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Education Minister launches childminders' toolkit

NICMA celebrates 25th Anniversary



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Contact: Liz Fawcett, Liz Fawcett Consulting Tel: 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662, or Bridget Nodder, Director, NICMA on 07850 102561.

The Education Minister, Caitriona Ruane, is launching an innovative new toolkit which will enable childminders to enhance their care of younger children.

The resources pack, *Touching Young Lives*, will be unveiled at a special conference being held by NICMA – the Childminding Association in Antrim tomorrow [Saturday 17th October 2009] to celebrate its 25th Anniversary.

In her opening address to the conference, Ms Ruane will say:

“NICMA’s dedication to the professionalism of the workforce that it supports and its continued efforts to ensure that childminders are promoted and skilled in order to provide an environment which is increasingly of better quality, is to be commended.

“The quality of the care provided is so important, and training of the childcare workforce, including childminders, plays a vital part in ensuring continuing levels of quality and I am proud that my Department supports NICMA in furtherance of these aims and objectives”.

NICMA’s Director, Bridget Nodder, says the charity is delighted that the Minister is addressing its conference:

“NICMA has come a long way over the past 25 years. We pride ourselves on the service we’re able to offer our members, but that would be impossible without the very valuable support of the Minister and her Department.”

However, Ms Nodder stresses that NICMA is keen to continue developing the support it provides for childminders in Northern Ireland:

“Our ‘Touching Young Lives’ toolkit is aimed at helping childminders to recognise the many ways in which different aspects of children’s play are aiding their development, and to provide ideas for new activities which our members might like to try.

“25 years ago, childminding was viewed as simply ‘looking after children’. We now know that a high degree of skill is needed and that every childminder can benefit from continuing professional development.

“NICMA will continue to work hard to give its members every opportunity to enhance their skills and the care they provide.”

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Editor’s notes:

1. NICMA – the Childminding Association is a charity, and is the sole organisation representing childminders in Northern Ireland. 74% of registered childminders here are members. For more details about NICMA, please go to: www.nicma.org
2. NICMA’s 25th Anniversary Conference will be held at the Dunsilly [previously the Comfort] Hotel in Antrim from 9.30am on Saturday, 17th October. The Minister will be speaking at 10.05am. A conference programme has been issued with this news release. This contains directions to the Dunsilly Hotel. The hotel’s address is 20 Dunsilly Road, Antrim, BT41 2JH. Tel: 028 9446 2929.
3. For further details, please contact Liz Fawcett, Liz Fawcett Consulting on 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662. **If you have any queries on Saturday, 17th October please contact Bridget Nodder on 07850 102561.**