

# Building the house

When building a house it is important to start by ensuring there are firm foundations. Even an established baby and toddler group should start at the beginning of this guide to review how solid its foundations are.

For new groups, or for people who are thinking of starting a group, Section One gives ideas about what needs to be considered and useful resources to assist with confidence building and ensuring best practice.

Where a group is established but is struggling with low attendance, it may be useful to look at how it started and review whether enough was done at the beginning to make the group sustainable and successful. Different points can be considered to rectify what is happening, and to help groups gain confidence in what they are doing.

In some cases a group is successful, with happy children, parents and carers in attendance, but there comes a time when it is necessary to 'pass the group over' to new leaders. This guide helps new leaders to review how the group was established and the factors that made it successful.

In this document there are six sections of the house:

## Planning

Issues to consider when preparing to set up a group.

## Laying the foundations

Consideration of the success factors that will ensure the group is sustainable.

## Forming a sound structure

The policies and procedures to ensure the welcoming nature of the group and the health and safety of all attending.

## Ground floor

How to market and promote the new group.

## First floor

Activities to ensure a warm welcome to all.

## Roof

A time to reflect on progress made and consideration of the role of groups in supporting families.

Each section is colour coded and contains a series of resource sheets which provide:

- Important information and examples of good practice in baby and toddler groups.
- Resource sheets which provide additional information and ask questions about the issues raised in each section. These can be discussed within the group or together with a development worker if one is available in their local area. Group leaders should contact the Pre-school Learning Alliance to identify whether development workers provide support and advice in their local area.