



Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand St, Dublin 1
Tel +353 1 8656800 Fax +353 1 8747333 Web www.oco.ie

EMBARGO 12.01am

Monday, 20th November 2006

Press Release

Monday, 20th November 2006

Cross-border pre-school project aims to promote diversity

Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan, will, on Monday 20th November – Universal Children's Day, launch a cross-border project as part of the Media Initiative for Children in association with the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, NIPPA, the Early Years Organisation in Northern and the Peace Initiatives Institute.

The Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) is an educational programme about respecting difference and diversity aimed at pre-school children. It originated in Northern Ireland following research by Dr Paul Connolly of Queens University, Belfast, which demonstrated that children at an early age are sensitive to difference and diversity.

NIPPA and the Peace Initiatives Institute (Pii) developed the MIFC which includes a curriculum for pre-schools; supporting materials and a number of cartoons. The programme was extended to the Republic of Ireland in 2006 and a fourth cartoon focusing on bullying was developed in cooperation with the Ombudsman for Children's Office and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY).

The fourth cartoon contains an anti-bullying message and will introduce a new character, Bukola, from Dublin, who joins the four existing characters to help stop the bullies. This cartoon along with the others in the series will be broadcast on RTE, TV3 and UTV on Monday evening.

Emily Logan said: "My Office is delighted to be associated with the MIFC. We decided to become involved with the development of the anti-bullying cartoon for a variety of reasons.

"Through the complaints and investigation function, my Office receives a significant number of complaints regarding bullying. While the OCO does not investigate the substantive issue of bullying, it's obviously an issue of concern to children and young people and therefore to my Office.

"We were particularly interested in the programme because it is targeted at children of a pre-school age, an important constituency group for me as Ombudsman for Children. We also welcome the opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues in NICCY for the first time on an all island project."

ENDS

Contact: Nikki Gallagher 01-8656803 or 086-8163246

The images in the pack can be supplied digitally. Please contact Jane Boxberger at 01-8656804 or jane.boxberger@oco.ie