

Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland



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Welcome from the New NCI President

As a parent of three young adults I know that there is nothing in this world more fulfilling than parenting. I have LOVED every single stage in the development of our three children from new born to toddler to school and now university and adulthood. But there is nothing quite like the wonder and curiosity of a toddler as they learn about their world; and no better time to start that journey together than when they are young. I am convinced that learning together at that young age has huge benefits for parents' relationships with their children and for supporting and encouraging them in their learning and development right through to adulthood.

The work of the ELI through the Early Learning and Stretch to Learn initiatives at NCI has given parents the tools and confidence to enjoy that most fulfilling of roles in life and so I'd urge anyone who'd like to learn more about how to support their child's learning and development to come along and start the journey with us.

Dr Philip Matthews
President



Supporting your child from Crèche/ Home to School



Rebecca O'Reardon, Participant of PCHP

Starting school is a milestone for children and it is important that they are properly prepared. It can be a difficult time for both you and your child but there are a few things you can do to ease the pain and ensure that they are ready:

- Take your child to visit the school, show them the junior classroom, and introduce them to the teacher
- If possible introduce your child to another child who will be in their class. It is good to have a friendly face when they start
- Put their names on their things so that they can find them easily
- Encourage your child to do things independently, like getting dressed on their own. Praise the child's efforts and don't criticise if they are not exactly right
- Make sure they can manage their lunch on their own - for example can they open their juice box, or peel an orange
- On the first day, try to be positive and keep control of your own emotions and tell your child you will be back to collect them.

For more hints and tips to help your child starting school go to <http://www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/Title,12369,en.php>

US to Docklands

- the story of PCHP coming to Dublin

Another of our programmes is the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP), a home visiting programme from the United States, which helps preschoolers get ready for Primary School.

Now in its 3rd year in the Docklands, it was officially launched in January 2010 by Training Director Michele Morrison, PCHP New York. She was delighted to give it the official stamp of approval as the first Irish site.

Bringing the programme to the Docklands required some careful planning and we are very grateful to the first families who volunteered to join us on this journey.

Perhaps the biggest stumbling block was trying to explain the 'no tea' policy of PCHP. The tea culture in Ireland is seen as a welcoming gesture in every home and the Home Visitors didn't want to look unfriendly. Parents understood when it was explained that the Home Visitors were in their house for a short period, with a very specific job to do. It meant that they didn't have to worry about milk, biscuits and clean cups. It also helped them see the home visitors as professionals.

PCHP has now extended out to the Canal Communities Partnership area and there is interest from areas around Ireland looking to set up a programme in their community.



The Home Visitors working in the Docklands with the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP)

Discover  national college of ireland



Left: Kelly Byrne, Julia Gorsova and Carlos Donavan, participants from the Discover University programme 2009

The **Discover University** programme at NCI is a summer course for young people aged 14-17 years interested in finding out about life in college. They get the chance to try a range of the subjects such as Business, Multimedia and Community Studies, as well as activities like drama, sports, and company visits.

Places are very limited, but for further information, contact Brigina Crowe on 01 4498618.

Education Guidance Primary to Second Level

The ELI wants to support all of the children in the Docklands to fulfil their full potential and go on to third level education.

This year we are doing a pilot project in 5th and 6th class in the primary schools to help children to start thinking about all different types of jobs they could do when they are older.

At the moment the children are doing some research projects in their community talking to people about secondary school and college.

We will be holding an Exhibition at the NCI on June 17th where you can come and see the results of the children's projects.

If you are interested in finding out more about how to support children on their journey to college, check out the following websites:

www.cao.ie
www.qualifax.ie www.gotocollege.ie
www.studentfinance.ie www.ncirl.ie



NCI Primary Challenges

The NCI Primary Challenges are designed to encourage children in 2nd, 3rd and 4th class to develop their literacy, numeracy and general knowledge skills while taking part in fun and educational activities.

The second challenge this year was a Table Quiz for 3rd/4th class at National College of Ireland on Wednesday 10th March 2010. 96 children represented 6 schools, with NCI'S Jimmy Hill, Dean of the School of Business, acting as Quizmaster for the evening. A large crowd of parents and supporters came along to support them.

In a closely drawn contest, the Easter Bunny Eggheads from St Patrick's Boys NS, Ringsend, were the top scoring team on the night.

Left: Team 'The Quiz Wizards' from City Quay NS at the NCI Table Quiz 2010

Stretch to Learn

Third Level Programme

The Stretch to Learn Third Level Programme aims to support young people from the local communities, who have attended local primary and second level schools, and who have then progressed on to college.

We are delighted to announce that this year we will have 6 students in the programme graduating from their course. Some will move into further study to get more qualifications, some will travel to broaden their horizons and some will start their careers.

This is an exciting period for students, but they can be overwhelmed with the options open to them and the expectations they and their families have.

Some points to remember:

- Seek advice and support – The Careers Service in every college will be holding events throughout the year on different options.
- Think carefully about your options. This is an ideal opportunity to reflect on your values so you make the right choices for you.
- Companies, Colleges and Organisations will be holding events to target graduates throughout the year eg. Graduate Fair in the RDS.
- Making a list of your network; friends, family and contacts from a work placement can be invaluable for getting you into a company.



Sinead Thompson who attended St Laurence O'Toole's Girls School and Marino College has participated in the Stretch to Learn 3rd level programme for the past two years. Sinead is now graduating from the Higher Cert in Computer Application and Support from NCI and plans to progress to a Degree Programme at NCI in September. We want to congratulate Sinead and the other students graduating this year and wish them success in their future.



Upcoming Events

18th May
Stretch to Learn
Second Level Awards

3rd June
PCHP Graduation

2nd/3rd June
Zoom Ahead with
Books Exhibition

17th June
Stretch to Learn
Primary Awards

21st - 25th June
Story telling in the
childcare centres.

Parents Returning To Education

It has never been a better time for adults to return to training and education. We all know how difficult this can be, especially if you have children, it can be quite a juggling act!

Here are some tips to help you cope better with your learning journey:

- **Set realistic goals**

Keep your goals in mind and realise that sometimes other things like ironing or tidying might suffer!

- **Prepare your family**

You will need extra help and understanding from all of your family

- **Be organised**

Get yourself and your family into a regular routine. Use a calendar to keep track of dates and times.

- **Find out what support services are on offer**

Most education centres offer specific services for adult learners, from learning and maths support to childcare facilities

- **Broaden your social network**

Going back to education is a great chance to meet new people. Make the effort to introduce yourself and get to know your new class mates

- **Take care of yourself**

Try to eat and sleep well. Relax when possible by doing whatever you enjoy

Of course all of the above is easier said than done, but with an upbeat attitude, hard work and perseverance you'll get there.

For information on back to education opportunities at NCI, you can contact Tel: 01 4498 500



Tutor Patricia Boucher and participant of the Parents in Education programme, School of Community Studies, NCI.



Tutor Monica Cassidy, ELI Co-ordinator Catriona Flood and childcare managers from the docklands, who recently completed a module from the Foundation Degree in Early Years from the University of Northampton, supported by the ELI.