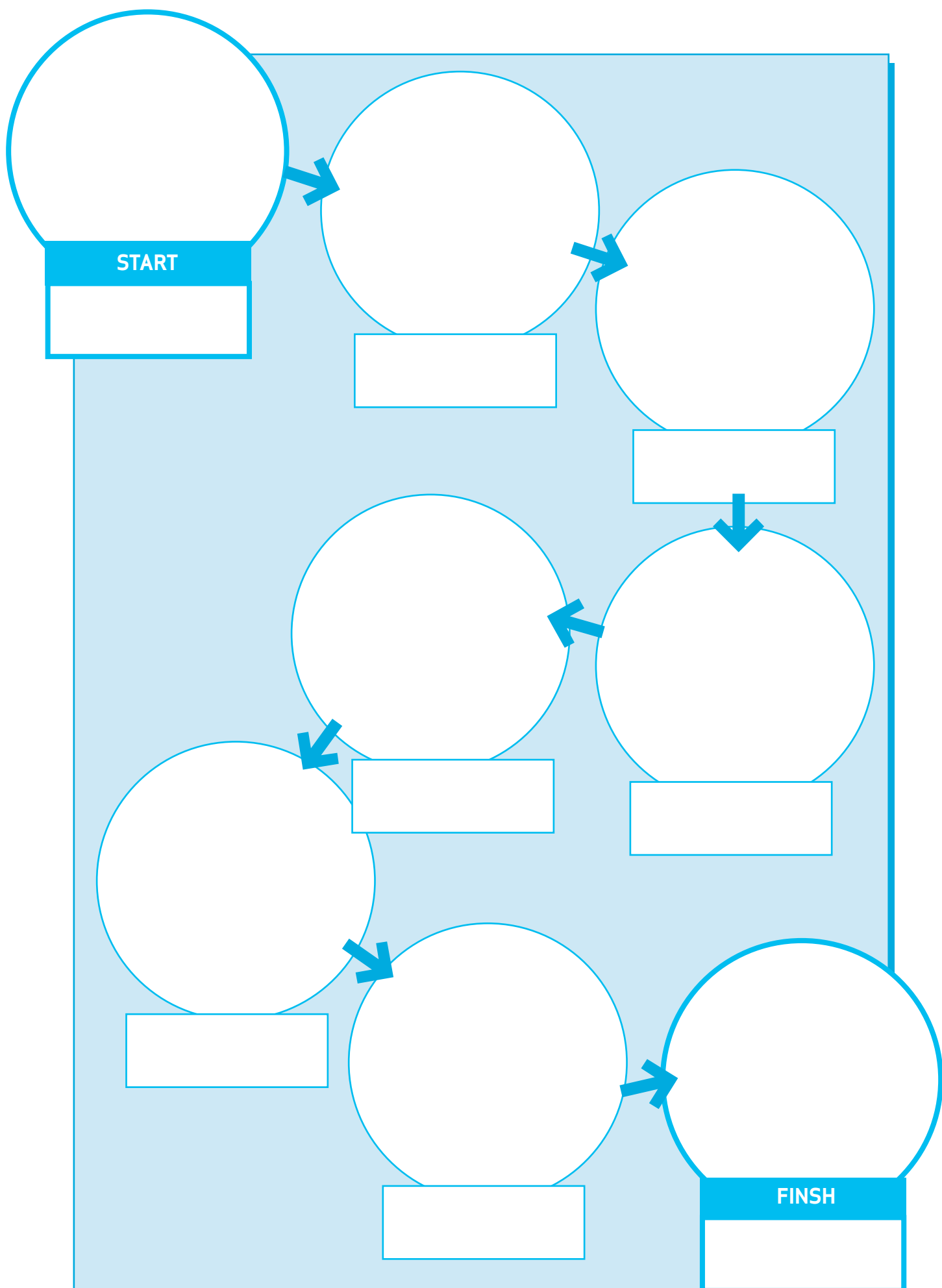
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

**Please draw an activity in each circle, like hoops or balls.  
Describe the activities by writing a word or words in the boxes.**



Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

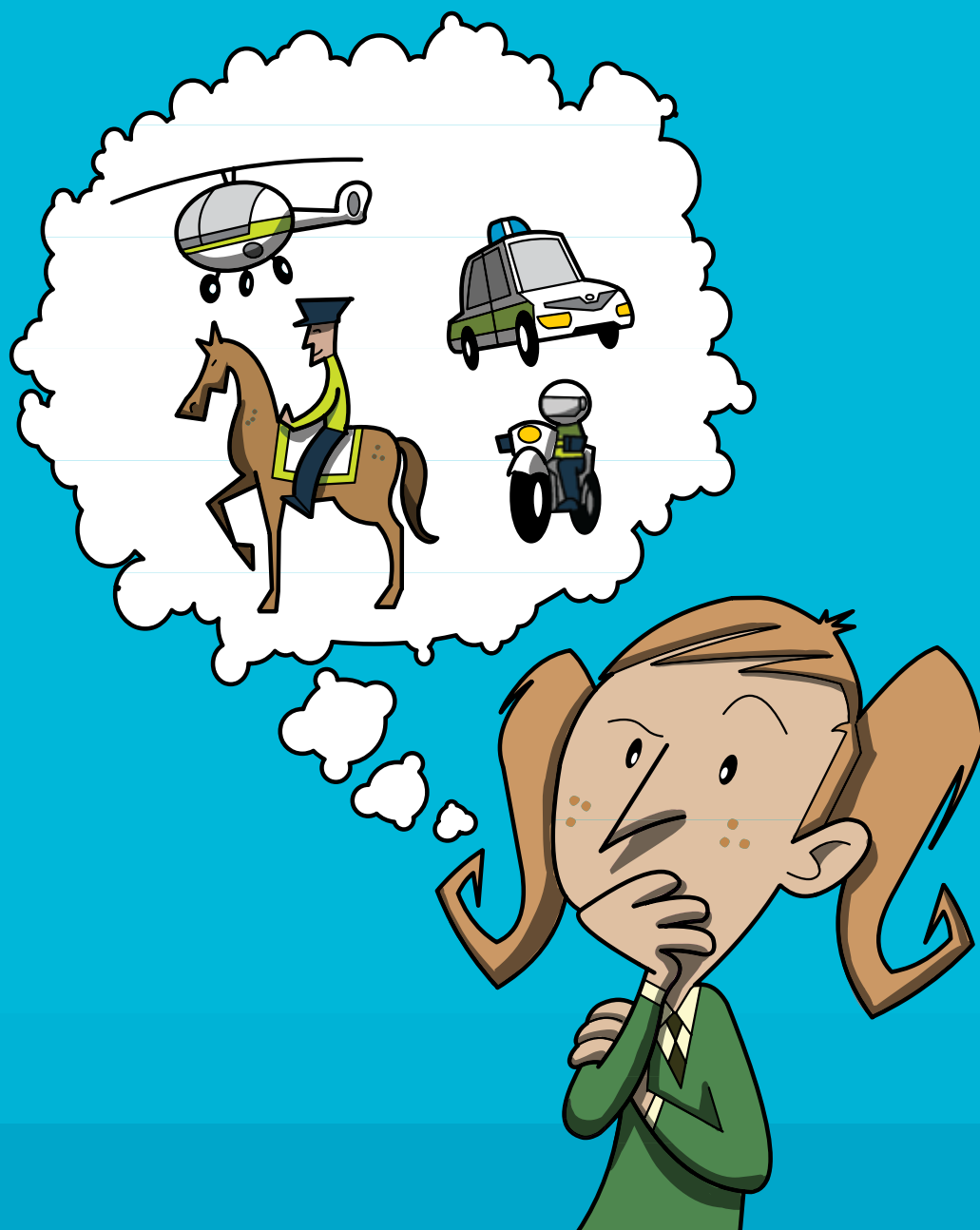






# ACTIVITY 6

## *The Challenge*





# The Challenge

In this activity, children explore the role of An Garda Síochána as keepers of the peace and look at some of the tasks they undertake to help and protect people, including children.

**OBJECTIVE:**

To develop the children's understanding of some of the ways in which An Garda Síochána help to keep people, including children, safe.

**Note for teachers:**

Research on obstacles to children realising their rights conducted for the OCO by University College Cork in 2007 indicated that children who come into conflict with the law and become involved in the criminal justice system are among several groups of children in Ireland who face multiple obstacles as regards realising their rights. For this reason, we decided to develop an activity that would enable younger children to engage with the theme of 'children and the law' in an age-appropriate way, i.e. by looking at the work of community gardaí.

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- Copies of activity sheet 6 (if you decide to do follow-up activity 3)

**INTRODUCTION:**

Read out the story  
*The Challenge* to the children.



# The Challenge



**Gina was only seven years old, but she often wondered what she might be when she grew up. She sometimes thought she might be a dancer or a film star or maybe a singer. At other times she thought she might be a farmer. It would be fun to drive a tractor she thought. But it was very hard to decide.**

One day Gina was in town with her mum and she saw a garda on a horse! Now, that seemed like a really cool job! Gina would love to ride a horse, to be high above all the people in the street and be able to keep an eye on everything that was happening. Maybe that's what she would be – a garda on a horse! At news time in school the next day, Gina told the class what she had decided. Her teacher Mr. Hogan smiled. 'Are you sure that you will be the sort of garda who will ride a horse? You might want to drive a car with a siren on top, or ride a motor bike, or cycle an ordinary bike, or maybe even fly in a helicopter.' 'Wow!' said Gina, 'I hadn't thought about that.' She hadn't realised all the different ways that gardaí travelled or all the different jobs that they do.

Mr. Hogan decided to give the class a challenge. Over the next week the children were to be police detectives. Of course they wouldn't be working with the gardaí, but they would be spotting gardaí. Everywhere they went they would be on the lookout for gardaí at work. Each day they would have to tell the class where they had seen them. Then the class would make a list of all the different jobs that the gardaí did. When they had all the information then maybe Gina could decide what type of garda work she would like to do when she grew up.

*Interrupt the story for discussion. Ask the children to guess where the children in the story might have seen gardaí and what they were doing. Make a list of their suggestions and see how they compare with the suggestions in the story when you continue reading.*

The children loved being detectives. They spotted gardaí in all sorts of places, doing all sorts of things.

Saoirse saw a garda in the garda station signing a form.

Jonah saw a garda stopping a motorist.

Tom saw a garda outside the post office.

Patrick saw a garda at a car accident.

Ameera saw a garda at the airport control.

Billy saw a garda walking up and down his road.

Kim saw a garda talking into his radio.

Holly saw a garda at a traffic jam.

Liam saw a group of gardaí on motorcycles.

Eva saw a garda on the television news.

Yvonne saw a garda at a football match.

Vicky saw a garda talking to teenagers on the green.

Gearóid saw a garda standing outside Áras an Uachtaráin

And the whole class saw a garda... in their classroom! On Friday, Mr. Hogan invited a garda to come in and tell the children all about his work. Everyone told the garda about being garda spotters and the challenge Mr. Hogan had given them. And they asked the garda lots of questions. In fact the children had so many questions that the garda said that his challenge would be to answer all of them before home time! Gina's next challenge was just to decide between the horse and the motorbike!

**DEVELOPMENT:**

Discuss the story with the children. Here are some possible questions:

- Why did Gina decide she would like to be a garda?
- Do you think this was a good reason?
- What other means of transport do gardaí use?
- What challenge did Mr. Hogan set for the children?
- Where did the children see gardaí working during the week?
- What might the garda have been doing in each case? (remind the children of each of the examples)
- How would you contact An Garda Síochána?



## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 1

Support the children to create a fact file about An Garda Síochána and to display it in the classroom. Facts for the children's file might include:

- The name Garda Síochána means Guardians of the Peace.



- The garda flag is blue with a grey badge in the centre. The badge is in the form of a Celtic cross. On the centre piece are the letters G.S, the initials of the words Garda Síochána. The badge carries the inscription, Ghárda Síochána na h-Éireann, which means Guardians of the Peace of Ireland.
- The garda badge is worn on a garda's cap.
- Each garda wears an identification number on his/her uniform.
- With the exception of specialist units, gardaí don't carry firearms.
- Garda cars are mainly white with yellow and blue fluorescent markings. Some garda cars are unmarked.
- The Scott medal is awarded for garda bravery.
- Different garda units do different jobs – for example, the Traffic Corps, Special Detective Unit, Operational Support (Water, Dog, Mounted, Air), and Emergency Response.

and/or

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 2

Discuss with the children occasions when it is necessary to call the gardaí or other emergency services – e.g. in the case of accidents, robberies and injuries. Facilitate the children to role play calling the emergency services, i.e.:

- dialling 999 or 112;
- giving their name and address;
- explaining what the problem is.

**NOTE:** In the context of this activity, make sure that you emphasise to the children that they should never reveal this information to strangers.

and/or

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY 3

Challenge the children to be 'Garda Detectives'. Over the course of a few days, the children should look out for gardaí. Once they have had an opportunity to do this, ask the children to report back on their sightings and explain what the particular garda they saw was doing. Note what the children say using relevant garda role headings and associated actions. Then ask the children to complete activity sheet 6.





# The Challenge

## The traffic garda checks for:

- *seatbelts*
- .....
- .....
- .....

## The garda in the station:

- *answers the phone*
- .....
- .....
- .....

## The garda on a city street:

- *watches for crime*
- .....
- .....
- .....

## The garda on emergency call:

- *phones or calls to the family*
- .....
- .....
- .....

## The garda on the motorbike:

- *watches the traffic*
- .....
- .....
- .....

## The garda in our area:

- .....
- .....
- .....

**Please draw a picture of a garda you saw on duty:**

*A Ballot on Children's Issues*

# ACTIVITY 7

*Your Voice,  
Your Vote*



## A Ballot on Children's Issues

# Your Voice, Your Vote

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Almost 75,000 children and young people in over 560 schools and centres throughout the country took part in the Big Ballot consultation organised by the Ombudsman for Children's Office in 2007. Feedback from participating children, teachers and principals indicated that among the principal benefits of participation in the Big Ballot were opportunities for children to learn about children's rights; to form and express opinions; and to participate in a democratic process by casting votes on children's rights issues. Teachers also told us that children were really engaged and enthusiastic about taking part in a ballot and the experience of casting a vote. This final activity builds on this feedback, containing as it does suggestions for holding a ballot on children's issues.

### DO I HOLD A SINGLE CLASS OR A WHOLE SCHOOL BALLOT?

The ballot can of course be undertaken at class level. However, the learning from the Big Ballot suggests that interest in, excitement about and learning from the exercise can be significantly enhanced by conducting the ballot on a whole school basis. If you can take this approach, it is recommended that you and your colleagues give 6th class children responsibility for organising the whole school ballot. Whether you undertake a ballot with the children in your class or participate in a whole school ballot, giving roles and responsibilities to children around organising the ballot for the duration of the process will make the activity more fun and enhance its value as an exercise in citizenship.



## WHAT ISSUES DO CHILDREN VOTE ON?

Facilitating children to take part in a ballot focused on the issues they have explored through the preceding activities in this resource will support children to reflect on the importance of making informed decisions and choices. However, the ballot activity could also be used as an opportunity for children to identify, articulate and vote on issues that are most important to them in, for example, their school or their local area.

## FEED BACK TO THE OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN'S OFFICE

Here at the Ombudsman for Children's Office, we would be delighted to hear from the children about the issues they have voted on and why they think one or more of these issues is so important. They can email us at:

[oco@oco.ie](mailto:oco@oco.ie)

or write to us, with 'Our Ballot Results' on the envelope, at:

**Ombudsman for Children's Office,  
1st Floor, Millennium House,  
52-56 Great Strand Street,  
Dublin 1.**

Depending on how you approach this activity, there are any number of people who the children could share the results of their ballot with and/or who they could ask to take their results on board – for example, your school's principal and Board of Management; local county councillors and TDs; or local service providers and community organisations.

## NOTE FOR TEACHERS ON FACILITATING THIS ACTIVITY:

However you decide to conduct this activity, you will need to adapt the steps we outline below to take account of:

- the ages and capacities of the children you are working with;
- the class you are working with;
- whether you are holding a class or whole school ballot;
- whether you are basing the ballot around the issues in this resource or other issues raised by the children themselves.

If you are teaching infant or junior class children and are focusing the ballot on the issues explored through this resource, you might remind the children of the issues by referring back to the stories. In terms of voting, you may wish to devise a more age-appropriate approach to facilitating younger children to cast their votes. For example, you could allocate a different colour to each issue and ask the children to use, for example, equivalent coloured blocks, paper or alternative materials available to you in the classroom in order to express their preference.

**OBJECTIVES:****Children will:**

- develop their understanding of democratic practices;
- identify and prioritise issues that affect and are important to them;
- have the opportunity to take a positive action in relation to the issue prioritised (optional).

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- To develop and make copies of a ballot paper, etc. to facilitate the holding of a ballot (templates are provided to assist you with this).

**ACTIVITY****1. Preparing for the ballot***All classes:*

- Facilitate the children to review the issues they have explored through the activities in this resource. Alternatively, if you are not basing the ballot on the issues in this resource, support the children to identify five issues that affect and matter to them in, for example, their school or their local community.
- In preparation for the vote, divide the children into groups, one for each issue to be voted on. Ask each group to prepare a short presentation to the class on their issue with the aim of persuading others to vote for it. Each group could also display any work they have done that is relevant to the issue and/or design and display a campaign poster about the issue.
- Advertise the ballot and the identified issues.
- Raise the children's awareness of procedures for the ballot (i.e. why it is a secret ballot, how to use a ballot paper, etc.) and, in more general terms, about what elections are for, etc.

*For the class/group organising the ballot:*

- The class or group that is organising and overseeing the ballot process needs to be introduced to procedures and key roles such as returning officer, counters, guards for the voting booths and observers. In addition, the children can make issue cards for display beside ballot boxes; collect and display artwork/posters for each issue from classrooms; and prepare/design ballot papers.
- If you are working with the organising group:
  - help them to choose a Returning Officer;
  - distribute the checklist on activity sheet 7;
  - support the children with deciding who will perform what role (the Returning Officer should have at least two assistants);
  - help the children to make and display a corresponding list of duties.

## 2. Holding the ballot

- The ballot Returning Officer will be responsible for overseeing the procedures.
- Hold the vote in an assembly area. If possible, older children could take responsibility for bringing the younger children to and from the voting area and helping to oversee the vote.
- Following the ballot, the Returning Officer should be facilitated to ensure that everyone is made aware of the results.

## 3. Options for follow-up activities

Encourage the children to bring home the results of the ballot. In addition, you could support the children:

- to identify and collaborate in taking a positive action in response to the issue, which topped the poll;

### and/or

- to email or write a letter to the Ombudsman for Children's Office to inform us of the results of the ballot, their views on these results and, if applicable, any action they have taken in relation to the issue that received the most votes;

### and/or

- to make display charts of class and/or school results.



# Organising Your Ballot

## Jobs Checklist

**Name of Returning Officer:** .....

The returning officer's job is: .....

.....

**Names of Returning Officer's Assistants:** .....

The assistants' job is: .....

.....

**Names of Guards (for the voting booths or boxes):** .....

The guards' job is: .....

.....

**Names of Observers:** .....

The observers' job is: .....

.....

**Names of Vote Counters:** .....

The vote counters' job is: .....

.....

**Names of Vote Recorders:** .....

The vote recorders' job is: .....

.....

# Sample Ballot Paper

**Please say which issue below you think is MOST important.**  
Put a tick in one box only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Issue: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Issue: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Issue: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Issue: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Issue: _____

**Please fold and place in the ballot box.**  
Thank you!

# Sample Returns Sheet

**School name:** .....

**School address:** .....

## Ballot results

Please indicate the number of votes cast for each issue:

*Issue:* .....

*Issue:* .....

*Issue:* .....

*Issue:* .....

*Issue:* .....

**School stamp:**

**Name of Returning Officer** (in capitals):

.....

**Signature of Returning Officer:** .....









