

## One of our contracts

I would like people to help others  
I would like people not to fight  
We can make the playscheme work by not fighting, and sharing  
I would like people to treat me nicely  
Do not mess when other people are talking  
I would like people to be kind  
I would like people to tell the truth  
To be treated nicely and fairly  
Be treated with respect  
I would like to be treated with respect and friendliness  
I would like to be included in games  
I'd like people to listen  
Share with people  
I'd like to do lots of jumping  
Everybody to be fair  
I'd like people not to chew gum  
I would like people to treat me like a friend  
Say sorry if you hurt someone by accident  
Be friendly to me  
Play together—don't leave anyone out  
Don't bully in any way  
Play with me  
Listen and be fair  
Not to hurt other people or animals or puppets  
Not to say nasty things to each other  
Treat me nicely  
I'd like people to clear up games + toys when they're finished  
Pay attention and be quiet  
Play fair in games  
I'd like people to be nice to me  
Play nice  
No swearing  
I would like people not to grab things from me  
To be nice and kind to each other  
Share toys and art equipment  
Be nice to me  
Have a lot of fun

# Maam children's playscheme



## “ Model of good practice

### **Maam Children's Playscheme: a volunteer playscheme in rural Ireland**

Maam Children's Playscheme caters for young people aged five to 14 from Maam, Co Galway and nearby villages . . . Visiting children are also welcomed.

There are no paid workers. The playscheme depends on parents, young adults and others working together. As far as possible parents and carers are expected to give at least a day or half day at the playscheme . . .

At the playscheme itself children choose what they want to do — much of it is free play, with some organised workshops . . .

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[extract from *Ready, steady, play: a national play policy*  
published by the National Children's Office, Dublin]

From an early age now children's lives are highly organised. They are under a lot of pressure to learn and to compete and to achieve. At the playscheme they have a space to discover, to daydream and to play—on their own or with other children or adults.

Play is the stuff of life for everybody. Through play children learn to take responsibility, make choices and organise things for themselves.

Maam children's playscheme has been running in the summer holidays since 1996. As well as free play, children can choose from the following activities—

- arts & crafts
- drama
- dancing
- singing
- story-telling
- games
- local walks

Every year on the first day we all work out a new contract together (see one on the back of this leaflet), about how each person would like others to treat them—a sort of list of general rules for everyone, adults and children. Every day we have a circle time—each person has a chance to say what they think and be involved in decisions. The youngest children join in too.

There is a co-operative play session together each day. This can be with everyone around a parachute, or singing together, or some other co-operative games. These things give everybody a chance to practise mutual respect and acceptance.

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**you are free to do what you want**

**making new friends**

**you get included in games**

**everybody played together—age didn't matter to anybody**

**everyone is kind**

**got to meet other children outside of school friends**

**my favourite bit was every minute of it**

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## Some of our projects

Over the years we have had project funding from Cumás, Forum (Letterfrack), Galway County Council, Galway VEC, Irish Youth Foundation, Millennium Fund, and many local businesses. Here are some of the things we do as a result . . .



We made a film with Galway Film Centre.

Young helpers and adults regularly get training: in first aid; child protection; the importance of play in child development; the role of a playworker; empowering children; drama . . .



Our big film project—*Maam Take 1*—was funded by the largest millennium award in Galway county. Sixteen 10–13 year olds worked with two crews from *The Nerve Centre* in Derry, to script, plan and shoot two short films. This involved three pre-production weekends, a week's filming and a trip to Derry to visit *The Nerve Centre* for editing. *The Nerve Centre* also made a documentary about the playscheme and the community in Maam.



Painted murals on the school playground shelter.



Published *Playscheme '98: how people in a rural community set up and ran the Maam children's playscheme*, which was used by *Súgradh* (the national play body for Ireland) in play awareness seminars held across Ireland.



We organised a community time capsule, also funded by our millennium grant. Many families and local groups in the Maam valley gave letters, drawings, photos, family trees, reports and stories to be enclosed in the capsule which was buried at a ceremony in December 2001. Local children have agreed to be guardians until it is opened in 2051.



With a local potter we made a big, clay dinosaur, which now lives in *Tír na Cille* school.