



ombudsman
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Ombudsman for Children's Office 10 Years of Putting Children First

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Ombudsman for Children

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies

Portlaoise

10th March 2015

OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN'S OFFICE

- Ombudsman for Children Act, 2002
- Presidential appointment
- Independent statutory office
- Directly accountable to the Oireachtas



OCO FUNCTIONS

- Independent Complaints Handling

Provide an independent service regarding actions by public bodies affecting children up to the age of eighteen

- Children's Rights Education & Participation

Actively promote children's rights including the provisions of the UNCRC

- Policy & Legislation

To monitor law and policy, and provide advice to any Minister of Government on any matter relating to the rights and welfare of children

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

- Advice on primary legislation affecting children for example
 - Children First Bill 2012
 - Criminal Justice Withholding Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons Bill 2012
 - Education Admissions Bill (2014)
 - Criminal Law Sexual Offences Bill (2015)

HEARING & HIGHLIGHTING THE VOICES OF IRISH CHILDREN



PROMOTING AWARENESS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

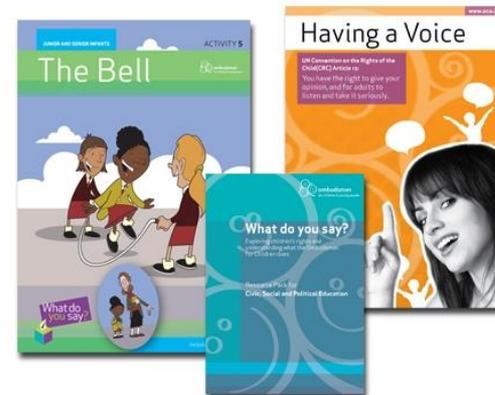
Workshops

- Twice-weekly educational workshops at OCO on children's rights and responsibilities



Materials

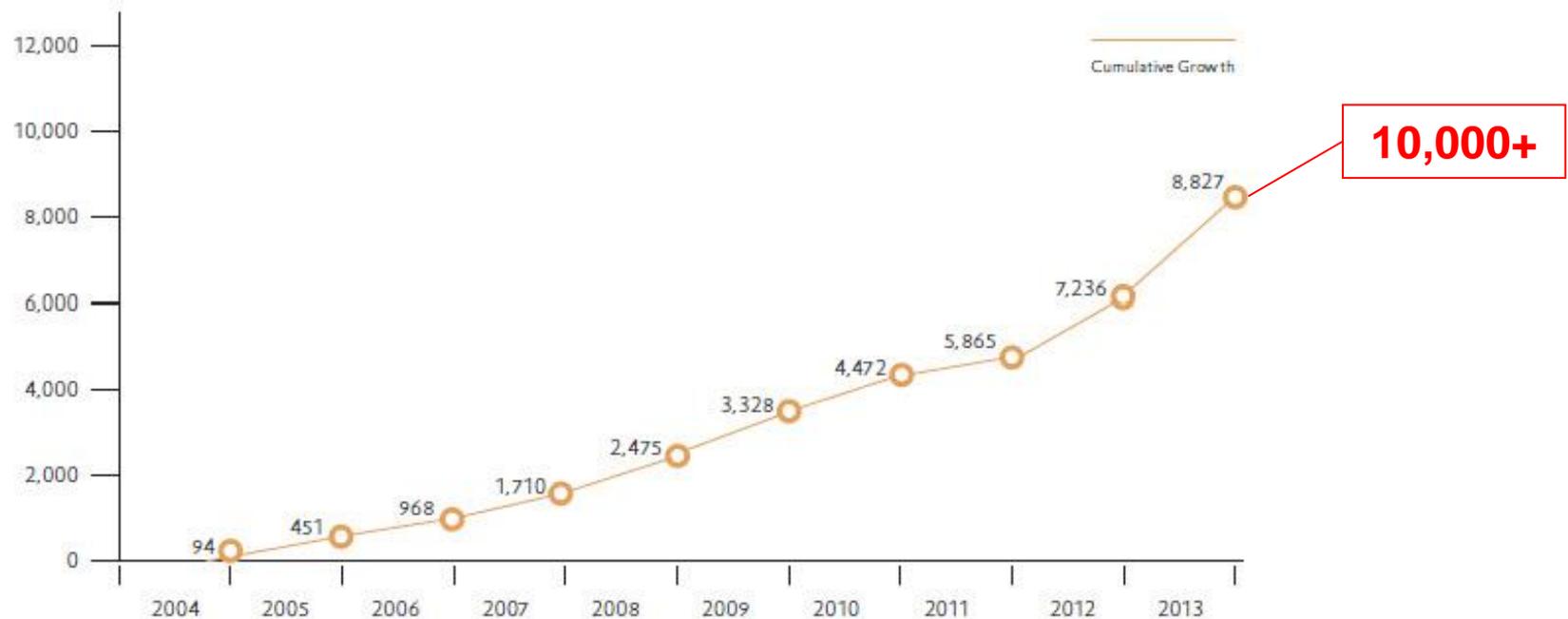
- Educational resource materials for use in the context of curriculum teaching and learning



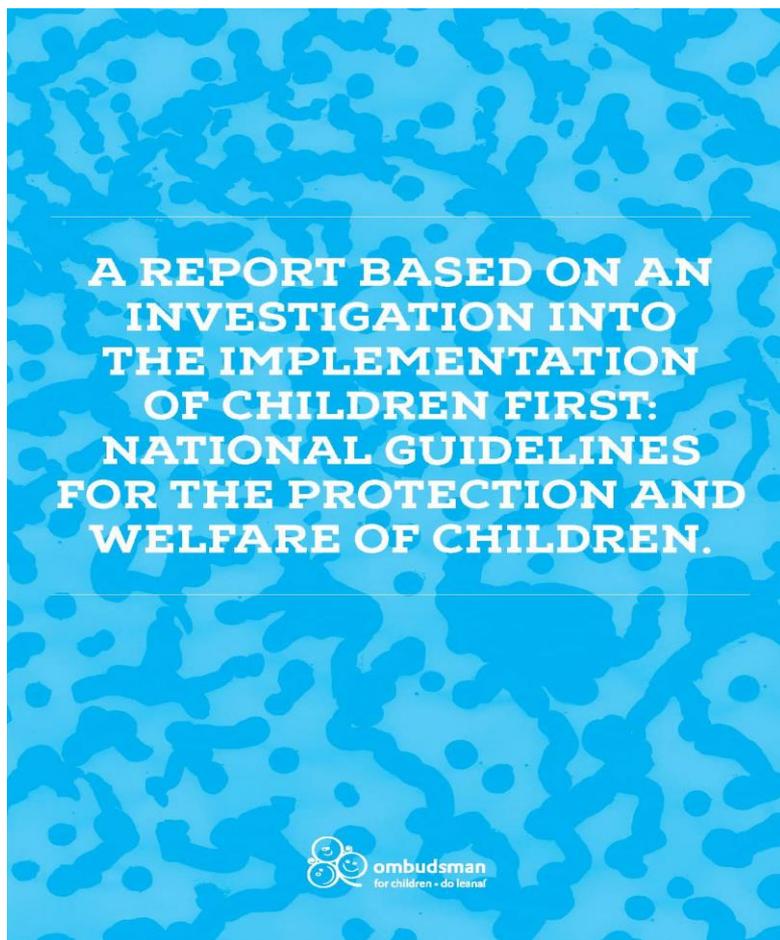
Independent Complaints Handling

- Complaints made by or on behalf of children
- Public bodies, schools and voluntary hospitals (Reviewable Agencies)
- Independent & Impartial
- Respect for local procedures
- Intervention
 - adverse affect on child
 - maladministration

CUMULATIVE COMPLAINTS 2004-2013



Children First Investigation 2010



- Following numerous complaints suggesting serious non-compliance and inconsistency around the country
- 22 Recommendations
- Noted the need to move Child Welfare out of the HSE to provide sufficient focus
- Influenced 2011 Children First (Revised)

Educational Resources for Children with Down Syndrome (2013)

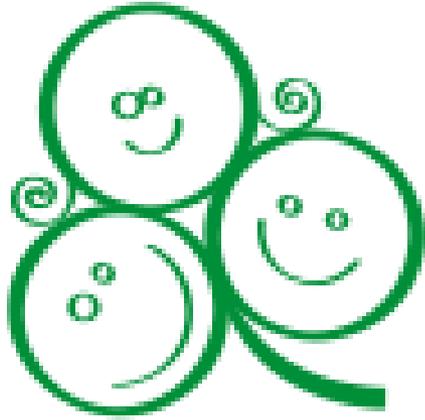
- General Allocation Model (GAM)
- Consider Model of Allocation
- OCO did NOT say how it should be allocated

Recommendations included

- Address the absence of arrangements to centrally monitor the impact of the additional support measures on the educational progress of children with special needs, including Down Syndrome;
- Review procedures whereby fundamental issues that emerge in respect of the categories of special need can be considered and dealt with in a timely manner

PROGRESS MADE IN 10 YEARS

- Children First revised and placed on Statutory Basis
- Closure of St. Patrick's Institution for u18's and move to Oberstown Single Campus
- Children's Referendum – Best Interest & Voice of the Child
- Increased awareness of OCO as a Free, Independent & Credible alternative to Court



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