

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child's school is taking part in the ***Demonstration Project on In-school and Early Years Therapy Support***. This is a joint project by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Health and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

What is the project about?

The project involves **school staff, Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs), Occupational Therapists (OTs) and families working together to support the learning of all students**, including students with additional needs. There are 75 schools and 75 Early Years settings taking part in the project this year (2018/2019 school year).

The project will be managed by the National Council for Special Education. The therapists in the project will not replace existing HSE or HSE funded SLT and OT services. This means that if your child is currently attending/on a waiting list for a HSE SLT or OT, this will not change. The project is part of the government's overall plan to provide more support to help every child to learn and participate in school to the best of their ability.

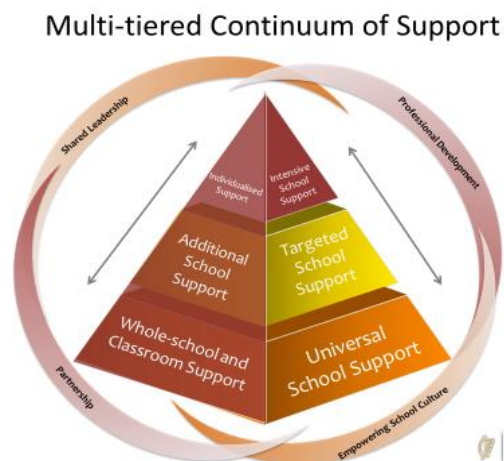
Where is it happening?

The Demonstration Project, will take place **in schools and early year's settings** in the HSE Community Healthcare Area of **Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow** (formerly CHO 7).

What Model of Support will the project adopt?

The project will use the multi-tiered continuum of support model.

- At universal level this means that all students can benefit from SLT and OT supports.
- At targeted level those with additional needs can receive extra help where needed.
- At intensive level those with more complex needs will receive individualised support where needed.



How will the project work?

The SLTs and OTs will work with school staff to support all students across the whole school environment. Teachers will identify some students with more complex needs that may need more help. The SLTs and OTs will work with school staff to give additional support to these students in their classrooms, in small groups and/or individually as needed.

What could Speech and Language Therapists be doing in schools?

Good speech, language and communication skills **support students to access the curriculum, get along socially with others and actively participate in the learning environment**. SLTs will be working with school staff to help the school **support students to develop their speech, language and communication skills**. These could include helping students to:

- Develop attention and listening skills
- Express themselves using words and sentences
- Explain things
- Understand verbal information and instructions
- Develop vocabulary understanding and use
- Develop social communication

What could Occupational Therapists be doing in schools?

Occupational Therapists work in schools to support students **to participate successfully in the daily occupations/tasks** that happen in the school and classroom. OTs will work with school staff to help the **school support students with daily school tasks**. This could include:

- School work (e.g. keeping on task, handwriting, taking part in sport)
- Life skills (e.g. managing belongings, developing independence in daily routines)
- Self-regulation (e.g. managing focus and attention, maintaining a calm-alert state)
- Break time/play (e.g. peer interactions, turn taking, games)
- Transitions (e.g. between tasks, classes, educational settings)

Do I need to give consent for my child to be part of the project?

- If your child is identified by their teacher(s) as needing additional support for SLT/OT, you will be informed by their teacher and together a plan will be put in place.
- If the SLT/OT and your child's teacher need to work together with your child in a group to help their learning needs, you will be asked for your informed written consent by their teacher.
- You will be asked for informed written consent for all individualised support offered to your child (intensive school support) by the SLT/OT.