

Newsletter



Early Learning Initiative
National College of Ireland

EMBRACING CHANGE

Who would have thought that so quickly after welcoming in a new decade, we would see us all having to rise to the collective challenge to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. We, in ELI, are so proud of the efforts that the local community has made to embrace change and support each other through these times.

ELI has been working hard to adapt to new ways of working while continuing to ensure that children, young people and their parents continue to have access to the support they need to achieve their educational, career and life goals. Learning to embrace change has ensured that we remain creative with how we involve children, young people, and families in ELI programmes.

Our Home Visiting Team have continued to provide home visits over the phone and through video calls with parents and children, with everyone enjoying the continued opportunities to engage in books and toys together. These exceptional times have once again shown us all how parents are their child's first and best teacher.

Social media has shown its value in providing a platform where we can share resources but also as a place where we can connect with each other in times where we need to stay apart. We hope you have enjoyed the activities and links we have been sharing. We know that everyone has been doing their best to provide a positive home learning environment for their children so we hope that these activities have been a resource library for families, where activities can be chosen to suit their needs and families can concentrate on what they enjoy doing together.

Self-care has also been more important than ever. It is vital that everyone in the family has a chance to take a breath and focus on themselves. We have some more self-care ideas in this newsletter that we hope parents will take the time to reflect on and enjoy. To take care of those around us, we need to make sure that we also take of ourselves.

For ELI, we would like to thank corporate organisations for reaching out and continuing to support families when they too find themselves in challenging circumstances. And thank you also to other local community and statutory organisations for coming together for the greater good of all of our communities. Embracing change in the face of adversity will prepare our children and young people for the successful futures that lie ahead of them.



To keep in touch with us and see suggested activities, videos and tips for all ages, and access to online groups please Follow, Like & Share us on.

 www.facebook.com/earlylearninginitiative
 Twitter: @ELI_Docklands
 Instagram: @earlylearninginitiative
 LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/early-learning-initiative

EMBRACING CHANGE - MY PLACE TO PLAY

As parents you are your child's first and best teacher. From birth, children develop a sense of who they are; relationships with family members, other adults and children play a key role in building their identities and personalities. Change can be hard for us all but especially babies. They need a sense of normality within their day with set times for fun activities. Our 'My Place to Play' programme offers guidance and support so parents can help their child get the best foundation for lifelong learning. In these times of change if your baby has a familiar place to play e.g. the same mat with parents giving them their full attention away from distraction for play and quality interactions, both the baby and parent will benefit.



PARENT AND CHILD GROUPS

Our Parent and Child groups connect people across the community both North & South side and offer children a wonderful opportunity to learn through play! We are always delighted to welcome mothers, fathers, grandparents and family members to our groups.

As the current Covid19 restrictions have put our physical groups on hold, we have been getting creative and looking at other ways to continue supporting parents, children and families. Keep an eye on our social media for information on new online group sessions including Storytelling & Song-time as well as Mammy & Baby Fitness online classes and Baby & Toddler Yoga. We will even have Family Yoga sessions at the weekend for everyone to get involved. So whether you're busy with more people at home at the moment than normal, or if things are a bit quieter than usual, there is something to accommodate everyone in the family.

Check our Facebook page <https://m.facebook.com/earlylearninginitiative/> for information on how to access the links to all online groups. Don't worry, this is new to all of us so we can learn together!



ZOOM AHEAD WITH BOOKS

ENCOURAGES CHILDREN TO ENJOY BOOKS AND READING FOR FUN!

Thanks to our volunteers from Central Bank, Citco, BNP Paribas and FMS who were book buddies for children in a local afterschool service in November and December 2019 and again from February 2020. Each week, the children and their book buddy read lots of stories, talked and drew pictures together. A final exhibition of artwork was held at Central Bank in January and was a lovely celebration of the project.

Thank you to the children, staff and parents from the CDETB Foundations Afterschool for your commitment to the project, for working so closely with ELI and being so welcoming to the volunteers.

Zoom Ahead with Books was underway for families in local primary schools just before the Covid-19 school closures and we are delighted that lots of families are able to continue using their packs at home and continue to read, talk and draw together during this challenging time.



ELI CODING CLUB

Thanks to our volunteers from Deloitte, McCann FitzGerald, Central Bank and RBC who volunteer with children in the local primary schools, afterschool services and youth services from October-December 2019 and from February 2020, for their commitment to the coding club programme.

Volunteers attend the services once a week to support the children and the facilitation of the programme.

The ELI coding club is designed to encourage children to learn STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) through a range of activities.

ELI are continuing to find new and innovative ways to support all involved in our programme, we can continue to code in our new learning environment as it is a fun and enjoyable experience for all the family to engage with.



EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE SECOND-LEVEL



The transition from primary to secondary school is a time full of changes that can sometimes be stressful for all involved. Students are often moving to a school away from their friends and farther from home and must adapt to a new, more demanding school environment. They are expected to become independent learners, develop their critical thinking skills and work effectively in groups, this can be a daunting prospect!

Our educational Guidance programme is funded by the NEIC and run by ELI for first year students to learn about jobs and workplaces, as well as exploring their own skills and talents. Lessons are designed to help students to develop various skills that are vital for secondary school, such as critical thinking, learning and research skills and social and communication skills.

There are also various opportunities to interact with corporate volunteers in order to learn about a variety of careers and industry sectors, as well as raise their confidence in giving presentations and engaging with adults. At the end of the programme, students display research projects carried out on a career of their choice.

Students from Larkin Community College, Belvedere Youth Club, Mount Carmel Secondary School and Marino College Fairview took part this year and presented their projects to corporate judges in the offices of Citco Fund Services in March. Huge congratulations to all the students and teachers for their hard work, and a big thank you to everyone involved in making this programme happen!

SUPPORTING YOURSELF THROUGH CHANGES IN LIFE

Change is one of the givens in life, so it helps when we're able to adopt ways of being that support us to manage them well. Some changes are more welcomed than others, such as your baby sleeping through the night! Then there are those changes that cause mixed feelings, such as becoming a parent or starting a new job! It's the changes that evoke strong negative feelings like sadness, anxiety, fear, anger that are more difficult to acknowledge and accept, that can result in engaging in negative coping strategies.

Here are 5 key ways to help you manage changes in your life:

1. **Acknowledgement/Acceptance:** Acknowledging that things are changing is possibly the most important step in facing change in a healthy way. It facilitates moving toward a place of acceptance and helps you channel your energy toward looking at how best you can move forward, rather than fighting the change.
2. **Recognising & naming feelings:** It's important to tune into the feelings you're experiencing about the change. Through being in touch with how you're feeling, you can better identify what needs you may have and explore how you can meet them. The following two points are ways in which you could meet those needs.
3. **Support:** This follows on from the last tip about identifying your needs. It is okay to ask for help; reaching out and talking to a friend/partner/confidant or if necessary - a mental health professional, who can offer you support during this time.
4. **Daily Routine:** Keep your daily routine as unchanged as possible. The more change that's happening, the more important it is to stick to your regular schedule – as much as is possible. This helps you to continue to have some certainty in your life, even if there is change happening in other areas. Meal times or a set time to walk the dog/go for a walk, act as an anchor for both you and your family and a reminder that some things are still the same.
5. **Exercise:** Keeping up regular exercise could be a part of "keeping up your regular routine". If exercise isn't currently part of your routine, try adding it. It can be something as simple as going for a walk.



Sonya Goulding
ELI Coordinator for Restorative Parenting, Emotional Literacy and Wellbeing Programmes



THANK YOU

Corporate, government and individual support is fundamental to our success.

We wish to thank all of our socially minded corporate, government and individual supporters, including Colin and Nikki Ryan, Joseph E. Corcoran and Keith Ennis, who play such an active role in the advancement of ELI.

The Area Based Childhood Programme

