Title: Parental Participation: Barriers and Enablers

Aim of Presentation: To introduce participants to Tusla’s Parental Participation Project, including issues relating to the application of a Parental Participation Toolkit.

Contribution to Practice/Learning: By outlining the implementation of a Parental Participation Project within Tusla and partner organisations, participants will gain an understanding of some of the key issues in relation to the engagement of parents within Family Support provision.

Parental Participation is at the core of successfully supporting families. This presentation will describe the strategies employed to embed Parental Participation approaches within Tusla and partner organisations. It will identify and discuss key factors relating to the meaningful engagement of parents including barriers and enablers.

The experience of family living is the single greatest influence on a child’s life. Tusla’s Parenting Support Strategy (PSS) has been devised in recognition of the key role that parents can have in the realisation of better outcomes for their children and the benefits to families of evidence-informed parenting supports. The PSS seeks to positively impact on family wellbeing and children’s outcomes by facilitating a strategic approach to how communities support parents and children through the delivery of timely, accessible and friendly supports and services.

Together with a focus on Parental Participation, the PSS involves a number of other related projects including the establishment of a Parenting Support Champion Network; the promotion of ‘Parenting24seven’ - a campaign which is aimed at the general population to raise awareness around important parenting issues and to ‘normalise’ parenting support; and a series of Parenting Support Conferences which will include parents as active participants in an incremental way.
When people have an active involvement in plans and actions that relate to them and their families, these plans and activities are far more likely to work. Parenting participation is a key objective of many strands of work within Tusla. This presentation will describe the proposed implementation of the Parental Participation Project within Tusla and partner organisations over the next 2 and a half years and explore some of the lessons learnt about parental engagement to date.