

A family's view on Inclusive Education

The slide features a decorative arrangement of six light blue circles. Three circles are positioned in the top row, and three are in the bottom row. The text 'A family's view on Inclusive Education' is centered over the top row, and 'Katherine O' Leary' is centered over the bottom row.

Katherine O' Leary

A Little Bit About Me....

Married to Tim, and we have 4 children

Homemaker

Farmer

Board Director Inclusion Ireland

Teacher in Our lady of Good Counsel School,
Ballincollig, Co Cork (Special school)

Columnist in the Irish Farmer's Journal

Board Director of Bord Bia

Chairperson of the 'Informing Families Project'
Cork Region

My personal story

1982 Married Tim

1985 Julie is born

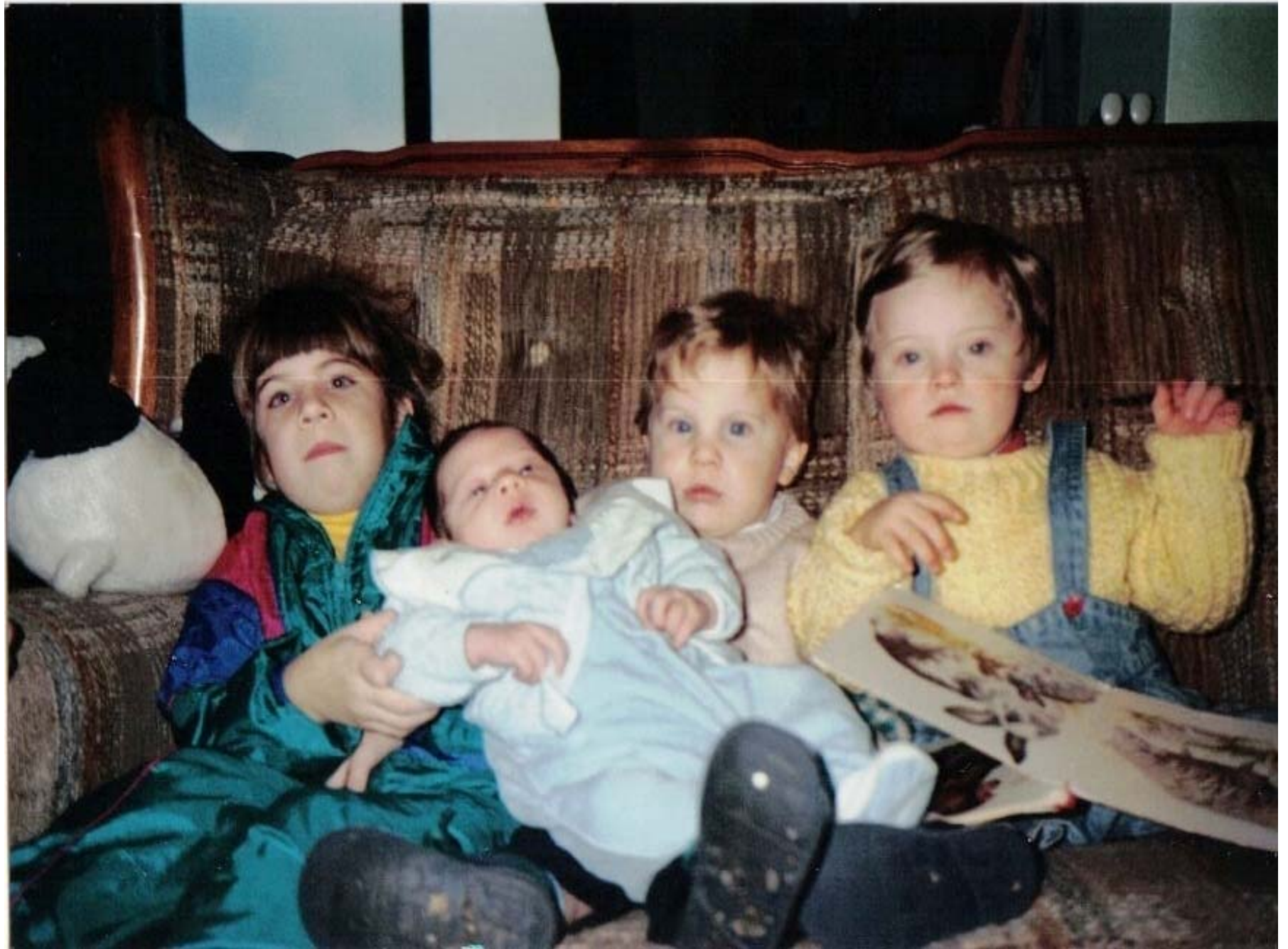
1986 Summer Julie is diagnosed with
Cerebral Palsy

I quit full time work

1988 Diarmuid is born with Down syndrome

1989 Philip is born

1991 Colm is born



WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Dr Gordon Porter

Education where students with special needs are educated in local schools in age appropriate regular classroom settings with non-disabled peers, with necessary supports to enable participation with their peers while also meeting their individual needs.

Choices

Mainstream school

Special school

Special class

Education – where do parents start?

From a position of unconditional love

A need to find the best possible education

From a position of ignorance yet filled with hope of what education can do for their child

The challenges faced by parents

The decision

The logistics

Isolation

Normalisation

Julie's needs

Education – she needed
to learn

Regular primary education
BUT

She needed access

She needed flexibility and as
she grew her needs changed



Challenges encountered by Julie

Primary school was fairly straightforward

Post primary

The changing ethos starts with the principal of the school

We were in the fight together!

Teachers to move rather than student

Provision of lift – use of political intervention

Extra time for exams Julie didn't tick that box

University is another story!

Julie

Julie is a vibrant,
successful, and
beautiful young
woman.

I am immensely proud
of her.



Diarmuid – intellectual disability

Education

Stimulation

Social training

Safe environment



Decision to send Diarmuid to Special School

There was only one choice

Education – brilliant

Problems -

Lack of interaction with community

Lack of interaction with other families

Lack of services

The fight was difficult every step of the way



Reflecting on experience

Happy with decisions

Friendships

We must always strive for excellence and work towards inclusion.

Good teachers will develop good strategies.

Individual teachers can drive success stories.

The future – the challenges

Positivity rather than negativity for all stakeholders

Being prepared to alter the mindset

Innovative thinking, training and co-operation

What becomes of the child with serious behavioural difficulties?

Where inclusive education is not possible there must be a plan for real integration

The future – the opportunities

That the educational needs of children with disabilities will be met in a way that makes them full members of society


That they will be integrated with mainstream pupils

That they will be educated with siblings

That they will be part of the school community

For Ireland it is important that the Disability Strategy and EPSEN elements are put in place.

For now we have to be content with a policy of towards inclusive education



**Beyond inclusion
is just good education**

