

# Gisborne author home to endorse Plunket campaign

by Kiri Gillespie

A GISBORNE author has got behind a Plunket programme being launched this weekend, encouraging three-year-old children to have health checks.

Gill Pittar, author of the Milly, Molly children's books, has come home from Turin, Italy — where one of her books was among frontrunners in an international book award — to endorse the Plunket's Books for Littlies campaign.

The programme offers children a hard-cover Milly, Molly book when their parents take them for their free three-year-old health check-ups.

Mrs Pittar will be at Saturday's launch, offering to sign books and meet with parents. She is a strong supporter of the Plunket programme.

"It is the most important service for children," she said.

She has offered 500 hard-covered books to help steer the Books for Littlies campaign.

"Plunket kept me floating when I had littlies. They were wonderful for me, so this is a little something I can do in support of them.

"That is exactly why I am doing it — so I can give them something back."

The books were not only an important way to encourage parents to get their children checked, but they also offered a "wonderful start to life" at the same time, said Mrs Pittar.

Plunket volunteer services leader Sharron Stevenson agreed.

"Reading to a child is one of the best connections you can make," she said.

Hard-cover books will also be on sale at the launch.

The health checks are paid for by the Government, which has prompted organisers to say there are no excuses for parents not to have their children examined.

The check-ups would help promote a child's enrolment with dental services, pre-school education, parenting support and nutrition programmes and offer help with behavioural issues, said Mrs Stevenson.

The Books for Littlies launch is at the Plunket Pool Party, Rockforte Finance Olympic Pool Complex on Saturday, from 11.30am.