

# Early Learning Initiative

## National College of Ireland



Volume 2, Issue 2, April 2013

## Going Forward: Supporting parents, communities and schools in the education of children

Monday 11th February 2013 marked a new era for ELI with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD launching the Evaluation Report by the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College. This evaluation, which was funded by Pobal Dormant Accounts Funds- Flagship Projects, found that ELI had enhanced the educational outcomes for children and their families, with parents now more involved in their children's education. We hope that the evaluation report will help inform national policy and will be used as a source of information for practitioners and policy makers.

Over the next five years, we plan to continue to grow and develop. To do this, ELI will need the on-going interest, commitment and participation of local community and corporate leaders. The role our partners play in supporting children and families in the Docklands to succeed in education cannot be underestimated.

As a new phase for ELI begins, we are delighted to welcome on board additional prominent corporate partners, who are committed to building a high-achieving, supportive and cohesive Docklands community.

We are very grateful to the volunteers from these companies. By sharing their knowledge and skills, they are supporting the young people from the community to achieve their educational and career goals.

We are excited about the future and look forward to continuing to work with you all to build a better future for children and families in the Docklands.



Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, pictured with pre-schoolers from an early years centre in the Docklands, at the launch of the Evaluation Report by the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College at NCI.

### Early Learning Initiative

**13th - 17th May**  
NEYAI Early Numeracy Activity Week

**23rd May**  
Stretch to Learn Primary Level Awards

**7th June**  
PCHP Graduation Event

**20th - 26th June**  
Discover University programme

### Upcoming Events

Find Us On  
**facebook** 

The Early Learning Initiative is pleased to announce that we have recently joined Facebook. Join us on Facebook and find out more about our programmes and keep updated with our latest news and events. Make sure to like and share!



Above: Docklands pre-schoolers enjoying their early numeracy activities as part of the NEYAI Early Numeracy project.

## Working together to improve our children's numeracy skills

*The NEYAI Docklands Early Numeracy Project has been running for almost two years now. We all look forward to the termly Docklands Early Numeracy Activity Week, when lots of exciting activities take place in our community. Have you ever wondered who comes up with all of the amazing activities for Docklands Early Numeracy Week?*

The Docklands Early Numeracy Project Working Group have been working together since June 2011, planning activities and events to promote the teaching and learning of early numeracy in the Docklands. The group is made up of early educators from nine local early years services, together with primary school teachers from infant classes in six Docklands schools and one After School Service.

This group has gone from strength to strength and has successfully highlighted that maths is all around us and is part of so many activities we do every day.

The working group meets four times per year. These meetings are a hive of activity and the buzz of enthusiasm about the Early Numeracy work in the Docklands is inspiring. The group shares a wealth of experience, and a treasure trove of ideas for making learning about early numeracy fun and interesting. An important aspect of their planning is making links with early numeracy in the home, with a focus on sharing ideas about how parents can support their children's learning. One of the key benefits of the working group is that early years settings and primary schools are creating and building upon existing links and networks, providing opportunities for continuity and progression in Early Numeracy learning experiences for children transitioning from ECCE settings to primary school.

*The NEYAI Docklands Early Numeracy Project is a real community effort and the Early Learning Initiative is very proud of the success of the team work involved. We hope you enjoy taking part in all of the activities we have prepared for you!*

## Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP)

The Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) is a "learning through play experience" for parents and their preschool children in the Docklands. It is designed to strengthen the natural bond between parent and child and to encourage a love of learning. It also helps prepare children for later success in school.

Since September 2011, we have introduced the Child Behavioural Trait (CBT) form as a way of collecting information about the progress of each child in our programme. Each child is unique and they all learn at a different pace. The CBT is a guide to help the parents and Home Visitors to work together to focus on and encourage the child's learning journey.

We would like to say a big thank you to all of our parents who helped us complete these forms.

If you would like to enquire about a place in PCHP in September 2013, please contact us on 01 4498604. Please note that places are limited and there may be a waiting list.



Above: Home visitors with the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) at NCI

*Corporate support is fundamental to our success. We wish to thank all of our socially-minded corporate supporters who play such an active role in the advancement of the ELI.*

**Deloitte.** IRISH FERRIES



THE IRELAND FUNDS  
PROMISING IRELAND  
CAMPAIGN



**MCCANN FITZGERALD**

**The Community  
Foundation for Ireland**



**NEYAI** National Early Years  
Access Initiative  
Promoting Better Outcomes for Children & Families



For more information on any of the Early Learning Initiative's programme please contact us on (01) 449 8618/635, Web: [www.ncirl.ie/eli](http://www.ncirl.ie/eli), or drop in to the college



## Planning for the Future Together

Pilot, Fashion Designer, Journalist, Accountant....just some of the careers that were on display at the Primary Education Guidance Exhibition at NCI, on Wednesday 27th February.

The projects from 5th and 6th class in the Docklands were the end product of a wider Education Guidance programme the children had been working on since November. Developed by Stretch to Learn in collaboration with the primary schools, it includes classroom lessons, group-work, and classroom visits from third-level students and volunteers from the business community.

Raising children and young people's educational and career aspirations is a key focus of the ELI and is in line with the mission of the NCI in the Docklands.

Well done to all of the children and their teachers, for the time and dedication they all put into the project. All who attended the event were impressed with the standard of work on display.

We were delighted to also have a large group of corporate volunteers from our partner organisations involved as 'Judges' at the event, to provide valuable feedback to the children on their work.

We look forward to continuing to work together in the Docklands to ensure that the children achieve their potential in the future!



Students from Docklands primary schools presenting their projects to Judges from local companies, at the Education Guidance Exhibition.

## NCI Table Quiz Challenge

Eleven teams representing 4th class in five schools across the Docklands competed at this annual event. We were delighted that staff from law firm McCann FitzGerald joined us as partners for this project. Volunteers visited the classes to help the children practice in advance and the team took on the task of organising the final event at NCI, playing the roles of QuizMaster and Scorekeeper, setting the questions and arranging the prizes. Over fifty parents and families from the Docklands came along to support the teams and there was a fantastic atmosphere on the night!

The Table Quiz is one of NCI's Primary Challenges, designed to encourage children in 2nd, 3rd and 4th class to develop their literacy, numeracy and general knowledge skills while taking part in fun activities.

Our next Primary Challenge will be a Monopoly event for 3rd class in May. Best of luck to all those practising at the moment in preparation.



Above: Pictured at the 2013 NCI Table Quiz Challenge is winning team 'The Mojo Men' from 4th class, St Patrick's Boys NS, Ringsend.



STATE STREET





## My Learning Journey

In September 2012 I began a new chapter of my learning journey and started a part-time Degree course in Early Childhood Teaching and Learning at NUI Maynooth.

It has been a long road for me. After my Leaving Certificate I did some initial training in nursery nursing and worked for a number of years in various types of childcare services. After having my own family I was keen to continue working but also to continue my training, and I began a FETAC Level 5 course while working in a community crèche. While it was a balancing act at times, I completed the course and then did my FETAC Level 6 training in Childcare Supervision.

During this time, I was also involved in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) with the ELI, together with my colleagues working in Little Treasures. We are working towards a Síolta Quality Award, which will highlight the hard work and commitment involved in working in an early childhood setting. Through my involvement with the ELI, I also got the opportunity to do a study trip to Scotland with a group of Irish early years professionals. All of the others had a Degree and I decided that I was ready to get my educational journey back on track. I applied to NUI Maynooth and after a long process was accepted on to the course. It is part-time one night a week, one Saturday once a month and a block week in the Autumn for three years. There is no doubt that it is very challenging, but now that I am on the road, I am so excited about where this journey will take me.

Although I realise that having a Degree doesn't make you a good childcare worker, I think good training certainly shows in the staff and I look forward to seeing the impact on the children and families in the centre.

### Cathy Steenson

Childcare Manager, Little Treasures, Community Crèche, North Wall

.....

### If you are interested in returning to education or training, Regina Dunne, Education and Training Advisor at NCI, has a few key hints and tips:

- A good starting point is to get some independent advice. Regina recommended the CDVEC Adult Education Career Guidance Service which is a free one-to-one service and available to people seeking advice on further education.

If you wish to do your own research, the following are some good places to start:

- Local Job Centre
- FÁS Centre
- Local Partnership or Community Development Project
- Local Library
- Schools and Colleges offering full-time and part-time courses
- Education Fairs such as Higher Options or Career Zoo where you can meet all of the providers at the same time.

Websites:

- <http://www.qualifax.ie>
- <http://www.nightcourses.com>
- <http://www.aontas.com>
- <http://www.studentfinance.ie>

For adults interested in returning to full-time higher education, each university or college has a Mature Student Access Scheme for people aged 23 years and above. You need to contact the colleges individually to find out more.

The government has also funded a number of college courses specifically targeted at job growth areas in the economy, and the courses are free for unemployed people. For more information, check out <http://www.springboardcourses.ie>.

So whether you want to learn a new skill or train for a new job, take a chance and try it, you never know where it might take you!