



Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland



*Supporting Parents, Communities
and Services in the Education of Children*

End-of-Year REPORT 2021-22

CHY 9928

WWW.NCIRL.IE/ELI

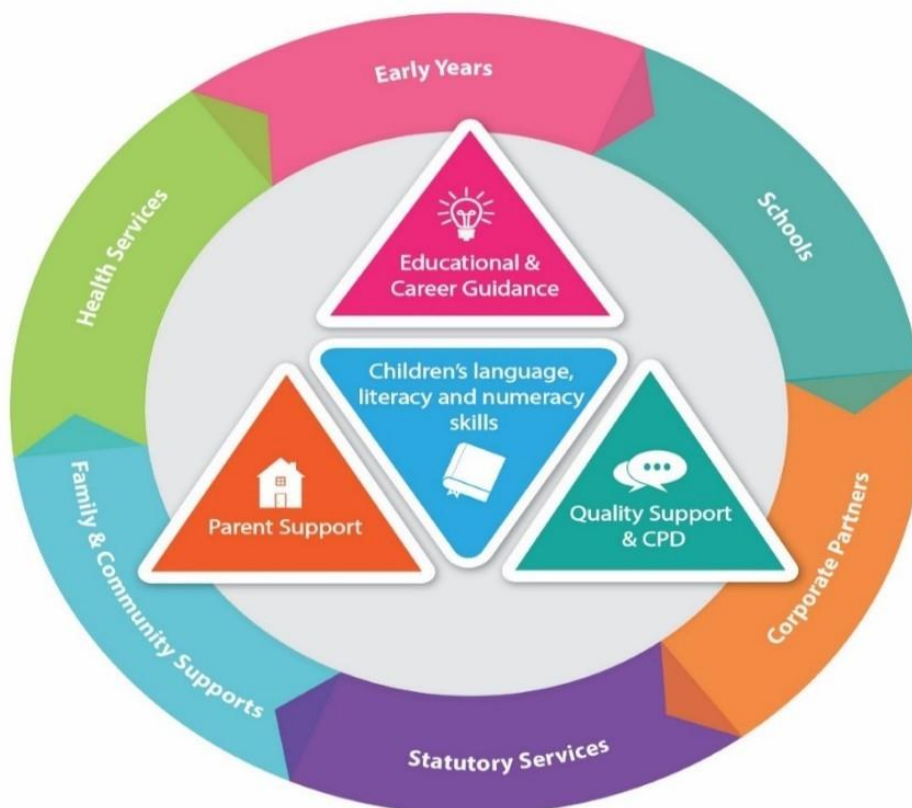


VISION

Our long-term vision is that ELI will lead the way in providing first class educational support programmes within local communities, thereby enabling children, young people and their families to develop the dispositions, skills and knowledge needed to achieve their educational, career and life goals.

MISSION

Working in partnership with Government and local communities to support educational journeys and achievements



This report was compiled by Kate Darmody ELI Researcher, Alexandra Alcala ELI Research Administrator, Bróna Mulligan ELI Research Intern, with contributions from the wider ELI team.

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1. INTRODUCTORY LETTER

2021-22 was a challenging year for the Early Learning Initiative (ELI), National College of Ireland (NCI), as we dealt with the continued impact of COVID-19, increased waiting lists for disabilities, the Ukrainian refugee crisis and cost of living increases on children and families across Ireland. Our new National Centre and core Dublin's Inner City Centres were further developed. The National Centre supports communities across Ireland to deliver home visiting programmes, while Dublin's Inner City Centre delivers wrap-around inclusive services to children and families.

Our focus on at-risk children continued with 14,835 people engaging in ELI's programmes in 2021-22. Satisfaction rates and learning indicators remain high with children's language, literacies and cognitive skills continuing to improve. This End-of-Year Report summarises our achievements over the past year with more information available on our website: www.ncirl.ie/eli and from our ELI team. While 2021-22 was a turbulent year for many families, our wonderful partners helped ensure that children and young people flourished despite the many challenges. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved and to note our key highlights this year.

Innovative diverse supports for parents and children

Expertise, innovation and research remains key. This year saw the development of new programmes (Parenting365, Stretch Graduate, NEIC Childhood Restored, NEIC Parenting Coordinator and My Place to Play) designed to support the emerging needs of our more vulnerable families, in particular children with additional needs who face long waiting lists for assessments and services.

Strategic Review and Enhanced Governance

Implementation of ELI's 2020-25 strategy to date has been remarkably successful thanks to ELI's Advisory Committee and Steering Groups. To enhance governance structures, a National Steering Group was established in April 2022 and a strategic review completed.

Expanding Home Visiting Across Ireland

Our ambition is that the 12,400 children born into poverty each year receive the support they need to thrive. 2021-22 saw the expansion of ParentChild+ and Home from Home into other communities along with the development of the new Sláintecare Community Families Programme. As chair of the Home Visiting Alliance, we look forward to the development of National Model of Home Visiting as part of the First 5 | A Government Strategy For Babies & Young Children.

Thank You

Once again, thank you to our many partners for your vision and support. Starting with language and literacy in 2006, including numeracy and STEM in 2010 to addressing the emerging needs of families living through homelessness, the NEIC feud, COVID-19 pandemic, lack of services for children with additional needs and now the increase in refugees and cost of living; you have journeyed with us in championing our most at-risk children and families. If you want to know more about ELI, we are very happy to talk to you. Together we are changing children's and young people's lives through education.



Dr Josephine Bleach,
Director, Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland

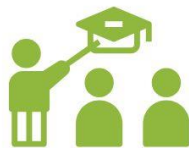
1.1. 2021-22 Key Indicators



14,835 participants engaged



**Indicators of satisfaction
(93%,n=1063)**



**Indicators of learning
(91%,n=991)**



7,411 parents engaged



165 volunteers engaged



35 corporate partners supporting ELI



**15,773 visits completed
in home and virtually**



209 interagency meetings held

1.2. Thank You



We would like to pay tribute to the generosity of all our donors, who range from Government to businesses to Trusts/Foundations to individuals. Your investment in children's futures is greatly valued and is making a huge difference to their lives. We would also like to acknowledge the support of all those who gave their time and expertise on a pro bono basis.

We are continually seeking additional partners and would welcome the opportunity to talk to interested companies and individuals. Please contact Mary Anne Stokes (by phone: 086 4666438 or by e-mail: maryanne.stokes@ncirl.ie) for more information.

1.3. 2021-22 Overview

National College of Ireland (NCI) is an independent third level institution providing programmes in business and IT to a diverse group of students from non-traditional backgrounds. In 2006, NCI established the Early Learning Initiative (ELI), as part of its mission to address educational underachievement in marginalised communities. ELI has grown from 400 participants (children, parents and professionals) to 14,835 and moved beyond its initial Dublin Docklands catchment area to supporting other communities across the country.

Part of ELI's 2020-25 Strategic Plan, the National Centre is working to support communities across Ireland to deliver high quality Home Visiting and Parent Engagement Programmes, in line with the Irish Government's First 5 A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028.

National Centre	Families	Professionals	% Expenditure
ParentChild+ (18-36 months)	471	95	58%
Sláintecare Community Mothers Project	1,300	30	11%
My Place to Play	413	180	7%
Home Visiting Alliance Webinar	0	328	6%
Rethink Ireland from Couch to Screen Project	0	65	13%
Research & CRM Projects	133	0	6%
Total	2,317	698	101%

Dublin's Inner City focuses on universal plus, wrap around, holistic integrated supports for children, parents, and families through the delivery of high-quality Home Visiting, Parent Support, Literacies and Educational Guidance Programmes. Dublin's Inner City is a best practice demonstration site for ELI's National Centre and other communities across Ireland. Programmes, having been successfully piloted and evaluated in Dublin's Inner City, are manualised and rolled out to other areas through the National Centre.

Dublin's Inner City	Families	Professionals	% Expenditure
Educational Guidance	544	40	10%
Literacies & STEM	2,676	229	21%
Parent Support Groups	526	41	18%
Home Visiting	325	49	50%
Total	4,071	359	100%

**292 of this figure also included in CERI table above.*

ELI is a partnership between families and professionals from statutory, corporate, voluntary and community organisations. Fifteen years of sustained cross sectoral collaboration has paid dividends due to the goodwill, enthusiasm and determination of our wonderful partners. In 2021-22, ELI teamed with (see Section 3.7 for further details).

- ✓ 1,426 professionals from community, statutory and voluntary organisations
- ✓ 31 corporate organisations and foundations along with 165 volunteers
- ✓ Irish Government through the Docklands and East Inner City Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme, Tusla, Children and Young People's Services Committees, Sláintecare, Rethink Ireland, Science Foundation of Ireland and the North East Inner City (NEIC) Initiative.

2. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

The Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland, is committed to good governance and put in place systems and processes to ensure we achieve our objectives with integrity by managing ELI in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent manner. This section accounts for ELI's 2021-22 income and expenditure along with its governance structures and 2020-25 Strategy.

2.1. Finance

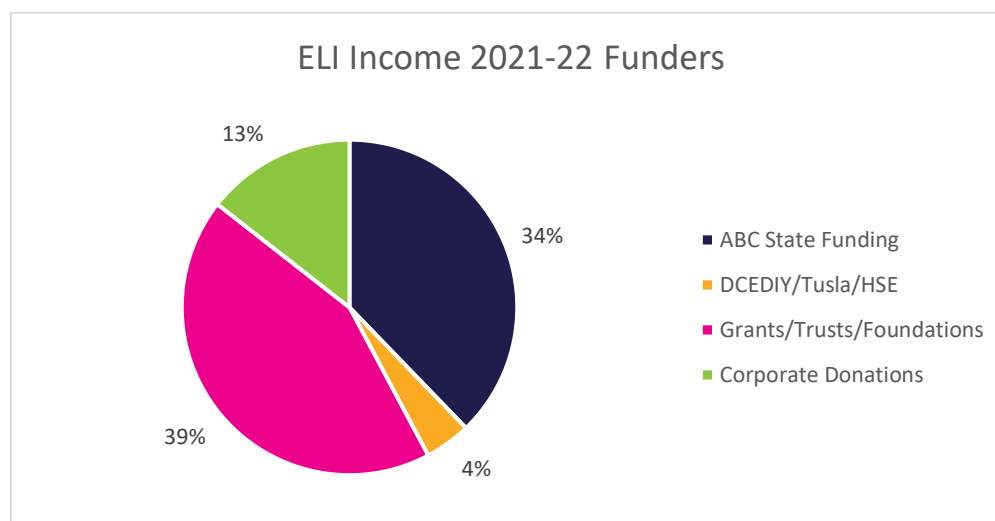
ELI has tightly managed income and expenditure to ensure that programme and partner outcomes and commitments have been fully achieved. It is financed by a mix of statutory and voluntary funding. This section details the income, expenditure and budgets for ELI's National Centre, Dublin's Inner City and Docklands & East Inner City Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programmes.

	Income 2021-22	Expenditure 2021-22	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Projected Expenditure 2022-23
	€	€	€	€
Docklands & East Inner City Area Based Childhood (ABC)	817,814	970,113	(152,299)	796,100
Dublin's Inner City	806,899	660,756	146,143	703,900
National Centre	743,805	843,153	(99,348)	900,000
Total	2,368,518	2,474,022	(105,504)	2,400,000

- The National Centre overspend is covered by restricted funding received in 2020-21, which was retained in reserve for contracted programme costs delivered in 2021-22.
- The combined ABC and Dublin's Inner City overspend was €6,156. The ABC overspend, which is covered by philanthropic funding for Dublin's Inner City, reflects actual programme costs rather than the Tusla ABC grant.
- The costs above do not include services provided by NCI but not charged to ELI, which are estimated as 20% additional cost of c.€500,000.

2.1.1. Income 2021-22

ELI raised a total income of €2.4m in 2021-22, up from €2.1m in 2020-21; €1.2m (43% down from 53% in 2020-21) came from statutory funding (ABC, Tusla, NEIC and HSE) with the remaining €1.2m (52% up from 47% in 2020-21) coming from our corporate partners, grants, trusts, foundations and individuals.



There was an increase in grants (39% compared with 31% in 2020-21) with corporate and individual funding decreasing (13% compared with 16% in 2020-21).

We would like to pay tribute to the generosity of all our donors, many of whom are long-term valued partners in improving outcomes for children, families and communities. A special thank you to Dan O'Connor (Director, CRH), Declan Quilligan (Managing Director, Citco Fund Services), Sean Reilly (Executive Chairman, McGarrell Reilly Group), Michael Hartwell (Partner, Deloitte) and Sandra Foley (Managing Director, State Street) for their invaluable input as part of our ELI Development Committee.

If you are interested in partnering with ELI, please contact Mary Anne Stokes, Development and Volunteering Officer (by phone: 086 466 6438 or email: maryanne.stokes@ncirl.ie).

2.1.2. Expenditure 2021-22

The combined spend for ELI for the 12 months to June 2022 was €2.5m (compared to the previous year of €1.9m). The spend for the National Centre was €744K (up from €628k in 2020-21) with Dublin's Inner City (including the ABC funding) €1.6m (up from €1.3m in 2020-21). More details of the breakdown in income and expenditure can be found in the relevant [National Centre](#) and [Dublin's Inner City](#) sections.

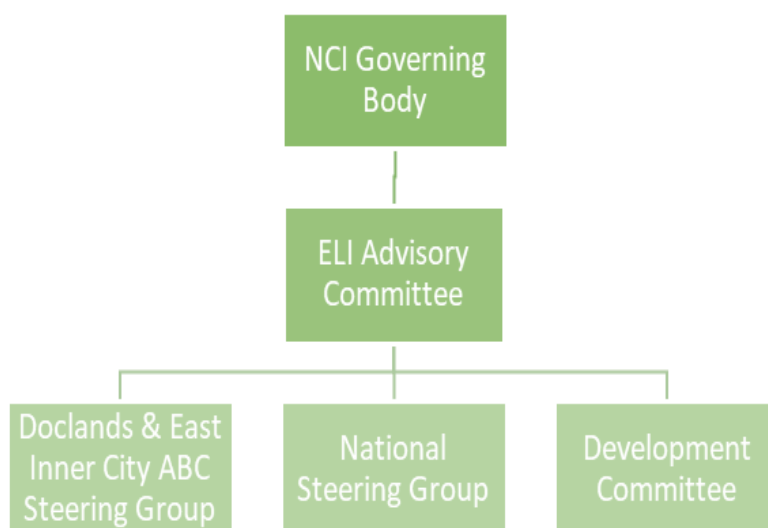
Department	Projected Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2022	Actual Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2022	Projected/ Actual Expenditure Variance	Projected Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2023
	€	€	€	€
National Centre	650,000	843,153	(193,153)	900,000
Dublin's Inner City	550,000	660,756	(110,756)	703,900
Docklands & East Inner City Area Based Childhood (ABC)	796,100	970,113	(174,013)	796,100
Total	1,996,100	2,474,022	(477,922)	2,400,000

Notes:

- The costs included above represent the direct costs incurred of providing the Programmes. They do not include any charges for services provided by NCI such as accounting, payroll, HR, marketing. It is estimated that this would account for 20% additional cost or €494,804.
- Spend was up across each Department and exceeded the projected budget, mainly due to grants awarded during the year and additional programmes. Spending also exceeded income but this was due to restricted funding awarded in 2020-21 to cover programmes costs in 2021-22.
- The ABC income is higher than allocated budget due to an additional 4% allocation by Tusla in November 2020. Funding from January to June 2023 is subject to its inclusion in the Government's 2023 Budget and the projected expenditure will be amended to reflect the 2023 ABC budget agreed with Tusla.
- ELI National Centre and Dublin's Inner City Projected Expenditure 2022-23 is based on ELI's 2020-25 Strategic Plan, costs in previous years, pledged funding, outstanding grant applications as well as proposed programme expansion for 2022-23. It will be amended in December 2023 to reflect funding received and additional pledges/grants.

2.2 Governance

NCI takes full responsibility for the financial, management, contractual, reporting and governance requirements of ELI. It has proactively embraced the highest standards of corporate governance including the Statement for Guiding Principles for Fundraising, Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015, Child Safeguarding Statement, GDPR and The Governance Code. NCI does not charge any central overhead to ELI and has absorbed historical deficits between funding available and the cost of delivering ELI programmes and services. The generous commitment of Leonard Moloney, Chairperson of NCI's Governing Body; Gina Quin, President of NCI; and other members of NCI's Governing Body and Executive Board has been critical to the success of ELI in improving outcomes for children and young people.



Membership of NCI's Governing Body and ELI Committees are listed below with more information on ELI Governance available on our website: www.ncirl.ie/eli.

NCI Governing Body as of June 2022	
*Members of Governing Body who sit on the ELI Advisory Committee, which in turn reports to Governing Body.	
Chairman - Fr. Leonard Moloney S.J. Mr. Michael Brady Ms. Barbara Cotter Mr. Brendan McGinty Ms. Brigid McManus Mr. Patrick Clancy Ms. Maureen Brogan Mr. Tony O'Malley Mr. Dave Cormack Ms. Gina Quin – College President	Ms. Sheila Nunan* Fr. Kevin O'Higgins S.J.* Ms. Kathleen Frith – resigned February 2022 Ms. Michelle Moore – appointed March 2022 Mr. Conor O'Reilly - NCISU President Mr. Kevin Callinan Mr. John McGarrigle - Secretary and Registered Officer – resigned November 2021 Dr Donnchadh Ó Madagáin - Secretary and Registered Officer – appointed November 2021

ELI is a discreet centre within NCI with its own dedicated staff and Advisory Committees. A review of ELI's Governance structures was completed in 2021-22, which led to the establishment of the National Steering Group. The leadership and expertise shown by Frank Ryan, Chairperson of the ELI Advisory Committee and ABC Steering Group; Dan O'Connor, Chairperson of the ELI Development Committee; Mary Doyle, Chairperson of recently established ELI National Steering Group and the other members of the ELI Advisory Committee and Steering Groups has been invaluable in the development of ELI. We thank them for their advice, guidance and support over the past year and look forward to working with them in 2022-23.

ELI Advisory Committee as of June 2022 is set out below:	
Chairperson – Frank Ryan Gina Quin, President NCI Fr. Kevin O'Higgins S.J., NCI Governing Body Sheila Nunan, NCI Governing Body Joe O'Reilly Sean Reilly,	Dan O'Connor, Chair of ELI's Development Committee Mary Doyle, Chair of ELI's National Steering Group Jenny Barnard (Resigned January 2022) Tom O Connor (Joined June 2022)
ABC Steering Group as of June 2022 is set out below:	
Chairperson – Frank Ryan, Chairperson ELI Advisory Committee Donnchadh Ó Madagáin, NCI Finance Director Dan O'Connor, Chair of ELI's Development Committee Niall Heneghan Dr Josephine Bleach, ELI Director	Lorraine Doherty, John Peelo Denise Hevey, Alison McCormack Dara Terry Denise McDonald Cathy Steenson
ELI Development Group as of June 2022 is set out below:	
Chairperson – Mr Dan O'Connor Mr Sean Reilly Ms Sandra Foley Mr Declan Quilligan Mr Michael Hartwell	Gina Quin, President NCI (Resigned May 2022) Deirdre Giblin, NCI Director of Development and External Engagement (Joined May 2022) Dr Josephine Bleach, ELI Director Lana Cummins, ELI Assistant Director
ELI National Steering Group as of June 2022 is set out below:	
Chairperson: Mary Doyle Jimmy Hill, NCI Vice President Dan O'Connor, Chair of ELI's Development Committee	Elaine McHugh Christine McCann Dr Josephine Bleach, Director of ELI

2.3 Strategic Planning

ELI is a complex initiative in an increasingly complex world with strategic planning a key element of its strength, durability and success over the years. Since 2007, ELI has focused on the delivery and sustainability of its programmes within the Dublin Docklands. Our 2015-20 Strategy defined a new phase in ELI's history with its aims to establish ELI as a national initiative with national impact. Our 2020-25 Strategy build on this work and aims to develop incrementally the following:

1. Sustaining and developing the portfolio of Dublin's Inner-City Programmes
2. Scaling up sustainable models of Home Visiting programmes across Ireland
3. Research and Innovation in response to quality assurance and everchanging contexts
4. Building partnerships to increase influence and impact

In January 2020, as part of the 2020-25 Strategic Plan, two separate but interlocking departments were established. One department is responsible for sustaining and developing ELI's suite of programmes in Dublin's Inner City. The other department, National Centre for Parent Child Home Visiting and Family Engagement, supports communities across Ireland to deliver high quality Home Visiting and Parent Engagement Programmes, in line with the Irish Government's First 5 A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028.

Described as ambitious and innovative in the Irish and international context, ELI continues to develop pioneering inclusive and diverse programmes that address the needs of the children, families, and local organisations across Ireland. With ELI's Dublin's Inner City programmes being the model site of best practice where innovative programmes will be tried and tested, the National Centre focuses on being at the forefront of educational access in marginalized communities.

2022-23 is a significant year for ELI with work commencing on the development of National Model of Home Visiting as part of the First 5 | A Government Strategy For Babies & Young Children. This model will outline the Government's vision for home visiting and will shape both the strategy and the work of ELI at both local and national level for the foreseeable future.

A strategic review identified the following priorities for 2022-23:

1. Sustain and develop further the portfolio of both National and Dublin's Inner-City Programmes. Details of all ELI's Programme can be found in this document and ELI Webpages: www.ncirl.ie/ELI
2. Secure sustainable funding for the National Centre for Parent Child Home Visiting and Family Engagement as well as supporting ParentChild+ sites around the country to secure their own funding.
3. Scale up sustainable models of Home Visiting programmes across Ireland as chair of the Home Visiting Alliance and the development of the National Model of Home Visiting as per the First 5 | A Government Strategy For Babies & Young Children.
4. Research and innovation in response to quality assurance and everchanging contexts with a priority on enhancing research partnerships and knowledge management systems, including knowledge dissemination (sharing expertise and learning), brokerage (supporting others to use knowledge) and synthesis (connecting the dots between theory, policy, and practice).
5. Develop ELI's CRM (Customer Relation Management) data management system to gather data on the multiple points of engagement in ELI by families in multiple organisations across the country as well as supporting ELI's research, evaluation, and reporting capacity.
6. Expand ELI's network of key partnerships and relationships at local and national level to achieve a multiplier effect, increase impact and influence policy. For more information on key partnerships, please see Section 3.7.

For more information about ELI's 2020-25 Strategic Plan, please contact Dr Josephine Bleach (By phone 086 81536000 or email josephine.bleach@ncirl.ie)

3. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PARENT CHILD HOME VISITING AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

3.1. Introductory Letter

Since its establishment in January 2020, the National Centre for Parent Child Home Visiting and Family Engagement has seen the further growth of ELI supported Home Visiting and Family Engagement programmes across Ireland. We are delighted to report that ParentChild+ is being implemented in eleven sites nationally with more expansion discussions and supports pencilled for the upcoming year. The partnerships we have established at local, regional and national level have been crucial to increasing our reach to 471 families. This section of the End of Year Report gives the 2021-22 highlights along with a brief overview of ELI's National Centre for Home Visiting and Family Engagement. More details are available on the website: www.ncirl.ie/eli. If you would like more information, please contact Lána Cummins by e-mail lane.cummins@ncirl.ie or phone 086 4672204.

Real-time diverse supports for parents and children across Ireland

Being responsive to the needs of families in real time is critical to ensuring the meaningful engagement of parents and children. Community Action Research allows ELI respond to emerging themes in communities across Ireland with programmes developed in Dublin's Inner City. Many communities now benefit from the Home from Home programme for families in emergency accommodation. Similarly, 413 families living in International Protection have been supported through My Place to Play for babies and toddlers.

Cross Country Partnership Approach

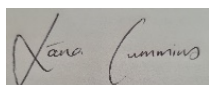
ELI works collaboratively with community stakeholders across Ireland to achieve the best outcomes for families. The National Centre Steering Group was established this year to oversee the work of the Centre and to harness expertise and community relationships across Ireland. The Home Visiting Alliance and the National My Place to Play Implementation Group also highlight the commitment ELI has to working with our partners and providing families with seamless, wrap around support.

Sharing Knowledge and Insights with Government, Statutory Agencies and Communities

Research and knowledge dissemination allows us to highlight the innovative work happening at ground level across Ireland and to influence policy, practice and research in home visiting and family engagement. Work has commenced on the expansion of the CRM system to be used in all national sites and allow for more effective data collection. ELI and NCI also spearheaded the first Home Visiting micro credentials in Ireland, a tremendous achievement for the sector.

Thank you

Thank you to all of our partners who make ELI's work possible. 2021-2022 saw a continuation of isolation and uncertainty through COVID-19, an increase in the cost of living, an unprecedented international protection crisis and a record number of children living in emergency accommodation. Without the vision, support and collaboration of all involved, ELI would not be in a position to support the parents and children who need us most. We will continue to find ways to ensure children across are Ireland are supported to achieve their educational, career and life goals.



Lána Cummins, ELI National Assistant Director

3.2. Overview

From the beginning, NCI envisaged ELI acting as a Centre of Excellence from which other communities and governments, nationally and internationally, could learn how to improve the educational and life chances of children and their families across Ireland and further afield. As ELI's activities grew exponentially, balancing local programme delivery with national advocacy and mainstreaming activities was challenging. As part of NCI's Strategic Plan, a National Centre for Home Visiting and Family Engagement was established to capture and build on its achievements to date and its strategic ambitions.

The National Centre is a focal point for knowledge management, capacity-building, communication and influencing in relation to educational disadvantage, access and ELI's growing expertise in supporting other communities to deliver high quality Home Visiting programmes, in line with the Irish Government's First 5 A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028. The overall goal is to capture new knowledge and practices in these areas and disseminate them locally, nationally and internationally. It supports and learns from ELI's work in Dublin's Inner City and uses it as an example of best practice from which other communities can learn.

National Strategic Objectives

- National leader and centre of expertise in accessibility, widening participation and educational pathways with a particular focus on early childhood and family learning
- National centre for the development of sustainable models of Home Visiting across Ireland and innovative emerging future orientated family home-based learning
- Innovation centre for adapting and transforming our existing activities, pedagogies, and processes to remain responsive to everchanging needs and policy contexts
- Pioneering research to capture new knowledge and practices and disseminate them locally, nationally, and internationally
- Develop our expertise in capacity-building for long-term sustainability planning, particularly in relation to programmes and services for children and young people in statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

At present, the National Centre supports a combination of the following activities:

1. Scaling up sustainable models of Home Visiting programmes across Ireland.
2. Research and innovation in response to quality assurance and everchanging contexts.
3. Building partnerships to increase influence and impact.
4. Sustaining and developing the portfolio of Dublin's Inner-City Programmes.

ELI's National Centre programmes and initiatives include:

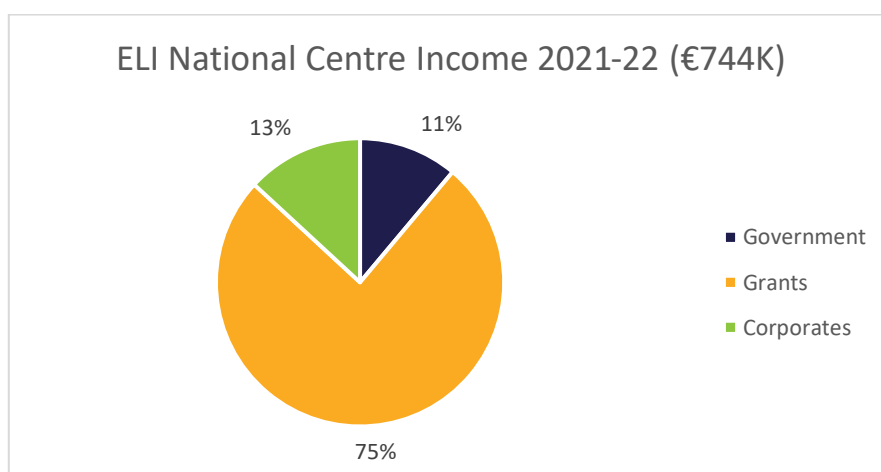
National Centre for Parent Child Home Visiting and Family Engagement	Families	Professionals	Budget
ParentChild+ (18-36 months)	471	95	58%
Sláintecare Community Mothers Project	1,300	30	11%
My Place to Play	413	180	7%
Home Visiting Alliance Webinar	0	328	6%
Rethink Ireland from Couch to Screen Project	0	65	13%
Research & CRM Projects	133	0	6%
Total	2,317	698	100%

3.3. Finance and Governance

This section accounts for ELI's National Centre 2021-22 income and expenditure along with its governance structures. Financed by a mix of statutory and voluntary funding, including Tusla and the HSE, it has tightly managed income and expenditure to ensure that programme and partner outcomes and commitments have been fully achieved.

Income

The spend for the National Centre was €744K (up from €628k in 2020-21). The following graph illustrates the breakdown in income with 75% from grants, 13% from corporate funding and 11% from the State, primarily Tusla and HSE through Sláintecare.



We would like to pay tribute to the generosity of all our donors, many of whom are long-term visionary partners in improving outcomes for children, families and communities. A special thank you to Dan O'Connor (Director, CRH), Joe O'Reilly (Managing Director, Castlethorn), Declan Quilligan (Managing Director, Citco Fund Services), Sean Reilly (Executive Chairman, McGarrell Reilly Group), Michael Hartwell (Partner, Deloitte), Gina Quin (President of NCI) and Sandra Foley (Managing Director, State Street) for their generous invaluable input as part of our ELI Development Committee. If you are interested in partnering with ELI, please contact Mary Anne Stokes, Development and Volunteering Officer (by phone: 086 466 6438 or email: maryanne.stokes@ncirl.ie)

Expenditure 2021-22

ELI National Centre	Projected Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2022	Actual Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2022	Projected/ Actual Expenditure Variance	Projected Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2023
	€	€	€	€
Home Visiting National	50,000	51,138	(1,138)	80,000
ParentChild+ National Office	125,000	124,283	717	150,000
ParentChild+ Direct Delivery	230,000	359,082	(129,082)	380,000
Rethink Ireland Innovate HV Training	82,962	107,159	(24,197)	-
My Place to Play	20,000	63,531	(43,531)	70,000
Sláintecare Community Mothers	87,000	89,615	(2,615)	5,000
Research & CRM Projects	55,038	48,345	6,693	215,000
Total	650,000	843,153	(193,153)	900,000

Notes:

The costs included above represent the direct costs incurred of providing the Programmes. They do not include any charges for services provided by NCI such as accounting, payroll, HR, marketing, which is estimated at 20% of the above costs (€168,631).

The deficit and higher spend was due to increased costs, the return to in person delivery and successful grants proposals. In addition, restricted funding was received in 2020-21, which had to be spent in 2021-22.

The ELI National Centre's Projected Expenditure 2022-23 is based on ELI's 2020-25 Strategic Plan, costs in previous years, pledged funding, outstanding grant applications as well as proposed programme expansion. It will be amended in December 2022 to reflect funding received and additional pledges/grants.

Governance

The recently established National Steering Group provides oversight and direction for ELI's national Centre. It oversees the development of the overall vision, operating framework and effective management of the National Centre as a separate department within ELI with responsibility for national programmes and initiatives in relation to improving educational outcomes for children and families. We thank all steering group members list below for their advice, guidance and support over the past year and look forward to working with them in 2022-23.

ELI National Steering Group as of June 2022 is set out below:	
Chairperson: Mary Doyle Jimmy Hill, NCI Vice President Dan O'Connor, Chair of ELI's Development Committee	Elaine McHugh Christine McCann Josephine Bleach, Director of ELI

3.4. National Home Visiting Support

Developing and scaling up sustainable models of Home Visiting programmes across Ireland so that the 12,400 children born into poverty each year in Ireland get the support they need to thrive in education, career and life is a key priority for ELI. To achieve this, we have been developing a National Home Visiting Support Centre, which has the capacity to support the delivery of high quality evidenced-based sustainable models of Home Visiting and innovative emerging future orientated family home-based learning across Ireland. While a lot of progress has been made, it is a complex task in an everchanging policy and societal context to ensure that the structures, processes and training to enable high quality governance, accountability and implementation of home visiting programmes in different organisations across Ireland are in place and are working. This section details this work

- **ParentChild+ National Home Visiting Training, Research and Support Centre**, which supports the scaling up of ParentChild+ to other communities in a sustainable way and provides ongoing comprehensive support to ParentChild+ Managers, Coordinators and Home Visitors around the country.
- **Home From Home Programme**, a specially adapted home visiting programme for families living in homeless/emergency accommodation, which is ready for scaling up around the country in 2022-23.
- **Sláintecare Integration Fund: Prevention is Better than Cure: A Community Mothers Programme Development Project** in collaboration with the HSE, Tusla, Katharine Howard Foundation and 10 Community Mothers sites across Ireland. Our goal is that every first-time parent in Ireland will be offered the updated home visiting programme.
- **My Place to Play Project** in collaboration with Tusla and CYPSC. It aims to enhance parent-baby interactions and children's physical (tummy time), emotional (sense of safety, wellbeing and belonging), cognitive and language development for infants living in homeless/emergency/international protection/overcrowded accommodation.
- **Rethink Ireland Innovate Fund for the 'From Couch to Screen' project**, provides professional qualifications in Home Visiting through
 - QQI Accredited Level 6 Microcredential in Core Pedagogy and Curriculum in Home Visiting
 - QQI Accredited Level 7 Microcredential in Leadership and Change Management for Home Visiting Coordinators
 - Non-accredited programme specific training and eLearning resources.
- **Home Visiting Alliance**, a collaboration of 5 Irish evidence-based early childhood home visiting programmes (Community Mothers, Infant Mental Health, Lifestart, ParentChild+ Preparing for Life) represents the collective national voice of early childhood home visiting.

3.4.1. ParentChild+ National

Originally from the US, the ParentChild+ Programme is an innovative, home-based literacy and parenting programme that strengthens families and prepares children to succeed academically. For over 14 years, ELI has delivered ParentChild+ to vulnerable families with children aged 18 months to 3 years in Dublin, expanding to Galway, Limerick, Louth and more recently, Waterford and Wexford. Beginning with 15 families in 2007, numbers have grown to 439 in 2022. Unfortunately, this is only 3.5% of the 12,400 babies born into poverty in Ireland each year and 9% of 4,800 babies born to first time parents living in poverty (CSO 2019). We would like to do more.

Extending ParentChild+ to other disadvantaged communities across Ireland is central to ELI's 2020-25 Strategic Plan as we want to ensure that all children get the support needed to start school with the language, literacy and numeracy skills needed for success in education, no matter what their background is or where they live. The ParentChild+ National Home Visiting Training, Research and Support Centre is committed to scaling up ParentChild+ in a sustainable way with two new sites in Cork and Galway coming on board in 2022-23. It also ensures fidelity to the programme and high-

quality service delivery through its ongoing comprehensive support to ParentChild+ Managers, Coordinators and Home Visitors around the country.

Programme Delivery

- 439 families in Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Louth, Waterford and Wexford received:
 - 11,960 home visits from September 2021 – June 2022.
 - 6,982 indoor visits, 886 outdoor visits, 4,029 video call visits and 63 phone call visits.

ParentChild+ Area	Started	No. of families	No. of Home Visitors
Dublin's Inner City (NCI)	2007	156	26
Dublin South City Partnership	2009	12	4
ABC Grangegorman/DoCCS	2014	30	5
Garryowen, Limerick	2015	80	5
Ballinasloe, Galway	2015	34	4
Ballyfermot Partnership (ABC)	2017	33	5
St Ultan's, Cherry Orchard	2017	11	3
Clondalkin – Blue Skies (ABC)	2019	10	6
Louth Genesis (ABC)	2019	53	7
Youth New Ross, Wexford	2021	14	3
Brill FRC, Waterford	2021	9	3
Total		439	71



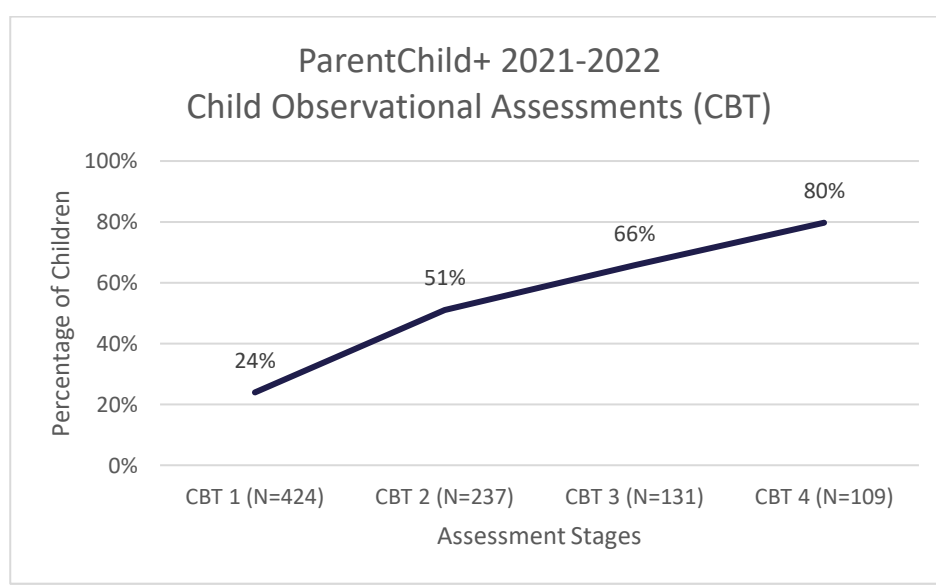
Full House at the Ballinasloe Graduation Day in June 2022

ParentChild+ Programme Assessment- Child Behaviour Trait (CBT) and Parent and Child Together (PACT)

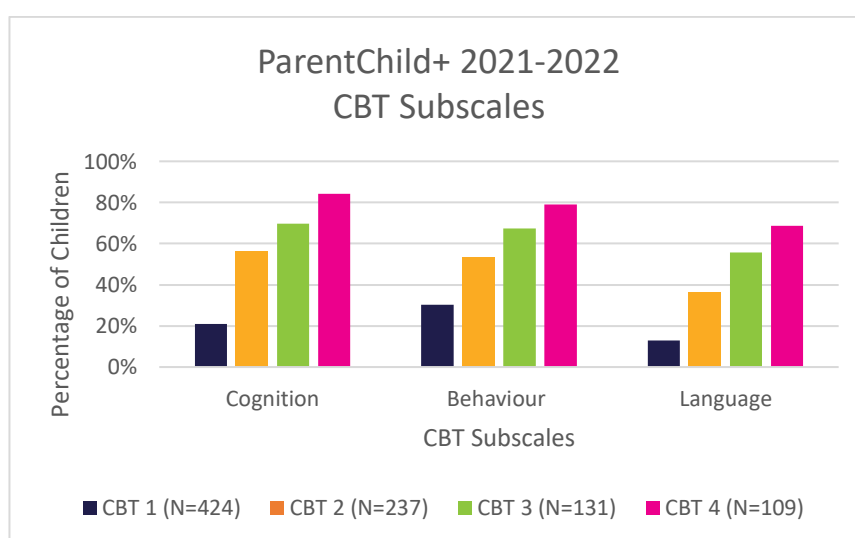
To monitor the developmental trajectory of the children and highlight the parent-child relationship, highlighting areas of learning and interaction that need to be addressed, Home Visitors complete two observational assessments (Child Behaviour Trait (CBT) and Parent and Child Together (PACT)) at the following points throughout the programme: CBT & PACT 1 after the 6th visit , CBT & PACT 2 after the

44th visit , CBT & PACT 3 after the 68th visit ,CBT & PACT 4 after the 92nd visit. In the following graphs, the percentages displayed are calculated based in the proportion of Home Visitors answering ‘often’ or ‘always’ in the CBT and PACT assessments. According to the coding scheme, children scoring ‘often’ (3) or ‘always’ (4) tend to meet their developmental milestones, and parents scoring at this level indicate positive parent-child relationships. Data from all national sites were collated and are reported in the graphs below.

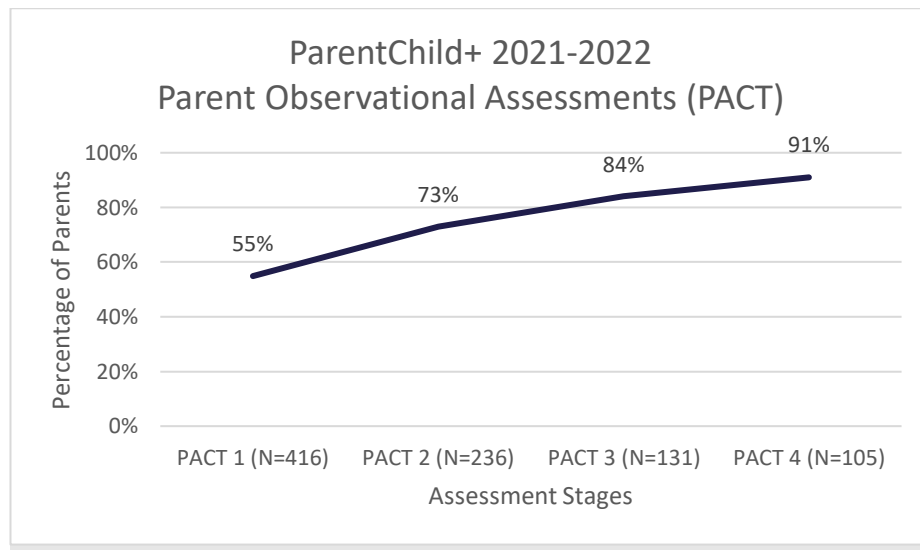
The percentage of children reaching their developmental milestones across the eleven ParentChild+ sites gradually increased throughout the programme, from 24% at the beginning of the programme to 51%, 66% and, finally, 80% on completion of the programme. The percentage of children reaching their developmental milestones after completing the full programme has increased by 2% from 2020-21 (78%).



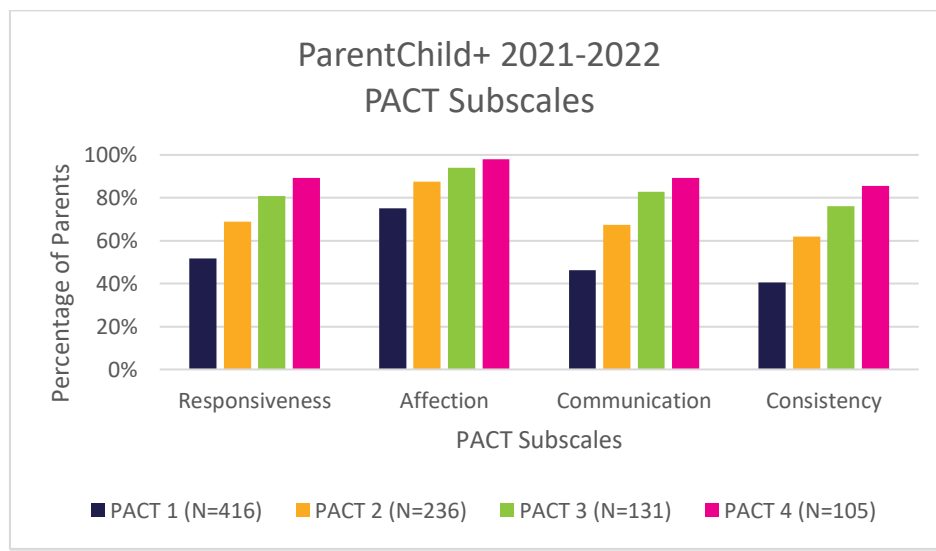
Children engaging in the programme demonstrated developmental increases across the three CBT subscales (cognition, behaviour and language) at each stage of the programme. As can be seen below the greatest overall increase was found in the percentage of children reaching their developmental milestones in the area of cognition (63%), followed by increases in language (56%) and behaviour (49%), following the same pattern as the assessment scores in 2020-21.



There was also a significant increase in the percentage of parents across all ParentChild+ sites having high-quality interactions with their children from 55% at PACT 1 to 91% at PACT 4, slightly higher to the 86% of parents at PACT 4 in 2020-21.



The percentage of parents having interactions of good quality with their children showed improvements in all four areas of assessment (parents' responsiveness to their child, parent's affection toward their child, parent's communication with their child and parent's consistency with their child) at each stage of assessment. This was particularly evident in parents' consistency (44%) and positive communication with their children (43%). This was followed by increases in responsiveness (37%) and affection (23%). This followed the same pattern as assessment scores in 2020-21, however, all domains demonstrated greater increases in good quality interactions in 2021-22.



Comments from participants included:

"I love supervision. Our job is hard, but I always feel after our groups supervision like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders and I'm ready for the week ahead. I don't think I could do my job effectively without it" [Home Visitor]

"In the month of May we are hearing lots of positive feedback from our parents that are engaging in the programme, they are telling us how many words the children now have and one child is starting to form sentences" [Coordinator]

"I learned to be more adaptable to meet his needs, especially his speech and language" [Parent]

"Thanks to Home Visitor and her hand puppet she is now sitting on the floor reading books, I thought she would never be able to do that" [Parent]

Training and Professional Development

Home Visiting and Parent Support Programmes are local peer-led community lifelines for most at-risk children (0-4 years) and their families. Continuous professional development is critical to ensuring that Coordinators and Home Visitors have the dispositions, skills and knowledge to effectively engage our most vulnerable children and families, particularly those experiencing intergenerational poverty, unemployment, violence/abuse, social isolation, trauma, mental health issues, educational disadvantage, international protection, homelessness/emergency accommodation.

Due to the ongoing restrictions, training and professional development was primarily conducted online this year, including:

- Mandatory training each year for all Home Visitors with weekly supervision supplemented by additional training in self-care and restorative practice.
- All Home Visitors have been supported to engage in eLearning with 1,676 hours of CPD completed nationally from a range of courses offered both internally and externally.
- Upskilling of the team in Presentation and Interview Skills:
 - 2 Home Visitors presented at the ELI online Community Action Research Day in June 2022.
 - 2 Home Visitors (originally programme parents), 1 Coordinator and the Senior Specialist presented at the ParentChild+ 2022 Conference online.
 - Dublin's Inner City Coordinators participated in internal Logic Model training.
- Ongoing upskilling of the team in IT Skills, Apps and Systems:
 - One-to-one peer support and Coordinator to Home Visitor support where needed.
- 25 Coordinators and Home Visitors are pursuing academic/professional qualifications:
 - 6 Home Visitors engaging in a level 5 in subjects such as Child Health and Wellbeing and Computers for Beginners.
 - 13 Home Visitors engaging in a level 6 Curriculum and Pedagogical Practice
 - 3 Home Visitors engaging in a level 7 Leadership, Governance and change Management
 - 1 level 8 in BSc Counselling & Psychotherapy.
 - 1 Home Visitor is pursuing a level 9 in Early Childhood Studies.
- Communities of Practice
 - 14 Coordinators attended 3 Community of Practice Day sessions online and received up to date training in quality assurance, fidelity to the programme, leadership practices, General Data Protection Regulations, and self-care.
- Mentoring and Support
 - 14 Coordinators attended monthly online support sessions

3.4.2 Home from Home Programme

The Home from Home Transition Programme is an intensive weekly home visiting programme developed by our Home Visiting Team in Dublin's Inner City for families living in emergency/ homeless accommodation, which provides an integrated plan of intervention and support for families with children aged 16 months onwards. An adaptation of the ParentChild+ programme, its overall aim is to meet the needs of families living under the duress of homelessness, who would not be able to commit to a two-year programme and twice weekly visits. It has been delivered in Dublin's Inner City since 2019 ([Section 4.4.4.](#)). In 2021-22, it began operation in three other areas around Dublin. The Home from Home National Home Visiting Training, Research and Support Centre is committed to scaling up Home from Home in a sustainable way with one new site in Wexford coming on board in 2022-23.

Programme Delivery

28 families in Dublin received:

- 260 home visits from September 2021 – June 2022.
- 146 indoor visits, 40 outdoor visits, 68 video call visits and 6 phone call visits.

Home from Home Area	Started	No. of families	No. of Home Visitors
Dublin's Inner City (NCI)	2019	14	7
Dublin South City Partnership	2021	7	3
Clondalkin – Blue Skies (ABC)	2021	6	2
Ballyfermot Partnership (ABC)	2022	1	1
Total		28	13

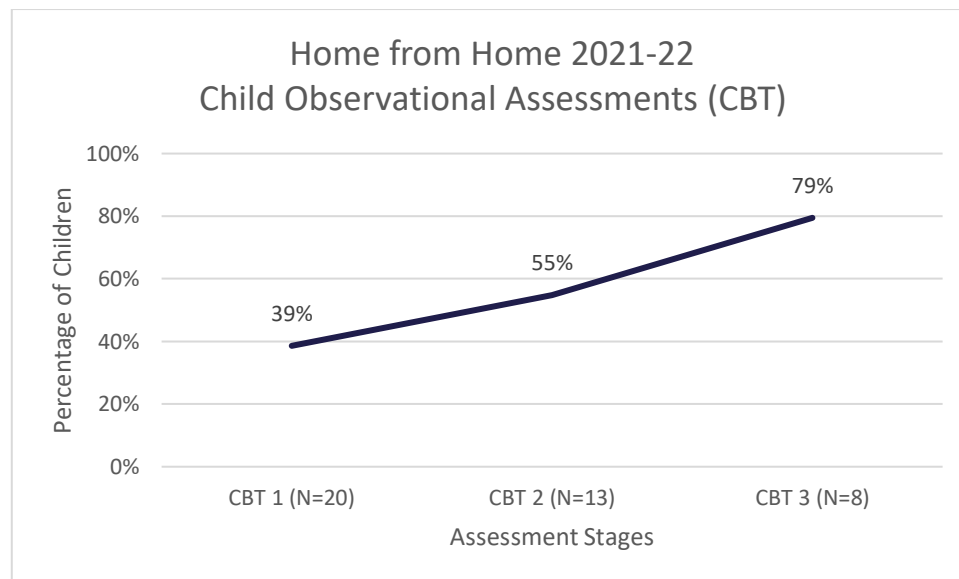


Home from Home child with her Easter pack.

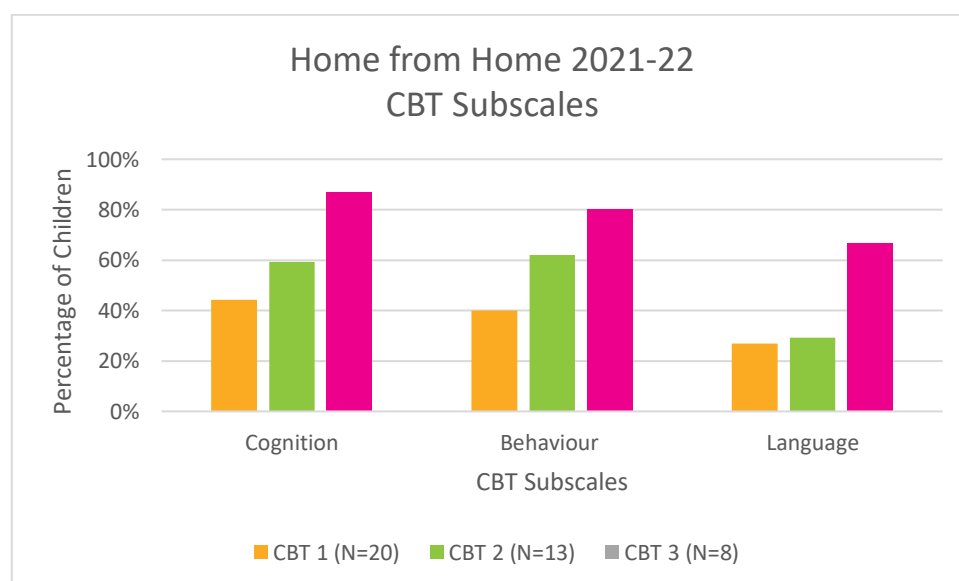
Programme Assessment- Child Behaviour Trait (CBT) and Parent and Child Together (PACT)

For the Home from Home programme Home Visitors complete a baseline CBT and PACT after the 2nd visit and a second CBT and PACT after the 12th visit. Due to the nature of the programme many families may be relocated to other accommodation and finish the programme at this stage. For any family that continues with the programme after the 12th visit, a final CBT and PACT assessment are completed after their final visit. (Please see [Section 3.4.2.](#) for further details on these assessments).

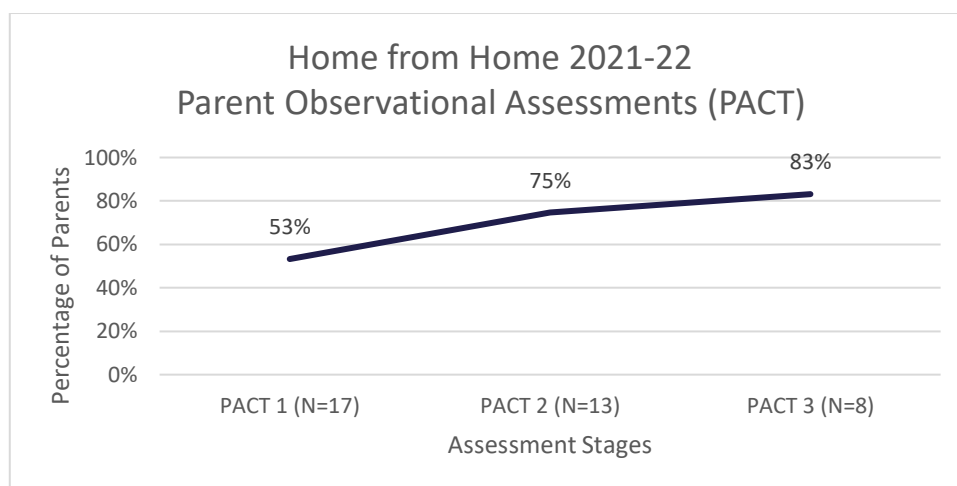
As can be seen in the graph below, 39% of the children in the 2021-22 Home from Home National cohort were reaching their developmental milestones on entering the programme. The average percentage score of children reaching their developmental milestones increased by 16% at CBT 2 and there was a significant increase of 24% in the national average score between the second and third assessment.



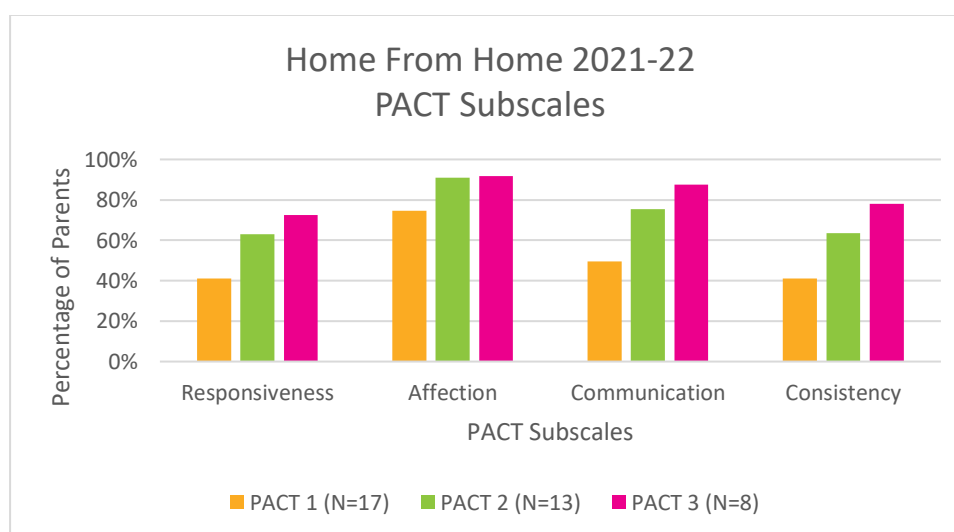
Children engaging in the programme demonstrated developmental increases across the three CBT subscales (cognition, behaviour and language) at each stage of the programme. As can be seen below the greatest overall increase was found in the percentage of children reaching their developmental milestones in the area of cognition (43%), followed by increases in language (40%) and behaviour (40%).



There was also a significant increase in the percentage of parents across all Home From Home sites having high-quality interactions with their children from 53% at PACT 1 to 83% at PACT 3.



The percentage of parents having interactions of good quality with their children showed improvement in all four areas of assessment. This was particularly evident in parents' positive communication with their children, which increased by 39% overall. This was followed by increases in consistency (37%), responsiveness (32%), and affection (17%).



Comments from Home Visitors included:

"An organisation working with a parent shared with us (with parents' permission) that the home from home programme has been the most positive thing in her and her child's life so far." [Home Visitor]

"Mum is very patient, warm loving and playful with child. She has increasingly shown a depth of self-awareness and how her state of being can influence child's. She is very child led and centered, uses the strategies to promote language development especially. Co-regulates child beautifully, understands child's frustrations heightened by her communication difficulties." [Home Visitor]

3.4.3. Sláintecare Community Families Programme Development Project

The Community Families Programme (CFP) is an Irish-developed home visiting programme which supports parents in caring for their babies and young children while also encouraging them to look after their own health and wellbeing. Working closely with the HSE Public Health Nursing Service, it is an effective mechanism for the delivery of key child health and wellbeing messages and supports, particularly in relation to:

- Maternal and child diet, sleep and overall health
- Childhood vaccination uptake
- Infant stimulation and development

Funded through the Sláintecare Integration Fund and a philanthropic donor, phase two of this project was a collaboration between seven local CFP sites, the Katharine Howard Foundation, the HSE, Tusla and ELI, with ELI the lead partner. Phase two of the Project funded by ELI donors ran from June to December 2021 with the standardised national model and dataset agreed. Information about phase one can be found in [ELI Annual Report 2020-21](#) It is also included in the [gov.ie - Sláintecare Integration Fund End of Programme Report 2022 \(www.gov.ie\)](#) with key references on pages 53 and 189.

Phase three commenced in January 2022 with the HSE & Tusla co-leading this project. ELI remains a member of the Oversight Group as well as being one of the Community Families sites. Funding has been secured from HSE and Tusla to support implementation and the development of a CRM/data base to support the implementation of a data set in line with the model. A CRM scoping exercise is completed, and funding is being sought for the next steps. A meeting was held with all sites on 9th June provide information on Phase three and the ongoing work in implementing the new model.

Programme Delivery

- 7 local organizations in Dublin (ELI), Limerick, Kerry, Longford, Westmeath, Tipperary, Laois and Offaly participated in the project.
- 1,200 families received the Community Mothers Programmes across the 7 sites.
- 30 Home Visitors upskilled and improved the quality of their service to families.
- 7 consultation workshops were held with the sites.
- 8 project group meetings were held.
- 5 oversight group meetings were held.
- 1 Parent's Consultation to inform the development of the project.
- 1 visit by Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly.

Comments from participants included:

"God, this, this was such an impact for us, or for me as a mother, I think in a way she made me strive to want to do like so much better, she really has like. She's been so amazing. I think like, since I've met her, she's always just kind of, she pushed me to be a better me." [Parent]

"My Home Visitor was a real-sounding board in terms of breastfeeding, you know she gave me all the information I needed, and she was very experienced in breastfeeding, so that was a big thing." [Parent]

"So many times in today's society, we are afraid to admit that we are not coping, or that we think we've done something wrong. I never felt that with the Programme – I think it's really important."

[Parents' Consultation and Presentation by Susan Brocklesby to Minister of Health 12th April]

3.4.4. My Place to Play

My Place to Play, which aims to enhance parent-baby interactions and children's physical (tummy time), emotional (sense of safety, wellbeing and belonging), cognitive and language development for infants living in homeless/emergency/overcrowded accommodation was developed in 2018-19 in partnership with the Dublin City North Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), Healthy Ireland Funds, ABC Programme (Dublin Docklands and East Inner City, Preparing for Life in Darndale, Better Finglas and Young Ballymun), Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), and Focus Ireland.

Since then, ELI has been part of a multi-agency National Implementation Group comprising of Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) National and local areas, Tusla Partnership, Prevention and Family Support (PPFS) National, Tusla Homeless Liaison, the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) to develop it further. The project is a leading example of the upscaling of a multi-agency, collaborative and responsive project from local to regional to national level. In 2021-22, in collaboration with Speech and Language Therapists, an extension of the programme for toddlers was developed and piloted. These packs focus on providing toddlers aged one to three years with a sense of well-being, belonging and self-identity. They aim to support toddlers' overall development including communication, social and physical development.



A child plays with her My Place to Play toddler pack

Programme Delivery

- 5 national organisations collaborate on the My Place to Play project (CYPSC, PPFS, IPAS, ABC and Tusla).
- 413 My Place to Play Packs, containing a portable play mat, a ball, mini maraca and wrist rattles were purchased for families nationally this year:
 - July 2021 through June 2022 – 49 packs were delivered to families in Dublin's Inner City by ELI.
 - September 2021- 11 packs, purchased by ELI, were delivered to Respond High Park Family Hub.
 - September 2021 – Athy Family Resource Centre purchased 266 packs.
 - January 2022 – 67 packs were purchased through Galway CYPSC (Children and Young Peoples Services Committees).

- March 2022 - 20 packs through CYPSC Louth, Genesis Project.
- 152 My Place to Play packs for toddlers to support physical and language development of children living in confined space were provided to families.
 - 11 packs were provided to families in Dublin.
 - 50 packs were provided to families in Cork.
 - 40 packs were provided to families in Donegal.
 - 10 packs were provided to families in Dundalk, Louth.
 - 41 packs were provided to families in Limerick.
- 179 professionals attended 8 online briefing sessions:
 - 34 professionals attended across 4 sessions on the infant pack facilitated by the MPTP Coordinator.
 - 54 professionals attended across 2 sessions delivered on the toddler pack facilitated by a Speech and Language Therapist.
 - 91 professionals attended across 2 sessions combining the infant and toddler packs facilitated by a Speech and Language Therapist and MPTP Coordinator.

Participant Feedback

Parents and practitioners are asked to complete an evaluation two weeks after the parent has received the My Place to Play mat. In total three parents and six practitioners completed the evaluation. These figures are both lower than those of 2020-21 (16 and 28 respectively). Due to the low number of evaluation returns resources will be put into place to support with data collection in 2022-23.

All parents reported having the My Place to Play mat makes it easier to play with their baby as the mat is convenient, provides a safe and comfortable place for their baby to play, and promotes one-to-one interaction with their baby. Practitioners agreed with these sentiments, reporting that the mat enabled parents to interact and play with their babies and that the resources provided valuable learning opportunities. All parents and practitioners would recommend the mat to other parents.

Feedback on the My Place to Play toddler packs will be collected throughout the next year and included in the 2022-23 annual report.

Comments from participants included:

“Perfect size for myself and my daughter to engage in one-to-one interaction, and she recognises the hedgehog when I take it out.” [Parent]

“Encourages me to introduce tummy time and create space even in small room for baby.”
[Parent]

“Helped them to begin to create a play area for their baby within their living space and alternatives beyond the cot or buggy to give their child a chance to safely explore and encourage muscle strength, co-ordination and development.” [Practitioner]

“Giving the mats to parents gave me an opportunity to talk with them about the importance of tummy time, spending time talking to and playing with their child.” [Practitioners]

3.4.5. Rethink Ireland Innovate Fund Project: From Couch to Screen

Home Visiting Programmes provide a critical lifeline to children and families at-risk of educational inequality and social exclusion. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Home Visitors have been making virtual 'home visits' via video/phone calls as well as socially distanced outdoor visits to ensure family well-being, address the educational divide and prevent developmental delays. The need for a high-quality responsive hybrid home visiting delivery model that supports children and parents in an ever-changing COVID-19 impacted world was identified.

A key goal of the Rethink Ireland Innovate Fund Project: From Couch to Screen - Engaging Children and Supporting Families Through High-quality Responsive Hybrid Home Visiting was to align standards in terms of professional qualifications across the country and build the skills and capacity to deliver high quality Home Visiting Programmes that would have a significant positive impact on children and families.

The Rethink Ireland Project enabled us to redesign the existing home visiting curriculum and pedagogy to incorporate blended delivery methods e.g., indoors, outdoors and online as well as develop e-learning modules for leadership/change management for the coordinators and curriculum/pedagogy for the home visitors. The first QQI Accredited professional qualifications in home visiting were developed. Non-accredited programme specific training and eLearning resources designed and delivered by the coordinators as part of their Level 7 course were developed, providing ongoing training and capacity building for Home Visitors.

These courses are the base on which we can develop further the professionalism of Home Visitors and encourage them to progress to degree level. It is another step in the realisation of the Government's First 5 goal of developing a standardised model of home visiting across Ireland.

Programme Delivery:

- 28 Home Visitors recruited for QQI Accredited Level 6 Microcredential in Core Pedagogy and Curriculum in Home Visiting.
- 8 Home Visiting Coordinators (6) and Home Visitors (2) recruited for QQI Accredited Level 7 Microcredential in Leadership and Change Management for Home Visiting Coordinators.
- 65 members of staff across 11 sites completed non-accredited programme specific training.

Participant Feedback

Feedback was positive with 93% (n=41) of participants reporting that the modules were useful. According to 80% (n=35) of participants the online sessions were easy to access and use and 86% (n=38) found the online sessions easy to engage with. Most participants (75% n=33) reported that the sessions were paced appropriately and 82% (n=36) felt they were able to participate in discussions. Furthermore, 77% (n=34) of participants reported that the lectures were well prepared, 84% (n=37) reported that they were responsive to their learning needs. Finally, 84% (n=36) reported that the programme facilitated peer-to-peer learning.

3.4.6. Home Visiting Alliance

Antenatal to five is the most critical period in a child's life and vital for development over the life course. Increasingly research indicates that chronic stress and trauma have a significant negative impact on the developing brain. It reduces parents' capacity to support child development.

Established in November 2020, the Home Visiting Alliance (HVA) is a collaboration of 5 Irish evidence-based early childhood home visiting programmes: Community Mothers, Infant Mental Health, Lifestart, ParentChild+ and Preparing for Life. A subgroup of the Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN), the HVA represents the collective national voice of early childhood home visiting from pre-birth or during pregnancy. While recognising that each programme has its own mechanisms and

structures, the Alliance's focus is on promoting common messages about home visiting and addressing cross-programme issues in a systematic coherent and collaborative way. It is also committed to supporting the development of a national standardised model for early childhood home visiting in Ireland as outlined in *First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families* (DCYA 2018).

The purpose of the Home Visiting Alliance is to:

- Promote home visiting from pre-birth or during pregnancy as an essential early years vital service for children, parents and families.
- Support member organisations, collectively and individually, to strengthen and broaden the impact of home visiting in Ireland.
- Contribute to policy development and implementation in relation to early childhood home visiting from pre-birth or during pregnancy and parenting support locally, nationally and internationally.
- Share our common learning at programme, approach, implementation and policy levels.

Delivery

- 9 executive group meetings chaired by the Director of ELI with the ELI Administrator providing administrative assistance.
- The DCEDIY What Works Grant enabled us to develop a website and deliver 2 webinars:
 - 80 Home Visitors attended Webinar 1: 5th November 2021 *Building Connections for Home Visitors*, (internal focus on sharing learning and building relationships between practicing Home Visitors)
 - 177 people attend Webinar 2: 8th December *Supporting Families through Home Visiting in Ireland*, (international policy focus with representatives from Parenting Unit in the DCEDIY, Eurochild and Healthy Families America)
 - A HVA website has been developed and will be hosted on the PEIN website. Work is continuing on this along with the development of a logo.
 - Application for the 2022 What Works Grand Round for support in relation to scaling and mainstreaming home visiting around the country has been successful.
- 61 Home Visitors attended a 3rd internal webinar on 13th May 2022 (internal focus with updates on HVA and National Parenting Services Model (DCEDIY) along with a presentation and discussion on supervision and support.
- Building partnerships with Family Resource Centres and local Partnership networks.
- Contributed to the DCEDIY's consultation on and development of a national model of parenting support. DCEDIY has asked the HVA to become involved in the national review of home visiting programmes, which is commencing shortly.
- Awarded funding from the Wheel Training Fund to support the professional development of Home Visitors.



HOME VISITING
ALLIANCE

New Home Visiting Alliance Logo developed with support from DCEDIY What Works Grant

3.5. Research Projects

Research and evaluation are central components of ELI's commitment to evidence-based practice. Considered essential to understand the needs of the community, they ensure that the programmes being delivered are meeting these identified needs. They also provide evidence of impact for our funders in addition to making important contributions to growing the knowledge base of early intervention and prevention in Ireland.

This section outlines the key research conducted by ELI in 2021-22. If you would like any further details on the progress of any of the projects listed below you can follow our [ResearchGate page](#) or contact the ELI Researcher, Kate Darmody, on kate.darmody@ncirl.ie.



Assistant Director Lána Cummins and Senior Coordinator Marion Byrne presenting at EECERA 2022

3.5.1. Community Action Research

The Early Learning Initiative continued to develop in line with their Community Action Research approach in collecting the voices of participants across all programmes through a variety of methods such as evaluation forms (paper based and online), focus groups etc. This includes capturing the voices of children, young people, parents, other family members, staff and corporate volunteers. This year all evaluations were reviewed, and common indicators being measured across ELI's range of programme identified. These include indicators of participation, indicators of programme satisfaction, indicators of participant learning and parental involvement.

In addition, children's learning continued to be measured for specific programmes through a range of child and parent focused measures including the 0-2 Child and Parent Well-being Measure and the 0-2 Parent and Child Observation tool (0-2 Home Visiting Programme), the ParentChild+ Measures (CBT and PACT), Assessing Children's Phonics, Writing, Sight Vocab and Social Skills (Doodle Den Programme), and Assessing Children's Understanding, Knowledge and Skills in Coding (Coding Programme).

To support the development of the ELI's team as Community Action Researchers, two research days were held - at the end of both term 1 (December 2021) and term 2 (June 2022). Both encouraged the team to reflect on their practice, the learnings emerging from the programme data collected and the

changes being made in response to this feedback. In December 2021 NCI staff were also invited to attend and participate in presentations. Of the staff involved across both events, 100% (n=41) reported that they learnt something new about ELI at the event. Some of the key messages that participants took away from the events focused on the power of storytelling in communicating the impact of community action research and the importance of inclusion in ELI's programmes.

In 2019 ethical approval was sought and received to enable us to disseminate our findings from our programme evaluation. An update on this application was conducted throughout 2021-22 to account for edits that had been made to programme measures, new programmes added since 2019, and changes in processes as we moved to virtual and hybrid deliveries of programmes. The NCI Ethics Committee approved the updated application in June 2022.

3.5.2. Parenting365 Project

The Parenting365 project aims to conduct an exploration of the experiences of children with disabilities and their parents living in an area of socio-economic disadvantage in Dublin's Inner City and to understand the impact of the Parenting365 Programme on children with disabilities and their parents. The study also seeks to directly engage the parents in informing the future development of the Parenting365 Programme. To date eight interviews have been completed with parents. Further details on the project and preliminary findings are available on request.

3.5.3. Early Developmental Outcomes of Infants from an Area of Socio-economic Disadvantage: a comparison with National Norms

The study exploring whether infants from an area of socio-economic disadvantage differ in variables related to Child and Parent Well-being, as compared to national norms continued across 2019-20. To date the study has 87 baseline surveys and 40 post programme surveys. A preliminary report on the findings of this research study is available on request from the research team.

3.5.4. ParentChild+ Follow-Up Study

In 2019-20 the ELI Advisory Board approved the recruitment of a researcher to complete a follow-up study on ParentChild+ graduates. Two different cohorts were involved, a cohort of 8/9/10 year olds and a cohort of 13/15 year olds with 97 families identified as being a potential sample. Of these, 53 were successfully contacted by phone with the remainder being uncontactable due to obsolete phone numbers. The study began in 2020 but was placed on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021-22 the study was resumed by an external researcher with 23 families thus far consenting to participate in the study. To date data has been collected with seven parents and seven children and is due to continue throughout the summer months with a final report to be completed by January 2023.

3.5.5. Learnings from a Move Towards Virtual Engagement in Supporting a Community of Socio-Economic Disadvantage During COVID-19.

ELI have collected data to share our learning of our continued work supporting children and families across our community during COVID-19. Our programmes have adapted to virtual delivery and we began checking in with previous programme participants to offer additional supports to families. Over 5,000 reflections completed by Home Visitors have been collected which will be explored in 2022-23 to identify the factors that predict positive engagement with virtual delivery of visits.

3.5.6. Learnings from STEM Programme Delivery in a Disadvantaged Community.

STEM programmes with disadvantaged communities have been running since 2008 in ELI. In 2021-22 ELI began collaborating with NCI's School of Computing to explore the effect of these STEM programmes on children and families in Dublin's Inner City. This collaboration is due to continue in

2022-23 and findings will be shared on topics such as the effects of the programmes on family engagement and the transition to e-learning.

3.5.7. Standardised Test Results.

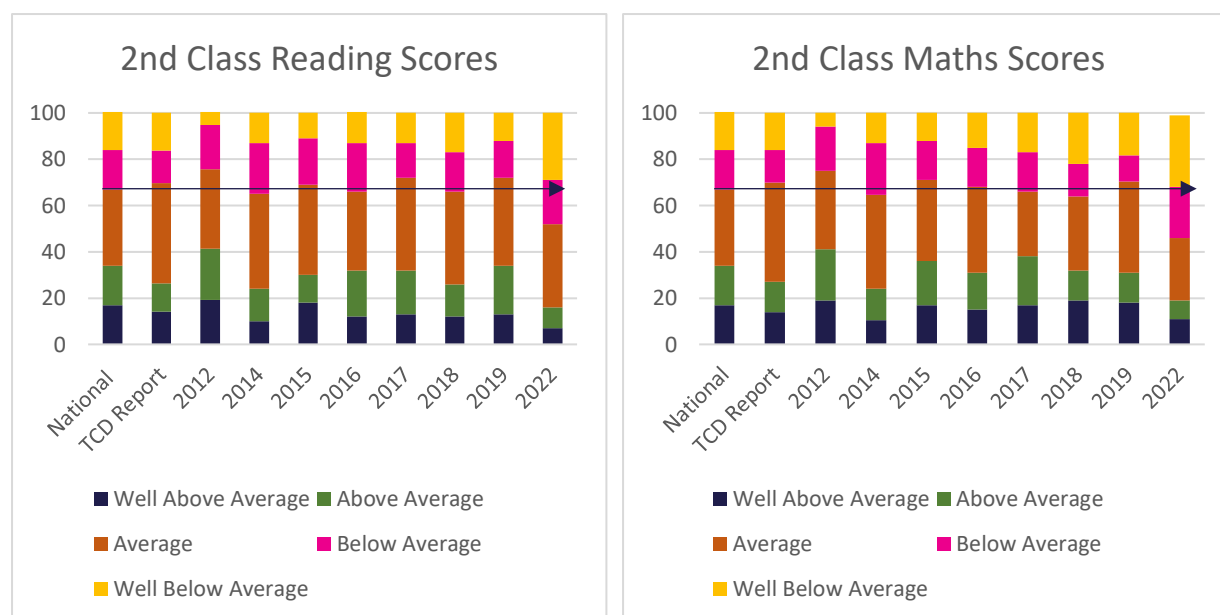
Standardised test results in English and Maths at seven years (second class) and 12 years (sixth class) were collected from the local primary schools who participate in the Early Learning Initiative's programmes since 2012. The aim is to monitor how children are faring in terms of their literacy and numeracy skills; thereby giving us an indication what, if any, impact DEIS, the Early Learning Initiative's and other programmes are having children's educational attainment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the adverse impact this had on schools this data was not collected in the years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

This information collected is aggregated annually and compared with the national norms developed by the test developers based on a sample of more than 10,000 pupils during 2002-03, in addition to baseline data collected by the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College (Share et al., 2011). The figures below display the results of aggregated results of students attending primary schools in the ELI catchment area, with the arrows denoting the national average scores for comparison. In 2021-22 nine primary schools, both North and South side, submitted their aggregated scores. This included one school who had not submitted their results in previous years. Table 1 shows the returns across the years 2011-12 to 2021-22:

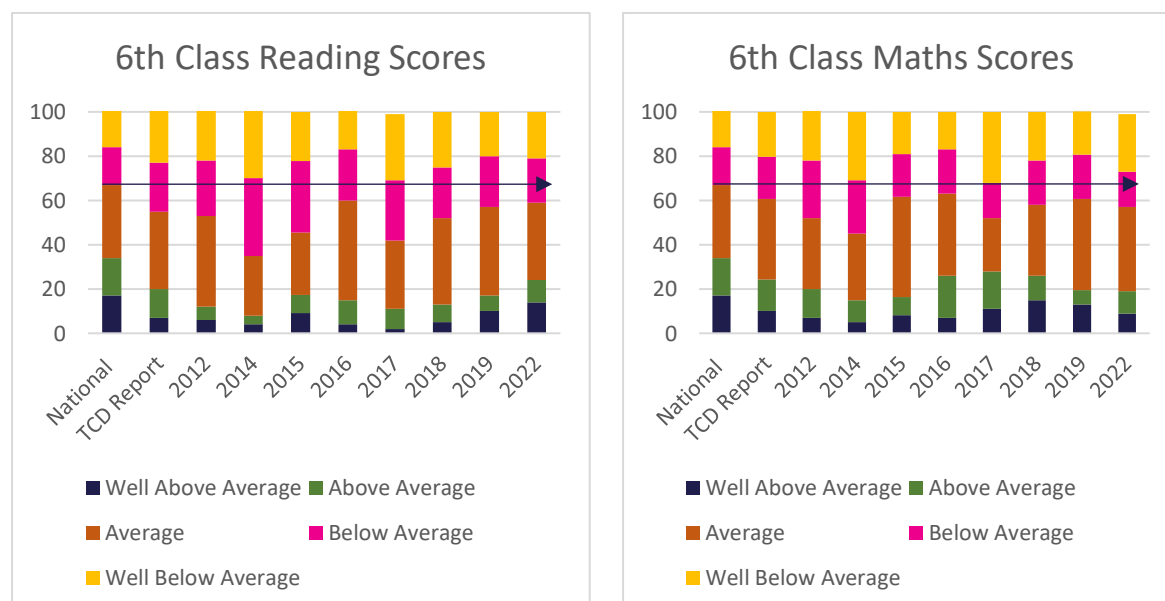
Table 1. Returns of assessments from schools across the years 2011/12 to 2021/22.

	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	21-22
Sch. 1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	
Sch. 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sch. 3	1		1	1	1			1	1
Sch. 4	1		1	1			1	1	1
Sch. 5	1	1	1		1		1	1	1
Sch. 6	1		1	1	1	1		1	1
Sch. 7		1	1			1		1	
Sch. 8				1	1	1	1		
Sch. 9					1	1	1	1	
Sch. 10					1		1		1
Sch. 11							1	1	1
Sch. 12							1		
Sch. 13								1	
Sch. 14								1	1
Sch. 15									1

As can be seen in the figures below, there was a decrease in both second class student's reading and maths scores. The number of students scoring between average and well above average in reading decreasing from 72% in 2019 to 52% in 2022. The number of students scoring between average and well above average in maths decreased from 70% in 2019 to 47% in 2022.



The reading and maths scores of the sixth class cohort remained comparable to those in 2019. There was a slight increase in reading scores with the number of students scoring between average and well above average increasing from 57% in 2019 to 59% in 2022. There was a slight decrease in sixth class maths scores, with the number of students scoring between average and well above average decreasing from 61% in 2019 to 57% in 2022.



These results are reflective of recent literature which has found that younger children have experienced the greatest effect on their learning after the pandemic (Juniper Education, 2022).

3.6. Innovation Projects

As a result of the restrictions implemented at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ELI pivoted our programmes to continue to support children, parents, and professionals in our community. Throughout 2020-21 ELI continued to build on this work developing a high-quality response hybrid home learning model that supports children and parents in an ever-changing COVID-19 impacted world. This section outlines the key innovative projects addressing the ever-changing needs of our community.

3.6.1. Quality Implementation Training and Champions

In April 2021 four nominees from the Dublin Docklands and East Inner City ABC Site (three ELI staff members and one consortium member) participated in ABC Quality Implementation Training which offers common language, consistent approaches and evidence-informed practice in relation to identifying need, planning services, delivering and quality assuring interventions, and the collection and analysis of data to all ABC sites. Two of these staff members elected to become Quality Implementation Champions, continuing Training of Trainers and have worked with their ABC colleagues to integrate the processes considered in the training. The first stage of Quality Implementation Training has been delivered to the ELI team in 2021-22 with plans to deliver further training to ELI and local stakeholders in 2022-23.

3.6.2. e-Learning

In order to support our community as the pandemic and its restrictions changed the way we live and delivered our programmes the ELI transitioned to a virtual format of revised delivery of our programmes throughout 2020 and 2021. In 2020-21 an e-Learning Specialist was recruited to support the team to find online solutions to which traditionally involved face-to-face engagement. This is most notably seen in the development of novel online STEM Family Learning programmes and online versions of our coding courses see [Section 4.5.7](#). To continue to support our community in an ever-changing COVID-19 impacted world upskilling ELI's staff, volunteers and partners to deliver high quality responsive hybrid programmes remains a priority as is the development of our e-learning resources and social media platforms, all of which have become essential tools to communicate with and support children, young people, parents and families.

3.6.3. Restorative Practices Strategy

Restorative practice (RP) is a social science and an approach to building, maintaining, and restoring relationships and community (Wachtel, 2013). For the last seven years, the Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland has been leading a community restorative practice project within Dublin's North East Inner City. In 2021 the development of a Restorative Practices Strategy was commenced to review the current practices and delivery of RP in the community. The development process and initial consultations with local stakeholders were completed in 2021 and a follow-up consultation completed in May 2022. The strategy is due to be launched in early 2022-23. For more details on our Restorative Practices programmes please see sections [4.6.3](#) and [4.7.2](#).

3.6.4. STEM Strategy

ELI has long recognised the importance of STEM education for a child's future academic and career success with the first STEM programmes in ELI being delivered in 2008. In 2021-22 the development of a STEM Strategy commenced. The ELI seeks to improve the provision to and engagement of children and families in innovative, emerging future oriented home-based learning. And to expand the delivery of our innovative STEM programmes through our National Centre. To achieve this ELI will conduct a programmatic review, ensuring ELI's STEM programmes are fit for purpose and future proofed. And build the capacity of staff and parents to engage with emerging technology and STEM education practices. The STEM Strategy is currently in the initial stage of development and will be completed in 2023. Further details on our STEM programmes can be found in [section 4.5](#).

3.7. Partnerships

ELI enables children, their families and the community, to acquire the skills and self-confidence needed to benefit fully from the educational system. All of our partners understand the challenges faced by the local community and are genuinely committed to making a real, measurable and positive difference to the lives and learning successes of children and young people. This section outlines how, in 2021-22, our partners supported us in improving outcomes for children and young people through sharing their expertise, resources and learning. Thank you to everyone who partnered with ELI last year. We really appreciate your friendship, generosity and commitment to helping us ensure that children and young people in the area achieve their educational, career and life ambitions. We look forward to working with you again in 2022-23 and building on past successes.

3.7.1. Government Partnerships

The Government, through its sustained support and interest in ELI, is directly ensuring a more cohesive, equal and successful society. Implementing Government policy, in particular *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-15* (DCYA 2014) and *First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families* (DCYA 2018).

The **Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme** enables us in collaboration with our colleagues in the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY); Tusla** and local partners address key educational and social issues for children and families in the Dublin Docklands and East Inner City.

The **DCEDIY What Works Learning Together Fund** grant to the Home Visiting Alliance was a first step in the development of a national standardised model for early childhood home visiting in Ireland as outlined in First Five. It raised the visibility of the Home Visiting Alliance and early childhood home visiting in Ireland; and built the capacity of the existing home visiting programmes to support vulnerable children and parents to thrive in a post-COVID-19.

Sláintecare, Prevention is better than cure: The development of a standardised national model and dataset for the Community Families Programme is an exciting collaboration with the **HSE, Tusla, Katharine Howard Foundation** and seven Community Mothers sites across Ireland.

My Place to Play is being mainstreamed across Ireland through a multi-agency Implementation Working Group comprising **Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) National and local areas, Tusla Partnership, Prevention and Family Support (PPFS) National, Tusla Homeless Liaison, the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS)**, thereby ensuring that babies living in homeless/emergency/overcrowded accommodation develop normally and learn how to crawl.

3.7.2. North East Inner City (NEIC) Programme Implementation Board

The NEIC Programme Implementation Board led by an independent chair, Michael Stone, has been very supportive of ELI since its inception. NCI President and ELI Director sit on Subgroup two: Education and Training and Subgroup three: Improving Family Wellbeing respectively. ELI was delighted that NEIC funding was continued in 2021-22 for Restorative Practice, Doodle Den and Educational Guidance at second level. Additional funding was received for the Childhood Restored Project and Parenting Coordinator.

3.7.3. Corporate Partners

Without the substantial, long-term financial and voluntary support of our corporate partners, much of the ELI's work would not be possible. We applaud their visionary insights and genuine commitment to making a real, measurable and positive difference to the lives and learning successes of children and young people across Ireland. We are continually seeking additional corporate partners and would

welcome the opportunity to talk to interested companies. Please contact Mary Anne Stokes (by phone: 086 4666438 or e-mail: maryanne.stokes@ncirl.ie) for more information on how your organisation could get involved with ELI.

3.7.4. Other Communities across Ireland, EU and globally

ELI, through the National Centre, is a centre of excellence, from which communities can learn how to improve the educational and life chances of vulnerable children and their families. Over the past year, a range of diverse national and international organisations expressed an interest in learning more about ELI and we are delighted to share our learning with them.

3.7.5 Influence and Advocacy

Central to ELI's impact is influencing collective efforts that improve the life chances of children, young people and their families. Members of the Prevention & Early Intervention Network (PEIN); ABC Manager's Forum and Learning Communities; Charity Institute; The Wheel and Children's Rights Alliance enables us to achieve this goal. We chair the Home Visiting Alliance, which represents the collective national voice of early childhood home visiting. These networks allow us to harness a wealth of expertise and work collaboratively to positively influence policy and practice and advocate for the needs of families and children across the country.

3.7.5. Local Docklands and Inner City Dublin Communities

One of the great strengths of ELI has been our local cross sectoral network of public health nurses, early years, after school and youth services, schools, TDs, community, statutory and corporate organisations. As well as directly supporting implementation, their involvement in the ABC Steering Group, Consortium and various Working Groups actively informs the development of all our programmes. Together we are changing children's lives.

3.7.6. Colleagues in the National College of Ireland

NCI staff, from various Departments, work very closely with us to ensure that ELI delivers our programmes to a high standard and best practice is adhered to. Through their interactions with ELI's partners at national and local level, they demonstrate NCI's long-standing commitment to widening participation in higher education and ensuring that children in the area will progress successfully to third level. NCI's new institutional Strategy recognises ELI as an integral part of the NCI landscape with ELI's Five-Year Strategy 2020-25 aiming to embed ELI further within NCI. Together, we are achieving NCI's mission to change lives through education.

3.7.7. NCI Governing Body and ELI Advisory Committees

NCI takes full responsibility for the financial, management, contractual, reporting and governance requirements of ELI. The generous commitment of Fr. Leonard Moloney S.J., Chairperson of NCI's Governing Body; Gina Quin, President of NCI; and other members of NCI's Governing Body and Executive Board has been critical to the development and success of ELI.

ELI is a discreet centre within NCI with its own dedicated staff and Advisory Committees. The leadership and expertise shown by Frank Ryan, Chairperson of the ELI Advisory Committee and ABC Steering Group; Dan O'Connor, Chairperson of the ELI Development Committee; Mary Doyle, Chairperson of ELI National Centre Steering Group and the other members of the ELI Advisory Committee, ABC Steering Group, National Centre Steering Group and Development Committee has been invaluable in ensuring that ELI operates effectively in the best interests of children and families.

3.8. Communication

Communication is key to ELI's engagement with all its partners and its ability to influence practice, policy and theory. During 2021-22, we communicated our work to multiple audiences through a mix of social media, conferences/webinars and papers along with traditional print and media coverage. Networking enabled us to expand our learning support networks and develop relationships with other similar organisations, who are committed to improving outcomes for children. It also enhanced our ability to reach new and potential corporate partners who expressed interest in our work during the year.

3.8.1. Social Media

ELI's social media presence aims to build connections, sustain relationships with stakeholders and share information, achievements and learning. As we continue to navigate programmes returning in person, our social media platforms perform an essential role to provide updates and promote access to our full range of activities and programmes for children, young people, parents and families across the community.

Over the year ELI continued to reinforce our message around family well-being and self-care for parents and signposted to our extensive suite of parent and child groups and online parenting courses. The introduction of our Parenting365 programme and Stretch Graduate Programme along with the continuation of the STEM Family Learning and Coding projects continued to engage families and keep them informed.

Other content included suggested activities, news and updates from all programme areas including 0-2 Home Visiting, ParentChild+, Doodle Den, Zoom Ahead with Books, Early Numeracy, Robotic Coding, Restorative Practices and Discover University.

Programme Figures

There was substantial growth across all four of our social media platforms, particularly in Instagram and LinkedIn.

Social Media Platform	Total followers end June 2021	Total followers end June 2022	Increase in 2021-22	% Increase in 2021-22
Facebook	2,687	3,003	316	12%
Instagram	663	900	237	36%
Twitter	1,148	1,281	133	12%
LinkedIn	331	485	154	47%
Totals	4,829	5,669	840	17%

Highlights of Content Posted:

- 10,564 reach and 489 engagements for the **ABC National Learning Meeting 2022** posts at NCI on Twitter in June 2022.
- 6,179 reach and 40 engagements for post announcing **RTE Toy Show Appeal Fund** success on Twitter in June 2022.
- 3,664 reach and 71 engagements for post announcing **Times Higher Education Award** on Twitter in September 2021.
- 3,954 reach with 157 engagements for **International Women's Day, Mam and baby fitness class** post on Facebook in March 2022.

- 2,001 reach and 536 engagements for **ReThink Ireland Home Visiting Graduation** post on Facebook in April 2022.

Themed Content:

- 1,711 average reach and 89 average engagement per post for **Discover University** (5 posts).
- 754 average reach and 82 average engagement per post for **Zoom Ahead with Books Virtual Book Club** series (16 posts).
- 1,255 average reach and 146 average engagement per post for **Parent Child+** updates and celebrations (12 posts).
- 737 average reach and 93 average engagement per post for **Parent Child + Inclusion and Diversity week** (8 posts).
- 1,248 average reach and 65 average engagement per post for **ELI Research Insights** (10 posts).
- 330 average reach and 41 average engagement per post for **Multilingual May Song and Language resources** (5 posts).

3.8.2. Conference Presentations

Darmody, K., Booth, J., O'Toole, F., Bleach, J., Stynes, P., Pathak, P. (2022, June 20). *A STEM family eLearning framework to increase family engagement in disadvantaged communities*. NCI Research Day, Dublin, Ireland.

Dennehy, H., O'Neill, J., Goulding, S. & Darmody, K. (2022, June 20). *Evaluation of the Parenting365 programme: Supporting children with additional needs living in an area of socio-economic disadvantage*. NCI Research Day, Dublin, Ireland.

Kearney, S. & Torres, I. (2022, May 17-19). *Adapting the needs of families in the community*. ParentChild+ Annual Conference, online.

Moore, M. & Krepta, M. (2022, May 17-19). *How to build capacity from within your team for programme sustainability – an Irish perspective*. ParentChild+ Annual Conference, online.

Wheatley, E. (2022, March 1). *Creating restorative communities: Collecting and using data on restorative practices*. Restorative Community Development – National Webinar, online.

3.8.3. Academic Publications

Bleach, J. (2022) Real-World Ethical Experiential Practice Based Action Learning for the 'New Normal', In Dunning, P., Bottom, K., Elliott, I. and Diamond, J. *International Handbook on the Teaching of Public Administration*, Edward Elgar, 139-147.

Bleach, J. (2021). Parents' voices through the COVID-19 pandemic. *Education Matters Year Book 2021*, 135-138.

Pitsia, V. & Kent, G. (2021). School readiness of five-year-old children from socio-economic disadvantaged areas: evidence from the Preparing for Life evaluation. *Irish Educational Studies*, (13) 1-21.

3.8.4. Networking

Learning networks are a significant element of our ethos and our community action research approach. In 2021-22, members of the ELI team attended 207 interagency networking events. Of these, 88 were related to the ABC Programme, 39 were Dublin's Inner City related, while the remainder (n=80) involved the National Centre. Key criteria for networking are the individual's and organisation's commitment to improving outcomes for children along with their ability to work in partnership with others. Priority is given to networks that are focused on early childhood development, educational disadvantage and supports for parents. Learning more about or having an

input into Irish and European policy, especially when it concerns children's learning and development, is highly valued.

Key networks in 2021-22 included

- Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) and PPFS Child and Family Networks at local and national level.
- Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN), ABC Managers Forum, and Home Visiting Alliance.
- Trinity College Dublin's Infant and Child Research Laboratory.
- Member of TCD's Grand Canal Innovation District Enterprise Working Group.
- Early Years Groups: Dublin City Childcare Committee; Better Start and Síolta Mentors; National Síolta Aistear Initiative (NSAI) Awareness Training Initiative.
- YPAR Meitheal, 0-5; 5-12; Homeless; Foreign National and Steering Groups.
- North Inner-City Community Coalition and its subgroups.
- Homeless organisations: CDYEB; Foundations Projects; Focus Ireland, Cross Care.
- Restorative Practice Ireland; Restorative Coordinators Group (CDI Tallaght, South City Partnership, Ballyfermot, and Limerick; Dublin Restorative Community Development; European Forum for Restorative Justice group.
- Charities Institute Ireland; The Wheel; Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) and NEARI.

4. DUBLIN'S INNER CITY PROGRAMMES

4.1. Introductory Letter

Since 2006, ELI has partnered with our local Dublin's Inner City community to improve the educational aspirations and outcomes of children and young people. There is a strong portfolio of Home Visiting and Family/Community engagement programmes along with robust implementation structures. This section of the End of Year Report gives the 2021-22 highlights along with a brief overview ELI's Dublin's Inner City and summaries of all its programmes, including the ABC and NEIC, programmes. More details are available on the website: www.ncirl.ie/eli. If you would like more information, please contact Catriona Flood by e-mail catriona.flood@ncirl.ie or phone: 086 0296894.

Increased Family Engagement with a return of indoor home visits and other activities

Family engagement increased with 4,071 inner city families participating in an ELI programme in 2021-22 compared with 3,801 in 2020-21. With COVID-19 restrictions easing, a hybrid approach was adopted with indoor home visits and groups resuming in November 2021. We hope to return to full in person delivery in 2022-2023 while retaining virtual delivery where required.

Innovation

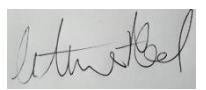
Three new innovative programmes were introduced this year: Parenting365, Stretch Graduate, NEIC Childhood Restored, and NEIC Parenting. Parenting365 and Stretch Graduate supported our more vulnerable families, in particular children with additional needs who face long waiting lists for assessments and services. The NEIC Childhood Restored gave primary school children an opportunity to explore their experiences and feelings about COVID-19 through art and creative writing. Other programmes were reviewed to meet emerging needs and that best practice in the changing methodologies was incorporated into programme delivery.

Centre of Excellence and Best Practice Demonstration Site

From the beginning, ELI's Dublin's Inner City was seen as a Centre of Excellence from which other communities could learn. With the growth of interest in and the expansion of our programmes across Ireland, it made sense to separate out the work. This would ensure that the children and families in Dublin's Inner City remained a priority and would continue to receive the attention they deserved. Dublin's Inner City continues as a best practice demonstration site. Its programmes, having been successfully piloted and evaluated in Dublin's Inner City, will be rolled out through the National Centre. More information on the National Centre can be found in Section 3 of this report.

Thank You

As always, our fantastic partners across Dublin's Inner City came together this year and supported children and young people to thrive, despite the many challenges facing them. This report highlights the enormous impact they have made on the lives of families living in the area. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with ELI's Inner City Programmes. Your generosity is greatly appreciated with your enthusiasm, expertise and energy the magic ingredient in all our programmes. We look forward to working with you all again in 2022-23.



Catriona Flood,
Assistant Director - Dublin's Inner City, Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland

4.2. Overview

At three years of age, there are already big differences in language and mathematical development between children depending on their family circumstances. This gap continues to widen if it is not addressed before children start pre-school. Dublin's Inner City Home Visiting and Parent Support Programmes help parents to develop their children's social, language and thinking skills from an early age and thereby ensuring that their children enter school ready to learn.

While support in the Early Years is undoubtedly essential, continued input throughout a child's life is needed to sustain the gains made through prevention and early intervention. ELI's wrap-around approach builds an excitement about education through multiple progressive sustained interventions in the same family, street and community with learning seen as enjoyable and something to be shared between families, schools, services and our corporate partners. These practices sustain high levels of parental involvement and increases the likelihood of children, with continued enthusiastic committed support from their parents, progressing through the education system to third level, and developing the skills, knowledge and dispositions required to achieve their educational, career and life goals.

ELI's pioneering portfolio of programmes in Dublin's Inner City include:

- **Home Visiting and Parent Support** (N=848 families) - positive home environment through playful learning interactions.
- **Literacies and STEM** (N=2,696 children) – improving social, emotional, language, coding and thinking skills.
- **Educational Guidance** (N=544 young people) - accessing education and career opportunities.
- **Capacity Building, Training and Mentoring** (N=401 professionals) – building professionals' skills to collectively improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Objectives:

- Enable children and young people to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions they will need to achieve their educational, career and life goals
- Increase parental involvement and skills in supporting their children's development and education
- Ensure smooth transitions, continuity, and progression in learning for children moving from home to early years' settings to local schools, afterschool services and on to higher education
- Promote a safe, secure, caring, holistic, restorative learning environment at home, in school, after-schools and youth organisations in Dublin's Inner City community
- Support family needs through interagency collaboration in Dublin's Inner City
- Sustain a world class research and development site for ELI's National Centre, where innovative ideas can be trialled and tested before being scaled up for mainstreaming and/or adaption in other communities.



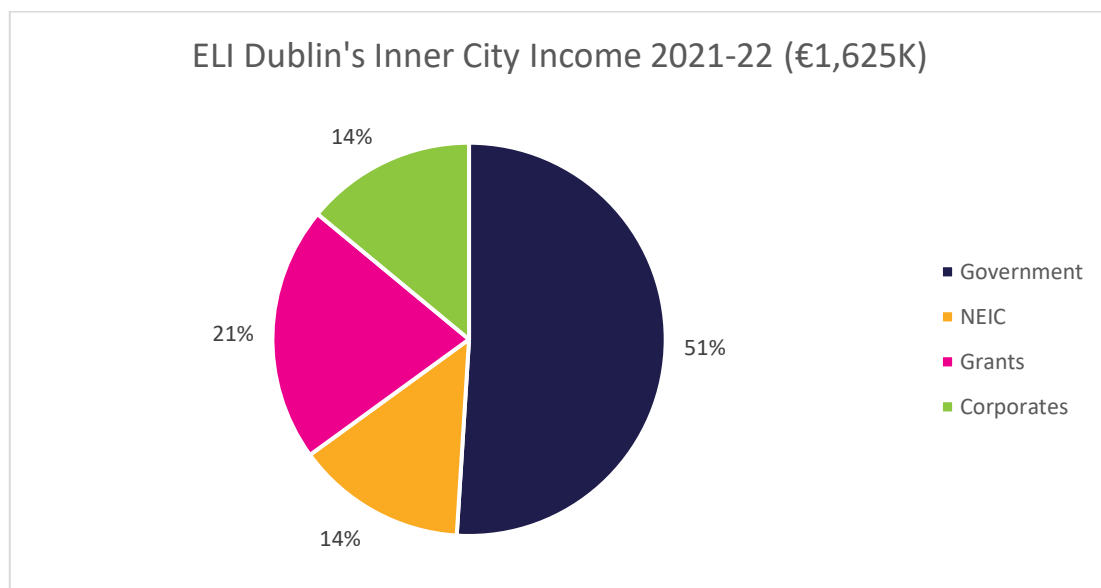
Mothers and babies enjoying outdoor groups.

4.3. Finance and Governance

This section accounts for ELI's Dublin's Inner City 2021-22 income and expenditure along with its governance structures. Financed by a mix of statutory and voluntary funding, including Tusla and the NEIC, it has tightly managed income and expenditure to ensure that programme and partner outcomes and commitments have been fully achieved.

	Income 2021/22	Expenditure 2021/22	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Estimated Expenditure 2022/23
	€	€	€	€
Area Based Childhood (ABC)	817,814	970,113	(152,299)	796,100
Corporate Donations, Grants & NEIC	806,899	660,756	146,143	703,900
Total Dublin's Inner City	1,624,713	1,630,869	(6,156)	1,500,000

The following graph illustrates the breakdown in income with 51% from the State, primarily Tusla funding for the Dublin Docklands and East Inner City Area Based Childhood (ABC) with an additional 14% from the North East Inner City (NEIC) Programme Implementation Board. The remainder came from grants (21%) and corporate donations (14%).



We would like to pay tribute to the generosity of all our donors, many of whom are long-term visionary partners in improving outcomes for children, families and communities. A special thank you to Dan O'Connor (Director, CRH), Joe O'Reilly (Managing Director, Castlethorn), Declan Quilligan (Managing Director, Citco Fund Services), Sean Reilly (Executive Chairman, McGarrell Reilly Group), Michael Hartwell (Partner, Deloitte), Gina Quin (President of NCI) and Sandra Foley (Managing Director, State Street) for their generous invaluable input as part of our ELI Development Committee. If you are interested in partnering with ELI, please contact Mary Anne Stokes, Development and Volunteering Officer (by phone: 086 466 6438 or email: maryanne.stokes@ncirl.ie).

Expenditure 2021-22

Programmes	Projected Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2022 €	Actual Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2022 €	Projected/ Actual Expenditure Variance €	Projected Expenditure Year ending 30th June 2023 €
Area Based Childhood (ABC) Funding	796,100	970,113	(174,013)	796,100
Non- ABC Funding	550,000	660,756	(110,756)	703,900
Total	1,346,100	1,630,869	(284,769)	1,500,000

ABC 0-2 Home Visiting (Community Families)	180,000	268,772	(88,772)	180,000
Community Families	-	-	-	81,900
Home Visiting COVID-19 Support	50,000	9,243	40,757	-
ABC ParentChild+	300,000	346,906	(46,906)	300,000
Parent Child Home Programme - Docklands	160,000	125,077	34,923	153,000
Stretch Graduate Home Visiting	52,000	71,682	(19,682)	70,000
Home Visiting Programmes	742,000	821,680	(79,680)	784,900
ABC 0-3 Parent Support Groups	70,000	74,141	(4,141)	70,000
Parenting 365	-	100,000	(100,000)	70,000
Parent Support Groups	30,000	8,696	21,304	8,000
ABC Restorative Practice Parenting	50,000	64,563	(14,563)	50,000
NEIC Parenting Coordinator	-	46,255	(46,255)	60,000
Parent Support Groups	150,000	293,655	(143,655)	258,000
ABC Early Numeracy Programme	60,000	73,704	(13,704)	60,000
ABC Zoom Ahead with Books	36,100	24,864	11,236	36,100
ABC Doodle Den Programme	100,000	117,163	(17,163)	100,000
NEIC Doodle Den	50,000	30,405	19,595	51,000
NEIC Childhood Restored	-	24,272	(24,272)	-
Robotic Coding Clubs	60,000	56,935	3,065	50,000
Literacies Second Level	30,000	21,215	8,785	20,000
Literacies & STEM	336,100	348,559	(12,459)	317,100
NEIC Brighter Futures	43,000	66,699	(23,699)	65,000
NEIC Educational Guidance	75,000	100,276	(25,276)	75,000
Educational & Career Guidance	118,000	166,975	(48,975)	140,000
Total Costs	1,346,100	1,630,869	(284,769)	1,500,000

Notes

The costs included above represent the direct costs incurred of providing the Programmes. They do not include any charges for services provided by NCI such as accounting, payroll, HR, marketing, which is estimated at 20% of the above costs (€326,174).

The deficit and higher spend was due to increased costs, the return to in person delivery and the introduction of new programmes.

ABC Funding from January to June 2023 is subject to its inclusion in the Government's 2023 Budget and the projected expenditure will be amended in January to reflect the 2023 ABC budget agreed with Tusla.

The ELI Docklands Projected Expenditure 2022-23 is based on ELI's 2020-25 Strategic Plan, costs in previous years, pledged funding, outstanding grant applications as well as proposed programme expansion. It will be amended in December 2022 to reflect funding received and additional pledges/grants.

Governance

The ABC steering group provides oversight and direction for ELI's Dublin Inner City Programmes (DIC), in particular the Area Based Childhood (ABC) grant. We thank all steering group members list below for their advice, guidance and support over the past year and look forward to working with them in 2022-23.

ABC Steering Group as of June 2022 is set out below:	
Chairperson – Frank Ryan, Chairperson ELI Advisory Committee	Lorraine Doherty, Tusla Southside Representative
Donnchadh Ó Madagáin, NCI Finance Director	Denise McDonald, Community Representative
Dan O'Connor, Chair of ELI's Development Committee	Cathy Steenson, Early Years Representative
Niall Heneghan, Principal	Denise Hevey, Early Years Representative
John Peelo, Tusla Northside Representative	Alison McCormack, Community Representative
Dr Josephine Bleach, ELI Director	Dara Terry, Voluntary Sector Representative
	Catriona Flood, ELI Assistant Director

4.4. Home Visiting and Parent Support

This section examines Dublin's Inner City Home Visiting and Parent Support Programmes, which aim to improve children's overall development and school readiness by supporting parents/guardians to provide a positive home environment through playful learning interactions. These programmes developed in collaboration with local parents and services are the ABC 0-2 Home Visiting Programme; ABC 0-3 Community Parent Support Groups; ParentChild+ (formerly Parent Child Home Programme); Home from Home Transition Programme and Restorative Parenting. In March 2020, we began reaching out to our ParentChild+ graduates to see how they are getting on and what, if any, support they required with COVID-19. In 2021-22 this initiative evolved into the Stretch Graduate Programme. Also in 2021-22 The NEIC Parenting Programme was developed to coordinate parenting supports in the NEIC.

Objectives:

- To increase parental skills, knowledge and engagement in all areas of their children's development and learning.
- To develop oral language, social, emotional, literacy, and numeracy skills of children so that they enter school with the skills needed for success in education and life.
- To provide resources and materials to create a stimulating home learning environment.
- To provide the information parents need to successfully navigate the Irish systems (healthcare, housing, education) for themselves and their children.
- To ensure effective transitions for children at key developmental stages and between home, hospital, early years' service, school, statutory & community services.
- To enhance and develop the existing interagency collaboration within the area and co-facilitating community support groups with other agencies to support specific family's needs.
- To enable children and their families to experience a safe, secure, stable, caring, holistic, learning and restorative environment in their home, in services (statutory and community) and throughout the community.

	Children	Parents
Home Visiting and Parent Support Programmes		
Home Visiting Programmes	Children	Parents
ABC 0-2 Home Visiting Programme (0-2 years)	134	206
ABC ParentChild+ (18-36 months)	158	173
Home from Home	16	15
Stretch Graduate Programme	20	20
Total - Home Visiting	328	414
ABC Parent Support Programmes	Children	Parents
ABC Parenting Group Support Sessions (0-3 years)	235	235
ABC 0-3 Summer Programme (0-3 years)	55	55
Restorative Parenting (0-11 years)	0	60
ParentChild+ Graduates Calls	0	51
Parenting365	69	99
NEIC Parenting Programme	0	20
Total - Parent Support	359	520

4.4.1. ABC 0-2 Home Visiting

The ABC 0-2 Years Home Visiting Programme, which is an adaptation of the Community Mothers Programme, is now in its seventh year of programme delivery as part of the ABC Programme. A universal, prevention-focused home visiting programme, it supports families to improve children's (from pre-birth to two years of age) wellbeing, developmental and learning outcomes while increasing parental skills, knowledge and engagement.



ABC 0-2 Home Visiting Programme Walk and Talk

Programme Delivery

- 134 families took part over the year.
- 1,393 programme visits in 2021-22 supported parents' wellbeing and children's development:
 - 446 video calls
 - 365 socially distanced, face-to-face outdoor visits
 - 121 phone calls when video calls and outdoor visits weren't possible.
- 37 self-care packs for parents were delivered to families engaging linked to Mother's Day and Father's Day.
- 160 referrals were received. The team continued to work in partnership with the families' PHNs, and Family Support Practitioners to provide continuity of care and share the one key message of integrated support.

The ABC 0-2 Home Visiting team are involved in the Sláintecare Community Mothers project, an Irish-developed home visiting programme which supports parents in caring for their babies and young children while also encouraging them to look after their own health and well-being. Further information on this project can be found in [Section 3.4.3.](#)

Child and Parent Observation Tool

The Child and Parent Observation Tool was developed in 2018-19 to track the wellbeing and development of the participating children and their parents as they progress through the programme. The 1st Observation is completed after the 4th visit, the 2nd Observation is completed after the 12th visit and the remaining stages of observations are completed every twelve visits thereafter. As the frequency of visits and length of programme varies across individual families participating in the 0-2 Programme, the number of observations reported on each year may change.

The below table presents the observations of the parents and children engaging in 2021-22 and the percentage of those scoring often or always at each of the observation stages. In 2020-21 the data highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reflected in an increase in isolation and a decrease

in social support. It is promising to see the reverse in 2021-22, with Home Visitors reporting an increase in social support and a decrease in isolation at observation five. It also must be noted, however, that due to the universal nature of the programme, whereby all new parents in the catchment area are eligible participants, those that remain on the programme for longer periods tend to be those most in need. Thus, this may also influence the average scores as families progress throughout the observation stages. This can be seen in the decreases in parents' health, knowledge and confidence from observations four to five.

	Obs 1 (n=73)	Obs 2 (n=50)	Obs 3 (n=43)	Obs 4 (n=25)	Obs 5 (n=9)
Parent Observations by Home Visitor					
Social Support	40%	40%	49%	32%	67%
Isolated	26%	24%	30%	44%	11%
Health	64%	74%	49%	68%	56%
Warmth	96%	94%	98%	100%	100%
Responsiveness	88%	92%	86%	96%	89%
Knowledge	30%	46%	65%	84%	78%
Confidence	66%	66%	59%	72%	67%
Child Observations by Home Visitor					
Responds to parent appropriately	85%	82%	85%	79%	78%
Developing as expected	88%	90%	91%	72%	67%
Healthy	93%	94%	91%	88%	89%
Appropriate diet	93%	92%	88%	92%	89%

Participant Feedback

Ninety-four percent (n=45) of parents found the programme useful/beneficial, and that they learned new approaches or ideas from their Home Visitor, and 96% (n=46) would recommend the programme to a friend. In reporting specifically on what they learnt from engaging in the programme parents noted practical tips around playing and interacting with their baby including tummy time and sensory play, tips on supporting their child's development, and tips on caring for their baby including sleep and nutrition. Approximately a third of families were finishing the programme as the parent was returning to work (33%, n=12), a third also as they were continuing on to ELI's ParentChild+ Home Visiting Programme (33%, n=12), 28% (n=10) as the child had turned two, and 6% (n=2) as they were moving from the area.

Comments from parents/guardians included:

"This programme helped me to cope with the pressure as new mam and supported me during my Maternity leave which actually impacts all mams mentally. It helped me to meet other mams and build a circle to share the challenges I am facing. And it is great way for my little one to engage with other babies in different kind of sessions."

"Just that I really appreciate the support and the work my home visitor does. She's amazing, kind, caring, approachable, very understanding and has not only supported my daughter but also me, she has been great and I just think that should be acknowledged."

4.4.2. 0-3 Community Parent Support Programme

The ABC 0-3 Parent Support Programme, now in its eighth year, was developed and piloted in collaboration with local parents and professionals. It has a dual purpose of supporting positive parent-child learning interactions as well as linking parents to the other parents and local supports. All the sessions are based on best practice: Aistear, The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA 2000), Síolta the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE 2006), Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (2015), Parents Together Community Course (Parents Plus & NCI 2008) and ParentChild+ Programme.



Child Enjoying Playtime at Summer Programme

Programme Delivery

- Approximately 214 families engaged in groups in 2021-22.
 - 16 groups were held across the year both online and in person (Storytelling, Song-time, Fitness for Mams, Read, Rattle and Roll, Infant Massage courses, Baby and Toddler Group)
- 36 families engaged in the 6 Baby massage courses.
- 15 families engaged across 3 Read, Rattle and Roll courses.
- Storytelling in Mandarin was piloted across 5 sessions with 22 families in attendance.
- Storytelling for the local Roma community was held which was unfortunately not well attended.
- 7 one-off themed storytelling sessions were introduced with an average of 22 attendees per session marking different celebratory dates throughout the year such as Halloween and International Children's Day.
- 6 summer programme events with 55 families were delivered in person.
- 15 books and 6 activity and crafts packs were gifted to families.

Facilitator Observations

At the end of each session, group facilitators complete an observational tool to document the learning occurring across the various group sessions being delivered by ELI group facilitators. The more commonly supported area of development across the groups are children's communication skills (92%), followed by social skills (91%), gross motor skills (83%) and speech and language skills (82%).

Participant Feedback

Evaluation feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction across all groups, as most participants (90%, n=27) reported feeling glad that they attended, and majority of the participants reported feeling supported by the facilitator (94%, n=30). Participants also reported very positive benefits to their own well-being (94%, n=30) and to their child's development and well-being (91%, n=29). There was evidence of learning across the groups with majority of participants (94% n=30) reporting that they learned new approaches/ideas through participating in the group.

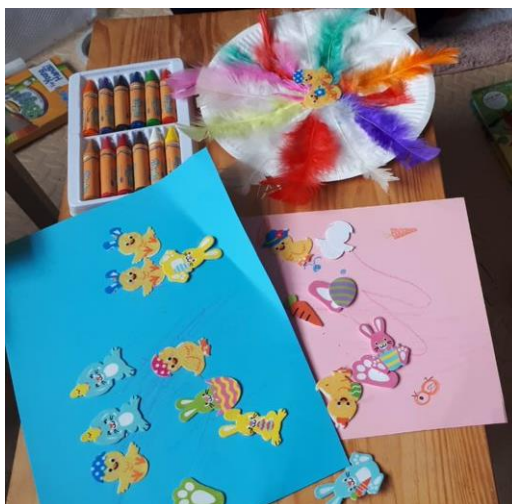
Comments from parents/guardians included:

"It is lively and interesting. It helps to improve Chinese and learn knowledge. Also meet new friends and improve skills. We hope to have story sessions every week. It is very good for my kids." [Parent attending Storytelling in Mandarin]

"I found this very beneficial for me as Mam as well as for my baby. It's very relaxing and gives you an opportunity to shut off and have good quality one on one engagement with baby. Very relaxing." [Parent attending Infant Message]

4.4.3. ABC ParentChild+ Programme

Originally from the US, the ParentChild+ programme is an innovative, home-based literacy and parenting programme that strengthens families and prepares children to succeed academically. For over 14 years, we have been delivering ParentChild+ to vulnerable families with children aged eighteen months to three years in Dublin's Inner City. Beginning with 15 families in 2007, the numbers have grown to 168 in 2021. The National ParentChild+ Training, Research and Support Centre, established in January 2020, supports implementation. More details on ParentChild+ National can be found in [Section 3.4.1.](#) of this report.



Home Visit Using the Easter Art Activity Pack.

Programme Delivery

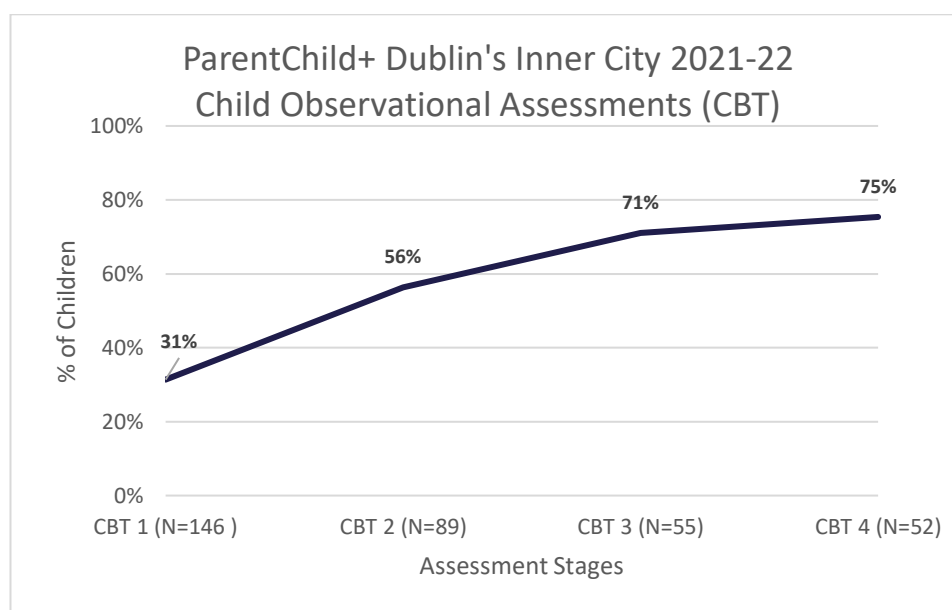
- 156 Families participated in ParentChild+ Dublin Docklands and Dublin 8 this year, engaging in 1,465 in home visits, 1,500 video call visits, 17 phone call visits and 340 socially distanced outdoor visits.
- 38 children graduated.
- 28 families left the programme before completion.
- 82% retention rate which is 4% higher than 2020-21 (78%) and 4% lower than 2019-20 (86%).
- 77 female and 76 male children with the gender of 3 children not specified by the parents.
- 148 female adults and 8 males participated in the programme.
- 55% Irish, 14% Chinese, 6% Eastern European, 6% African, 8% Asian, 4% Western European, and 5% South American.
- 26 ParentChild+ home visitors delivered the programme to families in 2021-22.

- 117 referrals received from the ELI 0-2 Home Visiting Programme, Family Support Workers, Public Health Nurses, Local schools, Social Workers and other Non-profit organisations and charities.
- 10 ParentChild+ themed social media posts were posted on the ELI social media channels.

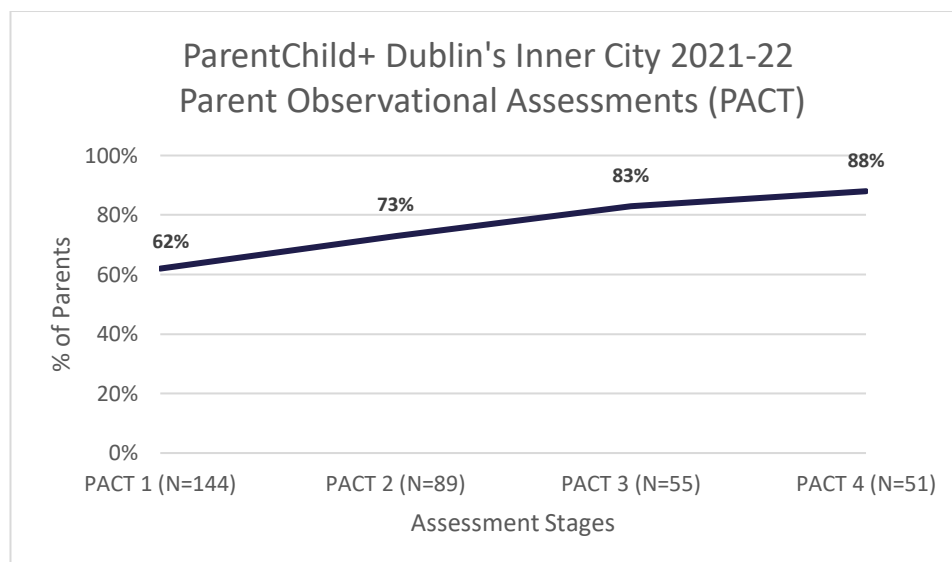
Programme Assessment- Child Behaviour Trait (CBT) and Parent and Child Together (PACT)

Throughout the programme Home Visitors complete two observational assessments (CBT and PACT). For more information on the assessments please see [Section 3.4.1](#).

As can be seen in the figure below, the percentage of children reaching their developmental milestones in Dublin's Inner City has gradually increased throughout the programme, from 31% at the beginning of the programme to 56%, 71% and, finally, 75% on completion of the programme. This 44% increase is lower than the improvement on that of the 2020-21 cohort (62%) and, also, the 2021-22 increase across all ParentChild+ sites nationally (56%, see [Section 3.4.1](#)). Children engaging in the programme demonstrated developmental increases across the three CBT subscales (cognition, behaviour and language) at each stage of the programme.



Overall, there was a positive increase in the percentage of parents having high-quality interactions with their children from 62% at PACT 1 to 88% at PACT 4. Similar to the CBT assessment, a lower increase was seen this year to the 2020-21 cohort. This could be due to a change in circumstances post COVID-19, as children were receiving more social interactions outside of the home. The percentage of parents having interactions of good quality with their children showed improvement in all four areas of assessment (parents' responsiveness to their child, parent's affection toward their child, parent's communication with their child and parent's consistency with their child).



Parent and Child Engagement

Both children and parents showed positive engagement across their visits in 2021-22. The percentage of children Home Visitors reported as fully engaged for their visits increased from 65% of children in 2020-21 to 73% in 2021-22. Ten percent of children in 2021-22 were reported as somewhat engaged with the visits and just 3% were not engaged. Eighty-nine percent of the parents were reported as fully engaged in their visits in 2021-22, in comparison to 84% in 2020-21. Ten percent of parents were somewhat engaged while just 1% were not engaged with the visits.

Participant Learning and Feedback

Satisfaction rates remained high with all parents reporting they found this programme to be useful and found the books and toys useful (N=58). All parents reported feeling confident using the strategies learned for reading and playing with their child. The majority of parents reported learning new approaches and ideas from participating in the programme (93%, n=54). Parents reported their children are benefitting most in the areas of speech and language skills (88%, n=51), social skills (76%, n=44), and improved attention span (76%, n=44). Furthermore, all parents felt supported by their home visitor and would recommend the programme to another parent (N=58).

Comments from participants:

"It brings both parents and child together to spend quality time. The no phone rule works so well where we can dedicate the time and attention to our child. It's great to observe the home visitor and learn from them." [Parent]

"The amazing dedication that each person gives. Starting from the ladies from Early learning program to my home visitor. The books and toys are plus however the best part is the dedication and love that they put in what they do." [Parent]

"I found the outdoor session wonderful, so did my son, the freedom of the sessions work really well like for example we do a puzzle but it can turn into a whole different play experience." [Parent]

4.4.4. Home from Home Transition Programme

The Home from Home Transition Programme is an intensive weekly home visiting programme developed by our Home Visiting Team for families living in emergency/ homeless accommodation, which provides an integrated plan of intervention and support for families with children aged sixteen months onwards.

Programme Delivery

- 15 families participated in the Home from Home Programme in 2021-22.
- 4 emergency accommodation services referred families this year including B&Bs, Homeless Family Hubs, Sonas Women's and Children's Refuge.
- 114 visits took place, including in home visits (35), video call visits (63), phone calls (2) and outdoor visits (14).
- 7 Home Visitors delivered the programme to families in 2021-22.
- 1 interagency meeting took place this year.
- ELI represented on the YPAR Children in the Homeless Sector.

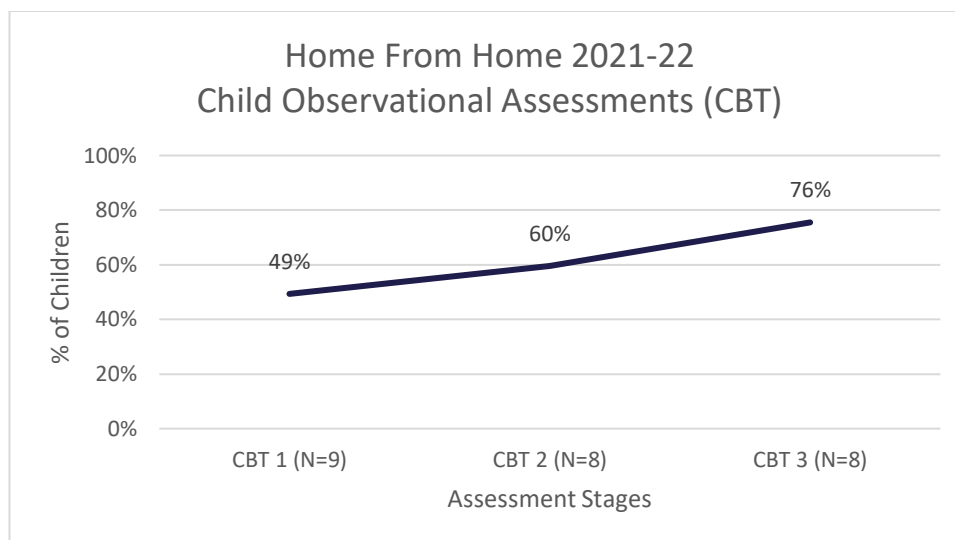


Child Reading his Easter Pack Book

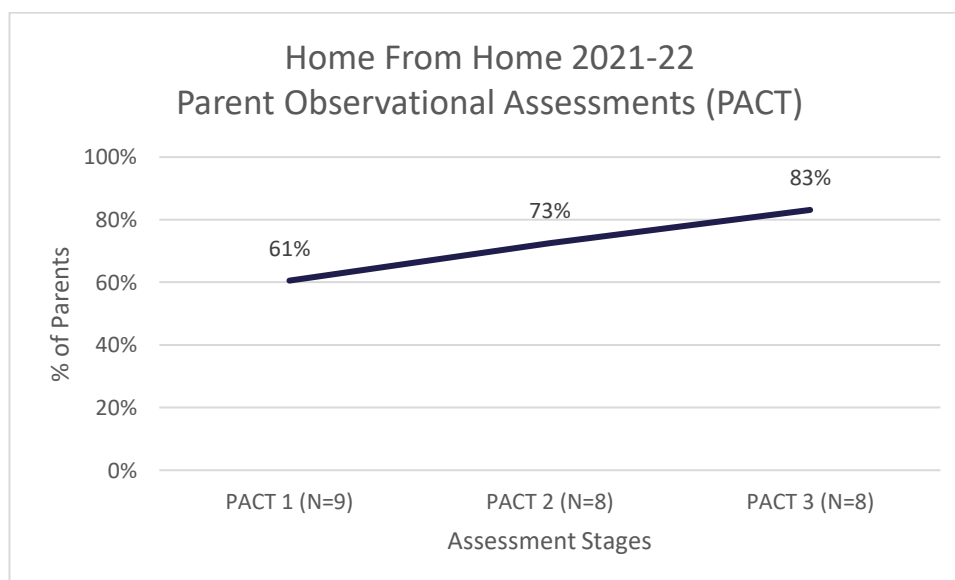
Programme Assessment- Child Behaviour Trait (CBT) and Parent and Child Together (PACT)

Throughout the programme Home Visitors complete two observational assessments (CBT and PACT). For more information on the assessments please see [Section 3.4.2](#).

As can be seen in the graph below 49% of the children in the 2021-22 Home from Home cohort were reaching their developmental milestones on entering the programme, this increased by 11% at CBT two and by a further 16% at CBT three. Children engaging in the programme demonstrated developmental increases across the three CBT subscales (cognition, behaviour and language) at each stage of the programme.



The 2021-22 cohort of parents experienced a positive improvement in their interactions with their children at each of the assessment stages and an overall increase of 22%. The percentage of parents having interactions of good quality with their children showed improvement in all four areas of assessment (parents' responsiveness to their child, parent's affection toward their child, parent's communication with their child and parent's consistency with their child).



Parent and Child Engagement

Parents were fully engaged for 81% of the visits, and children were fully engaged for 52% of the visits. Both levels of engagement were less than that of the ParentChild+ cohort (89% and 73% respectively). It must be noted, however, the considerable challenges the Home from Home families face, particularly space restrictions, which may affect the children throughout the visits.

Participant Feedback

Three of the parents provided feedback through exit evaluations and end of year evaluations. All parents indicated that they learned new approaches and ideas while participating and improved their interactions with their child. All parents also reported that their child has improved in the areas of speech and language skills, numeracy skills, literacy skills, and in their attention span.

Comments from parents/guardians included:

"The virtual visits were great."

"Honestly I think my son and I had the most amazing experience, with our home visitor and the fact that we could still participate while in a different county was brilliant."

"He learnt how to make friends."

4.4.5. Restorative Parenting Programme

The Restorative Parenting Programme supports healthy parent-child relationships through the development of parents' self-awareness, communication skills, and self-care practices. It helps parents to engage mindfully rather than reactively, seeking to understand their children's behaviour, and taking time to reflect on the types of interactions that are helpful and supportive.

Programme Delivery

- 42 parents engaged in 8 Restorative Parenting courses, 7 courses were delivered online and 1 in person.
- 8 parents engaged across 2 online workshops focused on challenging behaviour and new moms.
- 10 parents engaged in 20 one to one parent support sessions.
- 17 social media posts to support parents were developed and shared.

Participant Feedback

Parents (94%, n=16) found the Restorative Parenting Programme helpful; 100% (N=17) reported confidence in using the suggested parenting strategies and 100% (N=17) would be interested in taking part in a follow-up course, or future training. On completing the programme 88% (n=15) of parents reported knowing why their child is upset or disruptive and 87% (n=13) are experiencing less instances of their child misbehaving. Furthermore 94% (n=16) of parents find it easy to play with their child and 94% (n=16) report that they can communicate clearly and directly with their child.

Comments from parents/ guardians included:

"It has helped me feel supported and it really helps to just be in a setting with like-minded people. It makes a world of difference in the parenting journey. Thank you so much."

"The course helped me to realize that I am not alone and I need to take care of me so I can take care of kids."

"Overall, I'm more patient with myself and will show my child that I'm just a human too- I get upset/angry and make mistakes. It's always okay to feel but we can manage our emotions better sometimes. Loved the course. I would definitely recommend to others."

4.4.6. Stretch Graduate Programme

In recognizing the challenging situation many parents were facing during COVID-19, ELI reached out to previous graduates of the ParentChild+ programme - checking in to see how they and their family were doing. This support has continued throughout 2020-21 with the aim to ensure that parents whose children we have supported through their early years education will have the confidence, understanding, skills, and knowledge to continue to support their children's educations in this new everchanging situation in which home learning is more critical than ever.

This initiative was developed into the Stretch Graduate Programme, which commenced as a programme in January 2022. It is focused on supporting families with children aged between four and six years old that have graduated PC+, Parenting 365 or whom have been referred from schools and services from the Dublin inner city. Its aim is to improve children's holistic development by empowering their parents with confidence, skills and knowledge that can support their children's education and wellbeing. The educational resources are diverse, inclusive and carefully sourced according to Aistear (The National Curriculum Framework in Ireland for early education).

Programme Delivery

- 121 additional families were contacted for the ParentChild+ Graduate Calls in 2021-22.
 - 41 completed an interview.
 - 10 engaged in a conversation yet decided not to participate in an interview.
 - 61 families did not answer the call, these families also received a text and were invited to call back if they wished to participate.
 - 2 activity packs were sent to families.
 - 256 families were contacted in total upon completion of the initiative.
 - 80% (n=33) of families interviewed reported to be doing well an increase on 2020-21 (63%) and 2019-20 (44%).
- 20 families and 9 Home Visitors engaged in the Stretch Graduate Home Visiting Programme.
 - 79 activity packs were provided to families.
 - 111 visits, taking place over video calls (n=3), phone calls (n=46), and in-person (n=62).
 - 46 referrals were made to other ELI programmes.



Siblings enjoying 'The Dead Zoo' and Resources from the National Museum of Ireland

Home Visitor Reflections

Based on the Home Visitors' reflections on their visits, parents and children were doing well on the majority of their visits, 60% and 61% respectively. Parents were doing moderately well on 24% of the visits and children were doing moderately well on 21% of the visits. Home Visitors reported parents

to not be doing well on 13% of the visits and children on 3% of the visits. Activity packs were referred to families after 44 of the visits and the programme that received the most referrals were ELI's Zoom Ahead with Books programme, with 36 referrals. There were also eleven referrals to the STEM workshops and 8 referrals to the Early Numeracy Programme.

Participant feedback

Satisfaction rates were high with all parents reporting that they found this programme to be useful and found the books and toys useful (N=21). All respondents reported that they felt supported by their Home Visitor and would recommend the programme to a friend. Parents reported the programme benefitting their child in areas such as speech and language, literacy and social skills. Parents also noted the learned new approaches and ideas in which they could improve their interactions with their child.

Comments from participants included:

"Mam is attending lots of groups and making new friends which is good. Today seemed very positive on the phone." [Home Visitor]

"Today 2 more children were there, and they all participated. The older child helped the younger kids with the letters, she lined them up ABC..... The mother said that she would be very interested in Summer events if any." [Home Visitor]

4.4.7. Parenting365 Programme

The Community Foundation Toy Show Appeal funded Parenting365 Programme, which supports parents and families of children with additional needs. Addressing the many challenges faced by these children, it involves six weeks of developmentally targeted group play sessions in a safe and inclusive environment, in which parents' interaction and engagement with their children is supported by a trained play facilitator. Parents receive take-home resources to extend their children's learning and development. A weekly parent support group via Zoom enables them to meet with other parents of children with additional needs and have access to support from professionals such as occupational and play therapists. Research is a principal component of this programme and further details about the Parenting365 research project can be found in [Section 3.5.2.](#)

Programme delivery

- 66 families, with a total of 69 children engaged in a 6 week in person programme of parent and toddler groups across 3 terms.
- 46 parents engaged in a 6-week online parenting programme across 3 groups with 3 guest speakers (paediatric occupational therapist, play therapist, music therapist) delivered 6 of the sessions to the parents.
- Engagement from fathers was high on this programme with 26 fathers participating.
- 1 event for a funder, Revolut, was held in NCI with 13 families attending.
- 1 reunion event was held in NCI with 8 families attending.



Child reading a story with mam and the play facilitator

Participant Learning and Feedback

All (n=18) parents reported that the programme greatly benefitted them and 89% (n=16) that it greatly benefitted their child. The remaining 11% (n=2) reported that it somewhat benefitted their child. On starting the programme parents set goals for themselves and their child. For their goals, parents identified areas such as finding ways to connect with their child more; gain more understanding of their child's needs; and learn skills and techniques to support their child. Thirty-five percent of parents reported they had achieved the goal they had set out for themselves and 24% were close to achieving their goal. In relation to goals for their child parents reported they would like to see improvements in their child's social skills improving; language and communication skills; and regulating emotions. On completing the programme 18% of parents reported their child had achieved the goal they had set for them and 35% were close to achieving it.

Comments from parents/guardians included:

"The programme has been amazing for X, playing with the different toys has helped his gross and fine motor skills. Seeing other children has developed his social skills, he has learnt how to share and take turns.

The singing and the interaction with the team has helped his communication, he is doing a lot more babbling. I can't stress enough how important the 6 weeks have been. We can definitely see a change in X. I think the size of the group was perfect. Having both parents being able to come was amazing. I just hope that another programme is run."

"This programme had helped me, first of all, to connect and interact with parents with similar difficulties in coping with parenting. This programme also helped me understand my child's behaviour, at a different level, through professional guidance and advice. And not the last, throughout this programme I've learned how to better care for myself in order to be able to care for the others."

4.4.8. NEIC Parenting Support Programme

The NEIC Parenting Programme aims to identify and enhance the coordination of parenting programmes and referral pathways across all age groups in the NEIC. This is done in collaboration with the NEIC Parenting Strategy Steering Group, Parent Support Champions, parents and providers of parenting programmes. A key goal is to establish a Parenting Forum and involve parents in the design, delivery and evaluation of parenting supports and programmes.

Programme Delivery

- 10 individual Parent Support sessions were held based on family's specific needs.
- 13 parents were engaged in tabletop discussions individual/small groups initial meetings and relationship building to establish the parenting forum.
- 29 professionals from 28 organisations were engaged in the Parent Strategy Meetings to explore how can we use existing resources effectively to support parents.
 - Needs assessment questionnaire
 - Skills audit
 - Listening to issues arising – difficulty engaging parents, culture around parenting supports, perception can be seen as parents are failing. Need to change perceptions and rebrand parenting support.
- 10 support meetings for Parenting Champions to enable them to learn from each other.
- Engaged with 67 organizations to map existing services and resources for parents in the NEIC
- 32 social media posts.
- 66 parents responded to a Needs assessment findings circulated to professionals and due to be circulated with parents.

Participant Feedback

A Needs Assessment Survey was distributed to parents in the community with 66 parents responding. Thirty-one parents noted the difficulties they face around parenting. The primary difficulties raised were *supporting children's well-being/development* 26% (n=8) and *setting boundaries/looking after themselves* 23% (n=7). Thirty-two parents noted issues, needs, and concerns for their children. The foremost concerns for the parents were their children having *additional needs*, 31% (n=10) and the children's *well-being and development*, 25% (n=8). Thirty-five parents indicated facing barriers and challenges in accessing parenting support programmes. The primary barriers and challenges reported by parents were *lack of time* and *lack of childcare*, 63% (n=22). Forty-four parents shared their thoughts about parenting programmes or support. 30% (n=13) of parents indicated that they think of *receiving support, advice, and guidance*. Other parents, 20% (n=9) think of *community and meeting other parents*. 14% (n=6) indicated that they think of *learning and improving parenting skills*. 25% (n=11) of parents suggested having *positive feelings* about parenting programmes or support and were interested in finding out more. However, 14% (n=6) of parents suggested having *mixed feelings* about parenting programmes or support and were unsure whether it was a right fit for them.

Comments from parents/guardians included:

"When I heard the facilitator talk about "Self Care" that's what sold programme to me"

"I could not access parenting programme as service did not have childcare & I could not do online programme as they said my child could not be in the room. What do I do? I am a single parent"

"It was great coming here today & talk about what's happening. I found what other people said useful because I did not know that & I know that it's not just me who is finding it hard"

4.5. Literacies and STEM

ELI's Literacy, Numeracy and Coding Programmes focus on supporting parents, services and schools to develop children's social, language and thinking skills from an early age; thereby, ensuring that the children and young people in the area continue to develop the skills needed to achieve their educational, career and life goals. These programmes, developed through careful collaboration with local services and schools, are Early Numeracy Programme, Zoom Ahead with Books, Doodle Den, STEM Play & Learn, STEM Family Learning, Robotic Coding Clubs, NCI Challenges, Community Based Tuition Support, Language Cafés and NEIC Childhood Restored.

Objectives

- Enable children and young people to continue to develop the skills they will need to achieve their educational and career goals
- Develop a learning rich environment in inner city Dublin
- Support parental involvement in their children's education and learning
- Encourage children's and families' interest and pleasure in Literacy, Numeracy and Coding
- Widen participation in higher education within the Docklands

Literacies & STEM Programmes	Children	Parents
Early Numeracy Project (0-8 years)	1,103	1,655
Zoom Ahead with Books (4-6 years)	1,034	1,551
Doodle Den (Senior Infants)	95	142
STEM Play & Learn (4-6 years)	29	43
NCI Challenges (4-8 years)	24	36
Stretch Home Learning (6-9 years)	2	2
Family STEM Learning Events (6-9 years)	28	28
e-Learning Programme	5	5
NEIC Childhood Restored (7-10 years)	164	246
Robotic Coding Club (afterschools)	97	69
Tuition Support (15-18 years)	43	0
Language Cafe Events (15-18 years)	39	0
English Speaking Sessions (16-17 years)	13	0
Totals	2,676	3,777

4.5.1. Early Numeracy Programme

Beginning in 2011 with funding from the National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI), this programme is aimed at improving early year's numeracy and mathematical skills from birth to six years of age. With funding from the ABC Programme, this programme has grown from 16 organisations and 498 children in 2011-12 to 35 organisations and 1,031 children in 2021-2022. The programme revolves around the three community Early Numeracy Weeks. This year's themes were Sequence and Pattern (term one), Time (term two) and Measurement (term three). Working group meetings and onsite mentoring support practitioners to reflect on and improve the quality of the programme and their practice using the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide as a resource.

Programme Delivery

- 1,103 children and 1,655 parents overall.
- 12 early years services, 10 schools, 4 afterschool's, 5 libraries and 5 Public Health Centres engaged and received numeracy cards and activity packs to be used at home and in the school/service.
- 256 children and 57 staff members attended a Numeracy event at the end of Term 3 held in NCI.

Participant Learning and Feedback

On completion of each Early Numeracy Week, both staff and parents were asked to provide feedback through completion of an online or a paper evaluation. Staff completed reflections after Term one and Term two and completed an end-of-year evaluation after Term three. In total across the three terms 135 parents and 79 staff members completed evaluations. The staff feedback slightly decreased in comparison to the 2021-2022 figure (87), however we noted an increase in parental feedback once restrictions allowed ELI staff back into the services to deliver paper evaluations. This year we received 65 more parent evaluations in comparison to 2020-21 (70).

Parents' reports of children's satisfaction dropped slightly in comparison to last year's reports. 86% (n=92) of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the Early Numeracy Weeks were an enjoyable experience for the children involved in comparison to 95% in 2020-21. However, parents' own satisfaction remained high with 91% (n=114) of parents highlighted their own enjoyment in completing the activities with their child and 97% (n=127) said they would recommend the Early Numeracy Weeks and its activities to a friend. In the end of year evaluation 88% (n=28) of staff agreed or strongly agreed that the Early Numeracy Weeks were an enjoyable experience for the children involved.

Similar to the satisfaction rate, parent's reports of children's learning dropped slightly (5%) in comparison to last year's report. Eighty-four percent (n=94) of parents noted that the Early Numeracy Weeks improved their child's numeracy skills, and it provided their children with the opportunity to learn more about numeracy (89% in 2020-21). Interestingly the staff's reports of children's learning increased. According to 91% (n=29) of staff who completed the end of year evaluation, the Early Numeracy Week improved the children's understanding of numeracy theme (86% in 2020-21). Staff reported that the Early Numeracy Weeks provided valuable learning opportunities for the children (92%, n=73), parents (77%, n=60), and staff (82%, n=63).

Staff noted a decrease in Early Numeracy Weeks involving the parents in their child's learning in both their reflections and end-of-year evaluation. Just 31% (n=10) of staff reported an increased level of parental involvement (42% in 2020-21). This could be due to the restrictions that did not permit parents to enter the schools or services for most of the year. While parents were able to engage with the numeracy activities through an online learning tool called Seesaw, staff reported challenges getting parents to interact with the platform. That said, 88% (n=113) of parents found the Early Numeracy Weeks encouraged them to become more involved in their child's learning in comparison to 86% in 2020-21.

Comments from participants included:

"My daughter is using more words and can understand the clock like not exactly the right time but pretending and saying it's 9 o'clock and using her pretend watch." [Parent]

"The teachers love using the sequence cards provided with the numeracy resources, They are using them as part of their language curriculum lesson plans" [Teacher]

"My child learned lots about different times of the day. We baked cupcakes at home which she enjoyed. We went on nature walk and she

4.5.2. Zoom Ahead with Books

The Zoom Ahead with Books project encourages parental involvement and promotes children's enjoyment and motivation to read for pleasure. The programme is designed for children with family members as book buddies attending preschool, reception, junior infants, senior infants and first classes but can be used with children up to age nine with volunteer book buddies in after-schools services.

Programme Delivery

- 976 children and their families in 13 primary schools and 2/3 preschool and 1 afterschool participated in the programme.
- 7,000 books were read over the 3 weeks, i.e. each child, on average reading 7 books.
- Translations in 4 additional languages – Ukrainian, Urdu, Latvian, Mongolian, Creole.
- 57 families participated in the ZAWB Virtual Book Club that was newly developed in 2020-21 to reach and support families during the COVID -19 restrictions and school closures, using ELI social media.
 - 171 books and activity packs were posted directly to family homes
 - 9 corporate volunteers created 11 story-time videos to complement the books and packs.



The Best Book Buddies at Zoom Ahead with Books

Participant Feedback

Due to COVID-19 related and logistical challenges the number of evaluations completed by staff (N=5), parents (N=3 ZAWB programme and N=8 Virtual Book Club) and children (N=3) was considerably low in 2021-22. Feedback was positive with children reporting that the programme helped them with their reading and parents noticing an increased enthusiasm for reading.

Comments from participants included:

"I enjoyed drawing with mammy." [Child]

"The framed pictures at the end of the programme is the highlight. The children absolutely love seeing their pictures. The children and their grownups enjoy sharing books together and drawing their pictures. Overall it is a very enjoyable and beneficial programme for the children." [Teacher]

"First [impact] is joy. Second is new vocabulary. Gave us a new way to make it interactive. We are reading a book and sometimes drawing something out of it." [Parent from Virtual Book Club]

4.5.3. Doodle Den

Doodle Den is an evidence based after school programme that aims to address literacy needs amongst senior infants' children (aged five to six-years of age) using a range of fun learning activities.

Programme Delivery

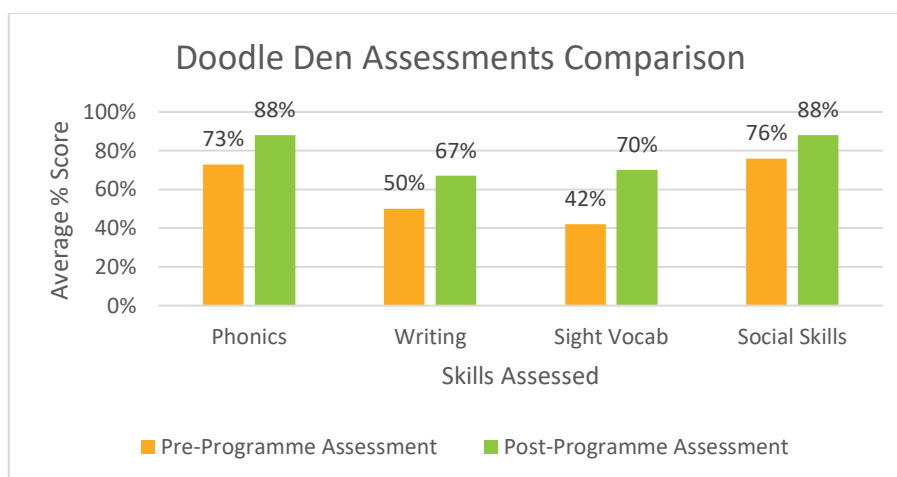
- 95 children enrolled in the programme across the 4 ABC (n=54) and 3 NEIC sites (n=41).
- 5 schools (n=49) entered data on the literacy need of the children attending Doodle Den.
 - 33% of children had a high level of literacy need, 47% medium and 20% a low level.
- 6 schools (n=67) reported on the numbers of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and a Special Educational Need (SEN).
 - The percentage of children with EAL increased from 2020-21 (28%) to 46% (of 67 children for whom data was returned).
 - Just 3% (n=2 of 67 children) had a SEN. A decrease from 9% in 2020-21.
- 4 parent events were held in Charleville Mall Library and Pearse St Library.
- 3 ABC sites visited the MUD Island Community Garden and 1 site held a separate event at a playground.
- 68 children graduated in June 2022. This represents a 28% attrition rate, 3% greater than 2020-21 (25%), but the same as 2019-20 (28%).
- 55 children received literacy packs – including a game, book, literacy sticker book, copy writing and colouring materials and a white board.



City Quay Doodle Den Group Photo

Participant Learning

Assessments were completed with the children at the beginning of the Doodle Den programme and again as they were completing the programme in June of 2022. These assessments examined the child's phonic skills, writing skills, sight vocabulary, and social skills. As can be seen in the graph below the average scores across all assessment areas increased. The greatest increase can be seen in children's sight vocabulary scores which increased by 28%, followed by scores in writing (17% increase), phonics (15% increase) and finally, children demonstrated a 12% increase in their social skills (please note, one school did not complete assessments on children's social skills, as this was their first year running Doodle Den the service ran into some logistical challenges). The 2020-21 cohort of children participating in Doodle Den had the lowest recorded scores, it is promising to see both baseline and post-programme scores in 2021-22 returning to figures more comparable to pre-pandemic scores. Interestingly, children's social skills in 2021-22 are among the highest recorded since ELI began the Doodle Den programme.



Participant Feedback

Facilitators (100%, n=4), 95% (n=19) of parents and 86% (n=19) of children reported that participating in Doodle Den was an enjoyable experience for the children. 86% (n=19) of parents also reported the programme helped their child, particularly with their child's reading ability (91%, n=20), listening (77%, n=17) and increased reading at home (73%, n=16). All staff reported the programme benefitted the children's listening, reading, writing, making new friends, behaviour, and using the library. 75% (n=3) of staff also noted increased parental involvement. 79% of children stated that Doodle Den has helped with their reading *a lot*, 5% (n=1) did not know if it helped and the remainder did not respond to this question. 63% (n=12) reported it has helped with their writing, 10% (n=2) did not know, 5% (n=1) reported it did not help and the remainder did not respond to this question.

Comments from parents/ guardians included:

"The best thing about the programme is improved reading skills spending quality time with friends having a great time while learning. All the little tips make a big difference to enjoy the afterschool eve more." [Parent]

"We will miss it [Doodle Den] so much because we like it better than school." [Child]

"The best thing about the programme was enjoying learning in a fun way opportunity to perform." [Facilitator]

4.5.4. NCI Challenges

The NCI Challenges are designed to encourage the development of cross-curricular skills as well as encouraging parental involvement in their children's education and schools. The inter-school challenges promote the development of children's literacy, numeracy, general knowledge and social skills through playing board-games like Monopoly (money, numbers, problem-solving), Rummikub (numbers, pattern, sorting) and the Table Quiz (general knowledge, literacy). In 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic ELI was unable to hold these challenges. In 2021-22 the return on one challenge, Rummikub, was trialled.

Programme Delivery

- 24 children engaged in 4-week programme in 1 after school, ranging in age from 4-8 years.
- 20 children participated in final challenge identifying number, pattern and sequence recognition.



Rummikub at Island Key

Participant Feedback

All of the children (N=20) said that they enjoyed taking part in the Rummikub event and 80% (n=16) reported wanting to play more math games. When asked 'What were your favourite parts about the event?' majority of the children commented on learning how to play the game and playing the game.

4.5.5. STEM Family Learning

COVID-19 and closure of schools and services highlighted the need for more direct parental engagement and home-based programmes to support children's learning. A variety of home-based learning activities were trailed in 2020-21 as part of the development of the STEM Family Learning Programme. The aim was to ensure that the parents whose children we have supported through their early years education will have the confidence, understanding, skills and knowledge to continue to support their children's education in this new everchanging situation in which home learning is more critical than ever.

Programme Delivery

- Stretch Home Learning Programme was continued in 2021-22 promoting STEM through card games in which 2 volunteers from GAM and KPMG engaged with 2 families.
- 5 families engaged in a novel self-directed STEM Family eLearning programme. 2 volunteers participated from Central Bank to prepare resources for the programme.
- 29 families engaged in a STEM Play & Learn Summer Programme. 3 volunteers from Arthur Cox engaged with families.

- 4 online STEM events were held separately in 2021-22:
 - o 1 microscope event was held with 7 families in attendance by volunteer from Trinity College
 - o 1 3D printing event was held with 7 families in attendance with 2 volunteers from TCD.
 - o 1 event was held on STEM in environment with 8 families in attendance.
 - o 1 event was held on Sequence and Pattern in STEM with 6 families in attendance.

Participant Learning and Feedback

Feedback was very positive with 100% of parents (N=7) and children (N=27) reporting that they enjoyed the programme and would recommend it to a friend. All parents reported their child learning throughout the programme and showing more interest in participating in STEM activities at home.

Engagement was high throughout the Stretch Home Learning Programme, as volunteers reported that children were fully engaged in all the sessions and parents were fully engaged in 50% of the sessions. Feedback was also very positive among the volunteers, as 100% reported that they were happy to have participated in the programme, would volunteer again, and would recommend it to a colleague.

Comments from participants included:

"It gave the children option to be involved in the workshop, let children to see different things, help them understand how things works, it was brilliant." [Parent]

"It was a new area of learning for my child. He didn't know anything about microscopes, but the event really got him thinking and sparked his interest." [Parent]

4.5.6. NEIC Childhood Restored: A Celebration of Children and Young People

Funded by the NEIC, Childhood Restored is a community arts project focused on emotional literacy that aimed to provide primary school-age children in North-East Inner-City schools with a safe space to express their feelings around the pandemic, amid their emergence back into society, and the effect it has had on them, through art and creative writing.

Programme Delivery

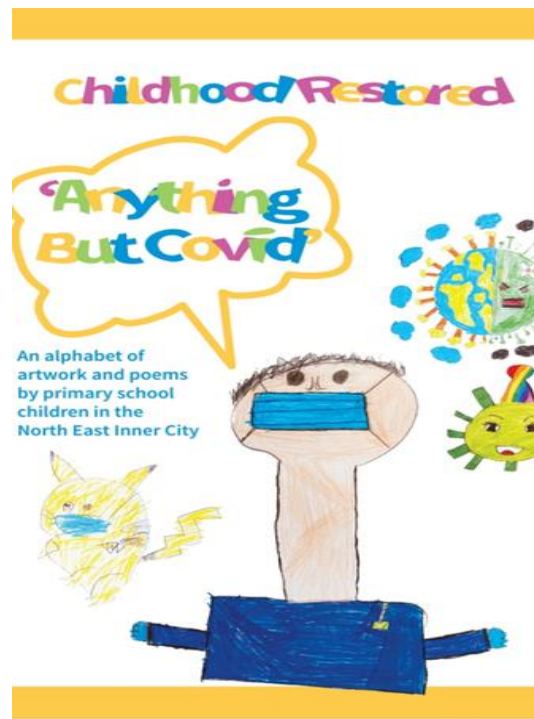
- 7 NEIC schools participated in the programme.
- 164 students in Junior Infants to third Class participated.
- 1 artist and 1 poet delivered the programme to the children.
- 14 workshops (2 per school) were delivered over 2 weeks.
- Children's artwork was published in a book and displayed in an exhibition in NCI.
- 5 parents attended the exhibition in NCI.

Participant Feedback and Learnings

Students and their teachers were offered the chance to give their feedback after completing the programme through a paper evaluation. Majority of the students reported enjoying taking part in the art project (87%, n=99) and most would like to take part in more art projects (75%, n=85). All teachers (N=10) reported that the project was a valuable learning opportunity for the students and was enjoyable.

All teachers (N=10) agreed or strongly agreed that the students were given the opportunity to express their feelings about the pandemic in a safe way and increased their interest in using art to express their feelings.

Students were also asked to share how they felt about the pandemic and lockdowns before the drawing and activities began and how they felt after the drawing and writing activities by choosing as many emotions as applies. The list of emotions included sad, bored, afraid, happy, angry, relaxed, confused, lonely, and excited. An increase in positive feelings (14%) and a decrease in negative feelings (21%) were seen after the drawing and writing activities.



Front Cover of the Childhood Restored book

Comments from participants include:

"What we enjoyed about the project is that when we came back to school, when the schools reopened, and we didn't talk about Covid, and we really didn't give the children a voice. But through this project, the children were able to talk about Covid and their experience of Covid and what it meant to them and their lives. So, from that point of view, it was just really excellent, and we really enjoyed it." [Teacher]

"We were very happy to sponsor this initiative from the NEIC and I'm blown away by the imagination of the students, both in their artwork and their couplets." [Funder]

"I really enjoyed looking at other people's projects, drawing/painting, and meeting the artist." [Student]

4.5.7. Robotic Coding Clubs

The Robotic Coding Clubs is a collaboration with NCI's School of Computing. Participants learn about robotics, programming and electronics with an Mbot, which is a robot that offers opportunity to begin exploring their engineering skills by building them and provides infinite possibilities for students to learn STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

Programme Delivery

- 43 children and their parents participated virtually across 6 groups:
 - 6 laptops were loaned to families without sufficient technology to engage for the duration of the programme.
 - There was increased parental involvement because parents had to supervise and support their children for each session.
 - 20 families attended across 2 online coding events in which children demonstrated their learning by engaging with an online quiz, supported by their parents.
- 54 children participated in person through their schools or afterschools across 4 groups:
 - 43 students and 5 parents participated across 3 in person coding events/challenges.



Robotic Coding Club Photo

Participant Learning and Feedback

Children were assessed on their learning outcomes, their confidence in their coding skills and their interest in STEM at pre- and post-programme surveys. Across the eight weeks of Robotic Coding Club an average of 83.7 % (n=43) children acknowledged an improvement in their understanding of the learning outcomes after each session. Aspirations to attend third level education were high, with 86.36% (n=44) of children reporting post program that they would like to progress to third level education. 90.5 % (n=42) of participants acknowledged that they enjoyed attending coding club and 77 % (n=40) expressed their interest in participating in coding club again. The children also reported a growing level of confidence in their skills throughout the programme, with confidence in computer skills growing by 100% (n=11) across the programme and confidence in coding skills by 53% (n=45). The favourite part of the coding club to most of the students were building the Mbots and making them move using coding.

All parents would recommend the programme to other parents and 95% (n=18) believe that STEM skills are important for their child's future education and career. Majority of parents, 88% (n=15) reported increased desire in helping their child to learn about STEM and reported their child's skills in STEM improved on the programme.

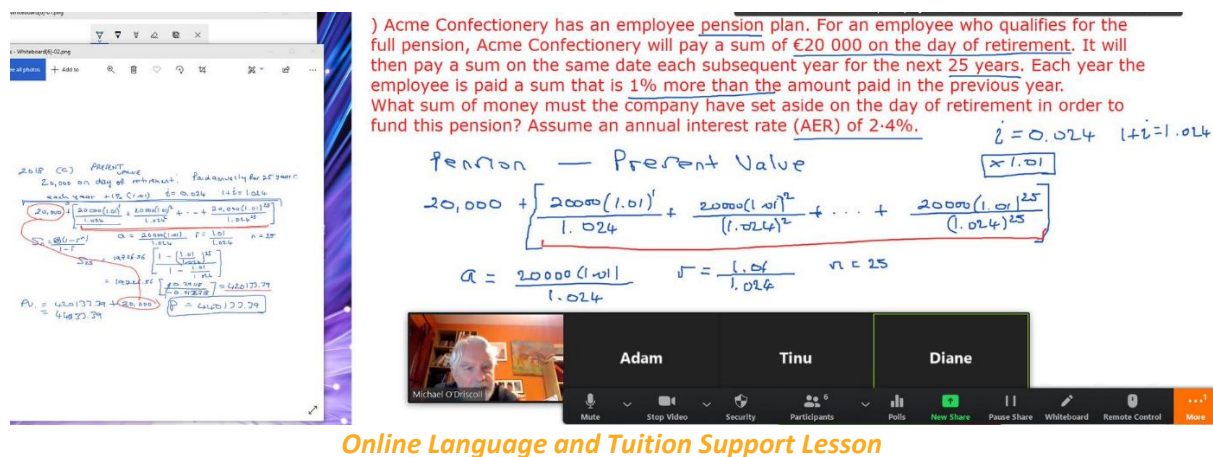
Comments from parents included:

"My favourite part of Coding Club was learning how to solve simple coding solutions, the math related problems, progressing in the basics of the coding language. Quiz, learning terminologies." [Child]

"My child now really likes coding and maybe in the future they will have a career based of coding that they like." [Parent]

4.5.8. Language and Tuition Support

ELI's Language and Tuition Support programmes aim to provide second level students with extra opportunities for learning in a safe and positive environment.



The screenshot shows a video call interface with three participants: Michael O'Driscoll, Adam, and Diane. The main focus is a whiteboard with a math problem and its solution. The problem is: "Acme Confectionery has an employee pension plan. For an employee who qualifies for the full pension, Acme Confectionery will pay a sum of €20 000 on the day of retirement. It will then pay a sum on the same date each subsequent year for the next 25 years. Each year the employee is paid a sum that is 1% more than the amount paid in the previous year. What sum of money must the company have set aside on the day of retirement in order to fund this pension? Assume an annual interest rate (AER) of 2.4%."

The solution on the whiteboard is as follows:

Pension — Present Value

$$20,000 + \frac{20,000(1.01)^1}{1.024} + \frac{20,000(1.01)^2}{(1.024)^2} + \dots + \frac{20,000(1.01)^{25}}{(1.024)^{25}}$$

Handwritten notes include: $i = 0.024$, $1+i = 1.024$, $\times 1.01$, $a = \frac{20,000(1.01)}{1.024}$, $r = \frac{1.01}{1.024}$, and $n = 25$.

Online Language and Tuition Support Lesson

Programme Delivery

- 95 young people participated in language and tuition support sessions, delivered online.
- 14 students enrolled in Maths Leaving Certificate tuition. 3 weekly sessions (2 Ordinary Level and 1 Higher Level) were held across 23 weeks. Attendance fluctuated throughout the year due to Covid restrictions, school closures, however, in general attendance was good and there was an average attendance of 8 students each week.
- 3 weekly Maths sessions (1 Ordinary Level and 2 Higher Level) for Junior Certificate students were run over 23 weeks with an average of 8 students each week and a total of 17 students enrolled.
- 10 students enrolled in Leaving Certificate Irish Tuition Support, which catered to Ordinary Level students. The format was changed last year and shortened to 30-minute oral sessions (6 per week) with 1-2 students at a time, over 14 weeks to prepare students for their Oral examinations, with an average of 7 students in attendance each week.
- 2 students enrolled in Irish Tuition Support for Junior Certificate.

- 2 online Language Cafés were held over Zoom with a total of 39 students in attendance, 1 in Spanish and 1 in Irish.
- 13 students engaged in weekly English-Speaking sessions, running over 8 weeks with an average of 6 students attending each week.

Participant Feedback

Feedback was positive across the support sessions, with 82% (n=18) of students reported improving their skills throughout the programme. Online delivery of the sessions continues to be well received with 82% (n=18) of students reporting that the digital format of the sessions worked well. All teachers (N=3) considered the programme to be an enjoyable experience and a valuable learning opportunity for their students. Furthermore, 86% (n=7) of students reported having a greater interest in learning their targeted language after engaging in the Language Café and the English-Speaking Sessions.

Comments from participants included:

"I've been doing these grinds for 2 years now and can't thank the tutor enough! He always made time for whatever anyone wanted to revise and if there were no suggestions, he was always prepared either something to do! Thank you so much." [Maths Tuition Support Student]

"I have noticed an improvement in the student's capacity for initiating conversation in recent months." [EAL Teacher of English-Speaking Sessions Students]

"Different people asking the different questions." [Language Café student when asked what worked well in the programme]

"Can teach people some English or talk some English." [English Speaking Sessions Student]

4.6. Educational Guidance

The main focus of the Dublin's Inner City Educational Guidance Programmes is on supporting young people, parents and communities' understanding of the education system and the impact of certain decisions such as subject choices on young people's ability to access further education and career opportunities; thereby, ensuring that the children and young people in the area achieve their educational, life and career goals. These programmes, which are developed through careful collaboration with local schools, afterschools, youth and community services, are Educational Guidance; A Day in the Life; NEIC Brighter Futures; Discover University; and Third Level Internships.

Objectives:

- Raise children's and young people's educational and career expectations
- Support young people and their parents to successfully navigate the education system and access interesting career opportunities
- Widen participation in higher education within the Docklands

Educational and Career Guidance	Young People	Parents
Educational Guidance (5th/6th class)	148	0
Educational Guidance Exhibition (secondary)	170	30
A Day in the Life Events	138	0
Discover University (14-17 years)	38	40
Restorative Practice Children and Young People	50	0
Totals	544	70

4.6.1. Educational Guidance Programme

Educational Guidance is a project-based learning career guidance programme for primary (fifth and sixth class) and secondary (first year) students. The programme enables students to explore career aspirations and opportunities and raises awareness among students and their parents of the importance of third level education in the pursuit of certain careers.

Programme Delivery

- 318 students from 8 schools engaged in the programmes.
- 100 students from 3 schools attended a virtual workplace tour of Dublin Fire Brigade.
- 30 parents attended an online information seminar about third level options
- 24 career projects were submitted by 100 students.
- 6 online judging sessions were held with 6 volunteer judges from Glenveagh, Maples and Virtu Financial giving project feedback and announcing the winning project at each session.

Participant Feedback

Students' responses to a post-programme survey (N=7) indicated that the key learning outcomes were achieved. Most students (57%, n=4) reported learning about the level of education needed for different jobs and indicated a developed awareness of how their subject and subject level choices at second level can affect their future educational and career prospects. This learning was echoed in the responses from the teachers with all (N=2) reporting students' increased awareness of the necessity of third level education. Students (71%, n=5) also reported that their knowledge of the wide variety of jobs and career paths available improved. Students enjoyed learning about jobs and workplaces (42%, n=3), working in a group (57%, n=4) and doing the project (57%, n=4). 86% (n=6) of students reported having aspirations to attend third level education.



Educational Guidance Class Group on Tour

Comments from participants included:

“Great programme supporting developing of communication and presentation skills, preparing students for public speaking and delivery of presentations. Provides motivation and enhances communication skills. A fantastic initiative adding real value to students.” [Volunteer]

“The programme was very interactive, and the children really enjoyed collaborating together on it, especially the career projects.” [Teacher]

4.6.2. A Day in the Life

- *A Day in the Life* events were held in November 2021 over 2 sessions.
- 138 secondary school students attended the events from 4 local schools.
- 18 volunteers from organisations such as Virtu Financial, Arthur Cox Law, Glenvegh, McGarrell Reilly and RBC, as well as professionals working in organisations such as Cricket Ireland, the Department of Justice and Threshold participated in the event.
- The events were held online through Zoom and students were assigned to different breakout rooms, where they chatted to a different corporate volunteer for 10-12 minutes about their job, what a day in the life looks like for them and how they got into that line of work.
- 2 additional *A Day in the Life* events were held in June 2022 as part of Discover University with 34 students participating.



Students participating in A Day in the Life event in June 2022

Participant Feedback

All teachers (N=2) agreed that the programme this was an enjoyable experience for the students in their class. They also (100%, N=2) reported that the programme fostered a greater interest in advancing the students education. Most students (69%, n=11) reported knowing more about different types of careers and (50%, n=6) also described feeling more confident when talking to people about their careers. All volunteers (N=8) stated that they would volunteer again and (89%, n=8) where happy that they participated in the ELI volunteer programme.

4.6.3. NEIC Brighter Futures Restorative Practice

In 2016-17, Restorative Practices (RP) was one of the Mulvey Report recommendations to support the North East Inner City (NEIC) community envision and plan for a better future for people in the area. ELI delivers Opening the Door and Relationship Keepers Programmes along with other restorative-focussed activities to support local children and young people to develop a greater sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem, sense of community, empathy, and emotional literacy; improve their communication skills and build mutually respectful relationships with young and old alike.

Programme Delivery

- 50 young people (aged 9-20 years) participated in restorative-focused activities facilitated online, through primary and secondary schools, youth services, corporate organisations and National College of Ireland.
 - 12 young people and 5 youth leaders from 2 youth services (Belvedere YC and Fountain YC) engaged in Opening the Door - Restorative Practice Conversations, in person.
 - 8 young people (TY) from Larkin Community School who trained as 'relationship keepers' in August 2021 to create a sense of connection and belonging within their school community.
 - 35 young people participating in Discover University engaged in Restorative Practice training.
 - 22 young people and 4 school staff engaged in a Student Listening Circle, in person, using a book (The New Girl by Sinéad Moriarty) as a focus – making friends, inclusion, belonging and empathy.



Relationship Keepers training- Larkin Community College

Participant Feedback

Of those participating in Relationship Keepers training, 100% (N=7) agreed or strongly agreed that the training was useful and that the skills learned will support them as a Relationship Keeper in their community. All participants felt they were able to participate in discussions and felt listened to. Following their training majority of participants reported feeling confident being a Relationship Keeper (86%, n=6) and leading in restorative circles (71%, n=5).

Comments from students included:

"There were a lot of different people with different backgrounds, and it was interesting to listen to each of them." [student]

"I think if anyone wants to have a career like the people that were speaking it would give them confidence, I think it was good even if you don't want a career like that." [student]

4.6.4. Discover University

Discover University is a summer programme held in NCI every June that aims to give young people the opportunity to experience a taste of life at NCI and to see college as part of their future.

Programme Delivery

- 38 young people participated in Discover University 2022.
- 8 NCI students were recruited as team leaders to mentor and guide young people through the programme.
- 28 volunteers from 5 local corporate organisations supported ADITL shared career & education experiences, participated as dragons for Dragons Den giving feedback on projects, and judged the final projects.
- Students on the programme participated in talks with NCI Library and Clubs and Socs, events such as A Day in the Life and Restorative practice workshops, drama workshop, attended tours of Hub Spot and Store Street Garda station, also a sports day in Trinity College Dublin funded by Dublin City Council.
- 33 students attended a graduation ceremony and presented their projects, 8 students spoke about their experiences. This event also featured a prizegiving ceremony. 40 parents attended along with other family members and social workers there to support the young people they were involved with.



Discover University- RP session to support relationship building

Participant Feedback

All students (N=33) and their parents (N=10) reported that the programme was an enjoyable experience and would recommend the programme to a friend. Majority of the students (97%, n=32) agreed that it was useful for their future. All students (N=22) and parents (N=10) reported the students having a better understanding of third level education. Most (97%, n=32) students reported being more excited about third level education and said they were more likely to go into third level education. Student's showed strong development in their learning/study skills (97% n=32), ability to work in groups (97% n=32), and communication skills (91%, n=30). All the student's parents (N=10) agreed that the student's social and personal skills, and ability to work with different types of people improved.

Team leaders (100%, N=3) were very positive about their experience, the future benefits and would recommend it to a friend. All agreed (100% n=3) that it developed their leadership, communication, and organisational skills. They (100%, N=3) also reported improvements in their facilitation skills and ability to work with young people. Project leaders (67%, n=2) were also very positive about their experience and would recommend it to a colleague. Lastly, all volunteers (100%, N=6) reported being happy that they volunteered, would volunteer again, and would recommend the experience to a friend.

Comments from participants included:

"I love it being here and gonna miss it but gonna come back next year so congratulations and thank you so much for creating this and making it unforgettable and fabulous!" [Student]

"The benefits of Discover University are that it provides 14-17-year-olds with the experience of going to third-level education, making the process less daunting for them. It can give these students confidence and social skills, and they can make friends in the process, and see learning and third-level education in a more positive light." [Project leader]

"The kids were happy to get into this program. They enjoyed learning with no worry about the exams, meeting new colleagues (they are still going out with the new friends they got), having new experiences. I really enjoyed the idea to keep kids busy over summer with some easy and educative activities." [Parent]

4.7. Capacity Building, Training and Mentoring

Long-term sustainable change requires continued innovation and upskilling. While changes in one family and service is always welcome, it is the collective impact on the community that will ensure that children and young people are growing up in a safe happy learning environment. ELI's aim is to collectively improve outcomes for children, young people and families through the provision of high-quality services. Continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities, which embed learning within services and allow for the dissemination of knowledge among practitioners and parents, is a critical element of ELI's work. Training, peer learning, communities of practice and on-site mentoring from ELI staff support practitioners to improve their practice and successfully manage innovation and change. Training and mentoring are provided in Home Visiting; My Place to Play; Digital Technology; Numeracy; STEM; Literacy; Síolta and Aistear; Restorative Practice; Self-care and Emotional Literacy.

Objectives:

- Empower and support professionals to be competent, confident, collaborative and restorative in their roles.
- Improve the quality of service and learning environments provided by local services and schools through the provision of professional development, mentoring and networking.
- Enhance interagency collaboration and support the development of a shared/Meitheal community-wide consistent approach to service delivery for children, young people and families.
- Improve the educational, life and career outcomes for the children and young people.
- Build a strong, happy, positive and supportive community.

Capacity- Building - Training and Mentoring	Professionals
Early Years Professionals	132
Restorative Practice Getting Started	35
Restorative Practice CPD	214
Restorative Practice Training of Trainers	15
Restorative Practice Summer Course for Teachers	20
ELI Interns	5
Totals	421

4.7.1. Early Years Professionals and RP Self-care

As part of the ABC Programme, there are a number of different CPD and Mentoring opportunities aiming to support practitioners in their role as early years educators and embed best practice within services, including:

- 34 early years educators attending 4 Early Numeracy Working Group meetings (3 online and 1 in person) – reflective space and peer learning opportunity (average of 9 attendees per meeting).
- 30 participants attended 3 Pre-Numeracy Workshops – shared planning for the upcoming numeracy week (10 attendees per workshop).
- 236 numeracy mentoring support meetings were provided to schools and early childhood education care services throughout the year through phone and zoom calls.
- Home Visitors and Group Facilitators completed 402 hours of CPD training.
- 3 Home Visitors completed a QQI Level 6 Certificate in Curriculum and Pedagogical Practice for Early Childhood Home Visiting.
- 57 Early Years Professionals including ELI Home Visitors, ABC nationwide coordinators engaged in 8 online self-care sessions.
- 2 local Home Visitors also engaged in one-to-one self-care support with our Self-Care Coordinator.

Participant Feedback

Feedback from post-training surveys indicated that 90% (n=45) of participants found their relevant training sessions useful, and 86% (n=43) benefited from the training through learning new skills or knowledge that they can use to improve their own practice.

Comments from participants included:

"I found the session great as it really grounds me, and reminds me to take 5 minutes for myself, especially to meditate."

"Reminding me of strategies I had pre Covid to help me to provide self care to minimise burn out."

"Found the break out rooms helpful to share ideas and discuss ways of presenting numeracy week"

"The mediation was very useful, it's something I don't do but would like to be better at. It was interesting listening to the other parents and picking up tips from the facilitator in response to their stories."

4.7.2. NEIC Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice (RP), which is funded by the North East Inner City (NEIC) Task Force and Government's ABC Programme, is an approach to building and maintaining relationships and resolving conflict in a wide range of community organisations, while complementing other approaches, i.e., coaching, mediation, and restorative justice.

Programme Delivery

- 69 different organisations participated in restorative practice programmes.
- 284 professionals, educators and other stakeholders attended RP training, workshops and events.
- 15 professionals continued to engage in Train the Trainer activities, ongoing mentoring and support, and course facilitation, online. 13 support sessions were delivered.
- 35 participants engaged in Getting Started with Restorative Practices training, online, which was delivered by the RP coordinator.
- 20 teachers and principals participated in the Drumcondra Education Summer Course, Restorative Practices for Classrooms and School Communities, in July and August 2021, which was delivered online for the first time.
- 217 professionals engaged in Continued Professional Development, including:
 - 12 professionals (principals, managers, Michael NEIC) attended across 2 Brown Bag Lunches, 1 general and 1 advanced, online.
 - 21 community members and professionals attended across 2 RP Strategy Briefings.
 - 13 professionals attended a workshop on RP and Additional Needs, delivered in collaboration with the Self-Care Coordinator and another RP facilitator online.
 - 8 participants of QQI course in Sports and Recreation attended a workshop on RP and Sport to complement their work and support their volunteering with North Wall CDP.
 - 99 professionals from 3 schools attended individualised CPD training, these sessions were delivered both online and in person.
 - 53 Special Needs Assistants attended RP workshops tailored for their work.
 - 9 professionals engaging with ELI programmes (Childhood Restored and Discover University) engaged in introductory RP workshops.

- 152 mentoring and support visits took place in total — 41 face-to-face, and the remainder using video conferencing platforms, video calls or phone calls.
- 9 fortnightly/monthly virtual community of practice meetings with an average of 3 attendees, from 32 organisations.
- RP coordinator delivered presentation on Creating Restorative Communities - Collecting and Using Data on Restorative Practices at the Restorative Community Development – National Webinar.
- Listening Circle delivered to Dublin City Council staff from across the NEIC in collaboration with NEIC Intercultural Officer during Social Inclusion Week.

Participant Feedback

Majority of participants (85%, n=100) agreed or strongly agreed that the knowledge and skills learned are transferable to their role, and 73% (n=86) reported they are likely or confident in implementing the skills learned into their practice. Both these figures were slightly lower than those of 2020-21 (97% and 91% respectively) and the qualitative feedback indicated that in-person delivery of Restorative trainings is preferable over online delivery. This feedback will be considered for planning of future trainings.

Pre-programme, the majority of participants rated their level of knowledge on Restorative Practices (72%, n=63) as poor, or fair and on completion of their training majority rated (90%, n=37) as good, very good, or excellent. With the most common motivation (63%, n=55) for doing the training to improve their ability to deal with conflict, there was a 10% increase in participants rating their ability at handling conflict as moderately, or very high from 62% at preprogramme to 72% on completion of their training.

Comments from participants included:

"[Restorative practice] is supporting my personal development and self-awareness, which in turn help me both personally and professionally. Through the RP training, I am also learning specific theory that can guide me in my interactions with others, professionally and personally and support higher quality relationships develop."

"[Restorative practice] is giving me the assurance that sometimes difficult conversations may need to be had to move things forward, and the tools to do this. It has built my confidence in looking to use restorative practice to overcome difficult situations where maybe before I might have just got annoyed or walked away."

"[Restorative practice training] has provided a common understanding and language that we can legitimately incorporate into our team, wider team and with our external stakeholders when the opportunities arise. Our work is rooted in restoring relationships, building trust, and 'being heard', the six questions, and the circle techniques gives us a consistent framework that has considerable potential for our service to build."

4.7.3. Third Level Internship

The Third Level Internship programme offers NCI students the opportunity to develop their personal, academic and professional skills, while becoming active in their local community.

Programme Delivery

- 29 applications to the programme in 2021-22, of which 8 were interviewed.
- 5 successful applicants studying Data Analytics (2), Psychology (2) and Early Childhood Education and Care (1).
- 5 Interns assisted in various tasks across multiple programme areas including the delivery of Coding clubs, Language Café events, data monitoring, data analysis, compiling reports and social media analytics.



ELI Intern Yogi Presenting Students with Completion Certificates

Participant Feedback:

Three interns completed an end of year evaluation. All agreed that the internship was rewarding and provided them with meaningful work that helped their career development.

Comments from the interns include:

"The intern programme is an amazing opportunity for college students to gain skills and confidence. The tasks we were given were perfectly suited to each individual, allowing us to apply the knowledge we had learned from our coursework to real life situation. Not to mention the staff at ELI are some of the kindest most welcoming people, they really just want to see everyone succeed. Can't thank the ELI team enough."

"Getting diverse experience, chances to talk with students and parents. Way to develop people skills."

4.8. Corporate Volunteer Programme

ELI's Corporate Volunteer Programme, which began in 2010 with eight volunteers, provides rewarding, diverse volunteering experiences to the staff of ELI's corporate partners. Partners include Irish and multi-national organisations from the finance, technology, construction and legal sectors who are largely based in Dublin's Inner City and IFSC area. The programme gives employees the opportunity to interact directly with children and their families in the community in which they work. The programme offers mutual benefits – allowing corporate staff to enhance their own interpersonal communication skills while simultaneously making a positive difference to the educational life chances of the people in their locality. As can be seen from the table below, volunteers engage in an array of roles across many of ELI's programmes.

Programme Delivery

In 2021-22, 165 (108 corporate; 57 other) volunteers contributed to an array of ELI's programmes. Most of this interaction was online as face-to-face volunteering was not always feasible due to COVID-19 related restrictions throughout the year. By June 2022 volunteers could participate in Discover University in person at NCI. The continued pivot of ELI's volunteering programmes to online delivery demonstrated both the programme's agility as well as the commitment of our corporate partners to the children, young people and families that we serve.

While the number of corporate volunteers has decreased with the advent of virtual volunteering, the quality of interaction and commitment of individual volunteers has been sustained with many participating in programmes throughout the year rather than once off events. Volunteers were pleased to link directly with families, children and young people in their homes, schools and services. It should also be noted the number of volunteers (corporate and otherwise) who make a contribution to ELI's work through our four voluntary committees – ELI Advisory Committee, ELI Development Committee, ELI Research Committee, National Centre Steering Group.



Students having a laugh with volunteer Louise at the English Speaking Sessions

Participant Feedback

Feedback from our corporate volunteers was positive across all programmes with 97% (n=30) reporting being happy that they volunteered and 100% (N=31) would volunteer again. Furthermore, 100% (N=31) felt well supported by ELI staff and 90% (n=30) would recommend the experience to a colleague.

Comments from volunteers included:

“Very positive impact and all volunteers who take part in the programme really enjoyed.”

“What worked well was volunteers were well briefed ahead of the programme. But as this was a pilot programme (with relatively older students) it was challenging to know how the evenings would work.”

“The open communication with the staff at ELI was great. They were always available to text or Whatsapp.”

Programme	Number of Volunteers	Lead Corporate Partner
Mentoring and Support		
Virtual Breakfast Event	9	Citco, State Street
Development Committee	4	Citco, Deloitte, McGarrell-Reilly, State Street
ELI Advisory Committee	1	McGarrell Reilly
Corporate Advisors (NCI School of Computing)	3	Central Bank, State Street
Volunteering Link People in Companies	17	Arthur Cox, basis.point, BNP Paribas, Central Bank, Citco, Deloitte, FMS, GAM, Glenveagh, HubSpot, KPMG, Maples, McGarrell-Reilly, Philip Lee, RBC, State Street, Virtu Financial
Restorative Practice Strategy Briefing	2	Arthur Cox
Skills Sharing	2	Deloitte
Afterschool and Community Programmes		
Storytelling (Zoom Ahead with Books)	9	Citco, State Street, FMS
STEM Play & Learn	3	Arthur Cox
STEM Family Learning	4	Central Bank, GAM, KPMG
ParentChild+ Graduates Phone calls	4	Arthur Cox, Philip Lee, Virtu Financial
Primary Level Programmes		
Educational Guidance	4	Glenveagh, Maples, Virtu Financial
Second Level Programmes		
Discover University	25	Arthur Cox, Deloitte, Glenveagh, KPMG, Maples
A Day in the Life Careers Events	9	Virtu Financial, Arthur Cox, Glenveagh, McGarrell Reilly, RBC
Language Cafés	5	Central Bank, Deloitte, Maples State Street
Educational Guidance	2	Glenveagh
English Speaking Sessions	5	Arthur Cox, Basis.point, GAM, KPMG
A Day in the Life, Language Café, Discover University, Skills Sharing, Committees and Steering Groups	57	Volunteers from other companies/organisations
Total	165	

5. LOOKING FORWARD 2022-23

Described as ambitious and innovative in both the Irish and international context, ELI will continue in 2022-23 to provide pioneering inclusive and diverse programmes that address the needs of the children, families, and local organisations in Dublin's Inner City and across Ireland. As in other years, our plans are flexible and multi-layered, enabling us to adapt as needed to ensure that vulnerable children and families across Ireland are supported during these uncertain times.

Vision, Mission, and Ethos permeates all aspects of ELI. We remain committed to the NCI's mission of changing lives through education and partnering with others to ensure that at-risk children across Ireland have the social, language, literacy, and numeracy skills they need for success in education, employment, and life. Community Action Research (research defined, undertaken, analysed, and evidenced by members of the community) continues to be at the core of our programme development, knowledge management and planning processes. Ownership, responsibility, integrity, and commitment remain core principles with creativity, innovation, and experimentation at the heart of everything we do.

5.1. Strategic Innovation

ELI's 2020-25 Strategy has two key priorities:

1. Sustain and evolve ELI's Dublin's Inner City Programmes.
2. Advance as a National Centre in Parent Child Home Visiting and Family Engagement-

Balancing forward thinking strategic planning with the day-to-day operations in Dublin's Inner City and across Ireland will continue in 2022-23 with ELI and their partners prioritising support for at-risk children and their families to successfully navigate and thrive through these challenging times. The division of governance, resources and activities between Dublin's Inner City and National activities will continue with the appointment of a second Assistant Director bringing clarity and energy to the process.

Dublin's Inner City, a sustainable proven model, will continue to deliver universal plus, wrap around, holistic integrated support for children, parents, and families through high-quality Home Visiting, Parent Support, Literacies and Educational Guidance Programme which. Fidelity to ELI's original vision and NCI's Governing Body's commitment to its local community remains key.

The National Centre is in its infancy with much work needed to define its identity, structures and processes. Its priority is to deliver on ELI's mission to bring home visiting and family engagement programmes to every community in Ireland, thereby ensuring that the 12,400 children born into poverty each year get the support they need to thrive in education, career and life.

The development of National Model of Home Visiting as part of the First 5 | A Government Strategy For Babies & Young Children is an important policy initiative for ELI. Outlining the Government's vision for home visiting, it will shape both ELI's strategy and work at both local and national level for the foreseeable future.

NCI's 2022-27 Institutional Strategic Plan has just been developed and work is underway on the implementation roadmap. Aligning and integrating both strategies will be an ongoing priority for ELI. A key objective for NCI is to continue to provide transformative 'cradle to college' education services through ELI, both locally to Dublin's Inner City and nationally, through NCI's ELI centre of excellence.

5.2. Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning

NCI's Governing Body along with the executive and management teams meet regularly to discuss risk and contingency plans, which includes dealing with COVID-19. ELI is addressed at these meetings and is included in NCI's general risk register. Regular risk reviews and contingency planning continue with the issues arising being discussed and addressed at NCI's Risk and COVID Committees, Governing Body, ELI Advisory Committees and Steering Groups.

5.3. Operational Priorities

Delivering high quality universal plus parent child support services remains a priority as is our aim of extending these programmes beyond Dublin's Inner City to local community organisations across Ireland. Long-term sustainable partnerships with key agencies such as Tusla and HSE at both national and local level is key to this work.

Direct programme delivery remains the key focus of Dublin's Inner City with its innovative portfolio of Home Visiting and Family/Community engagement programmes. Oversight of its activities to ensure that it is delivering on its original mission and evolving to meet the emerging needs of children, parents and services in Dublin's Inner City is a key task of the ABC Steering Group.

Established in January 2020, the National Centre is at a similar stage to Dublin's Inner City in 2008. Led by the National Steering Group, work will continue on defining its national ambition, identity and focus. Supporting other organisations to deliver ELI's Home Visiting and Family Engagement programmes is core to the work of the National Centre.

At present, a hybrid approach is being taken to all ELI activities with face-to-face and indoor delivery guided by Government, HSE and NCI Guidelines, risk of infections and fear of contagion. Retaining virtual delivery will enable us to adapt as required.

Increased complexity with the growth of Dublin's Inner City and the development of the National Centre has been challenging. Continuing to upskill our dedicated staff, volunteers and partners to negotiate change at ELI and societal level while delivering high quality responsive trauma-informed programmes remains pivotal to improved outcomes for at-risk children and families.

5.4. Changing Children's Lives through Partnership

ELI's network of partners bring a unique added value to the work. Together we do so much more to support at-risk children and families across Ireland. We would like to thank our wonderful partners for their sustained support.

With another challenging year ahead in 2022-23, we are confident that, with support from our fantastic partners, we can continue to provide critical supports during a historical and life-changing era and help thousands of children achieve their long-term educational, career and life dreams.