

# Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland



National  
College of  
Ireland

60<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary  
1951 - 2011

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## Early Numeracy Project- National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI)

In the previous newsletter, we were delighted to share the good news that ELI had got funding from NEYAI to develop a programme to improve children's early numeracy skills (0-6 years). We are now busy planning an exciting programme of early numeracy events and activities.

### What is Early Numeracy?

We often think of Numeracy as numbers and counting, addition and subtraction, but it is so much more. The recently published National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy says numeracy is 'the ability to use mathematical language and skills to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day living'. In the Early Years, this means helping your child to develop an understanding of concepts such as shape, space and position, measures, patterns, and doing activities like matching and sorting.

### What NEYAI activities can I take part in?

We are looking forward to working with children, parents, ECCE practitioners, and the wider community. Children will have the opportunity to take part in a variety of exciting early numeracy activities: at home with the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP), at Toddler Group sessions, in early years settings and primary schools. ECCE practitioners in a number of Docklands settings will be doing professional development activities related to Early Numeracy (linked with the Síolta and Aistear Frameworks). We will also run a series of workshops for parents and families to support the parent's role as primary educator. Look out for advertisements in your local early years settings, or check out our website: <http://www.ncirl.ie/ELI/>.



Pre-schoolers from Docklands exploring shape and space during their play session at NCI



Above: Aaron Connolly from St Laurence O'Toole's CBS with his father Declan Fallon at the Stretch to Learn Primary Awards Event in May 2011



## Have you heard about Síolta and Aistear?

Síolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE). This framework is designed to support and guide ECCE practitioner's work in developing consistent, high quality practice in their settings. The information is also of value to parents and families, and will support them in their role as the primary educators of their children. Check out Síolta online: [www.siolta.ie](http://www.siolta.ie)

Aistear is the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. It contains information for parents and practitioners on the types of learning and development that are important for children in their early years, and offers ideas and suggestions for challenging and enjoyable learning experiences. Aistear can be used in children's own homes, childminding settings, crèches & playgroups, pre-schools, naíonraí, and in infant classes in primary and special schools.

Aistear is available online:  
<http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/>

Nine Early years settings in the Docklands are working with ELI on a professional development programme that focuses on delivering a high quality care and education service to children and families. The Síolta and Aistear frameworks underpin this programme.

For further information, please contact Aoife O'Gorman  
email: [aoife.ogorman@ncirl.ie](mailto:aoife.ogorman@ncirl.ie) Tel: 01-4498635.



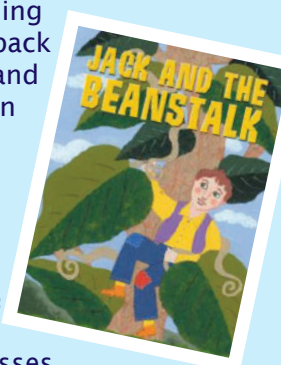
This summer, National College of Ireland held its annual Discover University programme, to give secondary school students the opportunity to experience life in college.

35 young people aged between 14 and 17 years old, from Docklands and other areas across Dublin took part.

They sampled modules from NCI's core subjects of Business Studies, HR, Marketing, Multimedia and Computing, and spent time working on a group project looking at issues students face when thinking about going to college. They also took part in a range of fun extra-curricular activities ranging from visits to innovative companies in Docklands, to drama and sport.

## Fe, fi, fo, fum...

Yes, Storytelling sessions are back this Autumn and are better than ever as part of ELI's NEYAI Numeracy Project. This year we are extending the sessions to the Infant Classes of the Docklands Primary Schools. September's Storytelling sessions will be based on the classic children's fairy-tale of Jack and the Beanstalk. We will be using positional language (Under, Over, On, Beside) as it is the part of early numeracy we are focusing on this term. Sessions will take place in September and October so contact your local school or early years setting for further details.



## Parents Workshops

Do you want to help support your child's numeracy skills? Not sure where to start? Don't worry, we've got it covered! As part of our NEYAI Numeracy project, the ELI will be running Parents Workshops in your local area in November. These workshops are short sessions to give parents tips and ideas on numeracy related activities to help their child's learning. The workshops will be linked to what teachers and ECCE staff do in school and this term will be about positional language. And the best part is, you don't have to be a maths wiz to attend! Keep an eye out at your local school or early years setting for further details!

Numbers!

$$3+9=12$$



## What is positional language?

Positional words are the words we use to describe where things are, like **Up, Down, Under, Over, Behind, In Front and Beside**.

Up is often a small child's first word. They stretch their arms **Up** to the parent to let them know they want to be lifted. The word **Down** is often next, as the child wiggles their legs to be put down again. These words will be followed by more complicated positional words as the child's language develops.

Most books for early readers use these words but we as adults might not even notice. *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill is a favourite of many pre-schoolers. It contains very good positional language – the bear is **Behind** the door, the snake is **Inside** the clock, and the lion is **Under** the stairs. By using these words whenever possible, children will begin to understand the concepts.

The Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) highlights these words when modelling for parents ways to read and talk with children. By using positional language and adding in other new words, this can help children's language skills to develop. If a child asks – **where shoes?** – the adult could answer – your shoes are **In** the cupboard.

These are just some ways that you can help children to learn new language, while also introducing them to early numeracy concepts.

## Toddler Groups

The Spórt is Spraoi Toddler Groups will be starting up again from 21st October in Ringsend and East Wall. In this group we focus on positive and supportive interactions between children and adults and children and children. This helps to develop the child's social skills, positive wellbeing and learning.

**East Wall:** On Friday mornings in Sean O' Casey Community Centre

**Ringsend:** On Friday mornings in Ringsend and Irishtown Community Centre.

For more information please contact  
Catriona Flood,  
Project Coordinator  
Tel: 01 4498544 or  
email: [catriona.flood@ncirl.ie](mailto:catriona.flood@ncirl.ie)



Toddlers from Docklands engaged in early numeracy play with cardboard boxes and wooden bricks!

## Parents Together Community Course

The Parents Together Community Course focuses on positive interactions between adult and child through positive praise and positive discipline. It encourages Parents to build strong relationships with their children and use positive discipline in order to teach children rules.

Keep your eyes peeled for Parents Together Community Courses running in your local school or Childcare Centre.

One student commented on her experience: "It is good to meet new people and experience new things. Visiting the companies and experiencing the social side of college during our breaks was also good". The programme ran between Thursday 23th of June and Wednesday 29th June.

For more information please contact  
Brigina Crowe on 01 4498618  
or email [bcrowe@ncirl.ie](mailto:bcrowe@ncirl.ie).



Participants from Discover University 2011 with Lord Mayor of Dublin Andrew Montague at the Project Showcase Event which marked the end of the week long programme at NCI



## Launch of Evaluation of CPD Programme

On the 30th May, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs launched the report by Trinity College Children's Research Centre, entitled Evaluation of the Early Learning Initiative's Continuous Professional Development Programme in the Community Childcare Settings in the Dublin Docklands.

The report, funded by Pobal Dormant Account Funds – Flagship Projects, examines the implementation of ELI's Pen Green Parental Involvement in Children's Learning programme in early years settings in the Docklands.

You can see the report online:

<http://www.tcd.ie/childrensresearchcentre/assets/pdf/PublicationsDevelopingEarlyYearsProfessionalism.pdf>



Ms Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs takes a moment to read a story with children from Docklands, at the Evaluation Report Launch in May 2011.



ECCE workers from Docklands who were involved in the programme and who attended the Evaluation Report Launch in May 2011

## Tuition Support

We know that Maths is still a big concern for many students studying for their exams in school, with many reporting that they are struggling and need extra help.

NCI is continuing to offer some tuition support for students doing their Junior and Leaving certificates in the Docklands. The programmes range from group based revision courses to one-to-one support from NCI student volunteers. These services take place in various community centres in Docklands as well as in the NCI Campus.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Brigina Crowe Tel: 01 4498618. Places are extremely limited, so cannot be guaranteed. The programme is free of charge.



Nathan Ward, a student in CBS Westland Row who received a Stretch to Learn Award at the Second Level Awards Event in May 2011, pictured with his parents Bernie Ward and Gareth McMahon. The Stretch to Learn Award Scheme recognises children and families who are committed to education.

The awards are given in the following categories; Communication, Persistence, Listening, Friendship and Academic Excellence. The scheme will be running in the schools again this year and we look forward to seeing more winning students and their families at the Awards Night in NCI in May 2012!