



National
College of
Ireland

Early Learning Initiative at National College of Ireland Learning Journeys in the Docklands

Stretch to Learn Awards

Volume 1, Issue 3, November 2009



Eire Tierney from St Patrick's Girls National School, Ringsend, with her parents Keith and Denise, at the Awards Ceremony in May 2009.

The Stretch to Learn Awards reward and encourage the students in primary and second level schools to work hard and succeed in their education.

The awards are given for the following:
Listening, Communication, Friendship, Persistence and Good Student.

In May 2009, 90 primary students from 6 schools received an award and 45 second level students from 3 schools received an award.

The Awards Ceremony will be held in May 2010 at NCI and we would like to encourage all the children to do their best in school this year.

Parents Together Community Course

In October 2009, eight more people trained to be facilitators of the *Parents Together Community Course*. The course gives parents an opportunity to reflect on their relationships with their children in a safe, group environment.

One parent who attended a *Parents Together* course said:
"It helped with the praise, I realised I wasn't praising the baby, I found that I was praising him loads (now), like with every little thing saying "that's great son". So I find myself doing it more, It helped me with that."

This term there are several Parents Together Community Courses running in various areas in the Docklands including Ringsend and Rutland Street. Several more are starting after Christmas so keep your eyes peeled for information posters!

In January, a Parents Together Community Course will start in the evening at NCI. For more information on Parents Together Community Courses running in your area, **contact Catriona Flood on 4498635 or talk to your local school or childcare centre.**

Upcoming Events

1st December 2009

10am - 11.30am

St Patrick's College Seminar
series for Childcare Centres
Early Literacy

4th December 2009

10.30am - 12pm

Play Session at NCI for
Sport is Spraoi Parent
Toddler Groups

12th January 2010

6pm - 7.30pm

Free Seminar for Parents
*Supporting your Child on
their Journey to Third Level*

26th January 2010

10.30am

National Launch of PCHP

Learning Journey from a Childcare Centre

Moira Ward from St Andrews Resource Centre tells her story...



Moira Ward, Support Manager in St Andrews Resource Centre Creche.

I work in St Andrews Resource Centre in Pearse St where I am a support manager. In 2007 we were approached by the Early Learning Initiative and asked to participate in training. The training focussed on Parental Involvement in their Children's Learning (P.I.C.L.) and it involved spending two study weeks in Pen Green Training Centre in Corby, England over two years, with extra training and support meetings in the NCI.

There were twelve of us that travelled to the Pen Green Centre where we spent an intensive, interesting and very rewarding time learning about Ferre Laevers concepts of Involvement and Well-being, and also Schemas and Pedagogic strategies. We learned how to use these concepts to involve our parents in their children's learning and linking children's learning from home with pre-school. This involved videoing the children's learning, making portfolios and lots of photographs and observations and then sharing these with the parents.

It was quite difficult bringing this training back to the centre as it was a new way of doing things, I was very enthusiastic and tried to do too much too soon and frightened everyone, I took things slowly after that and the staff came on board.

We now take time to talk to our parents and actively encourage them to spend time with us. This training will really help us with *Aistear* (Irish for Journey), the new Irish Curriculum for Early Learning. This new curriculum contains a lot of the ideas we learned with Pen Green and ELI so I feel we have a bit of a head start. We were also given the opportunity to do a foundation degree module so that the training we had done would be recognised. We did the course through Northampton University and it was totally unlike anything I had done before but I was really pleased with what I achieved.

I couldn't have done any of this without the support of my colleagues, my centre management and the total commitment from ELI. The training has really impacted positively on my centre. I feel this is only the beginning, we still have a way to go but with the continued support from ELI things can only get better!

Discover University with NCI

The Discover University programme is run at NCI over the summer for young people aged 14-16 years. In June 2009, 36 young people took part in the programme and were given the opportunity to come to NCI for a week and take part in a range of classes to give them a taste of College life as well as activities like drama, sports, rock-climbing, and company visits.

We hope to run the project again next summer so keep an eye out for posters in your schools and community centres, as places are limited.



Left to Right: Discover University Team leaders Aideen Blake and Sarah Geraghty and participants Carlos Donovan and Kelly Byrne.

Sport is Spraoi

Parent Toddler Groups



Niamh Fleming and Noel Ryan from Little Treasures Community Creche, North Wall Womens Centre.

The Sport is Spraoi Parent Toddler Groups mark the start of the learning journey between ELI and parents and families in the community.

This term, 3 Spórt is Spaoi Parent Toddler Groups are up and running in the community: East Wall and Ringsend are continuing on and a new group started in St Laurence O'Toole's Recreation Centre on 3rd November.

At the start of each session there is a short 10 minute talk on children's educational development based on the new Irish Curriculum for Early Learning called *Aistear* (Irish for Journey). The four areas of the curriculum are covered: Well being, Identity and Belonging, Exploring and Thinking and Communication.

The rest of the morning is an opportunity to play with your child and chat with the other parents. The last week of each term is a play session held in NCI.

If you have a child 0-2 years old and would like to join in please come along:

- St Laurence O'Toole's Recreation Centre, Sheriff Street-
Tuesday mornings 10.30am, contact Tracey Dunne 8363995

- Daisy Days Creche, East Wall- Friday mornings 10.30,
contact Eva Dillon 8555071

- Ringsend Community Centre- Friday mornings 10am,
contact Helen Sherry 086-8963813

'NCI Counts'

Maths Tuition Support

The 'NCI Counts' Maths Tuition Programme provides afterschool learning support for young people from the area doing their Junior and Leaving Certificate in June 2010. The service is free of charge to eligible students.

Sessions run for 2 hours per week and are facilitated by a tutor from the College's Maths Support Service. Additional support is provided by NCI students. The students identify areas they would like help with at the start of the term and the format of each session involves revision and practice of exam questions. A hot meal is provided at the break where the young people can chat informally with the tutor and NCI students and find out more about College life.

There will be additional six week programmes between January and March 2010 and again between March and May 2010. **If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Brigina Crowe on 01 4498618.**

The Learning Journey of a Home Visitor with PCHP

Linda McGrath, PCHP Co-coordinator, tells her story...



Linda McGrath,
PCHP Co-coordinator,
Early Learning Initiative, NCI.

Before I joined the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) in December 2007, I was a stay at home mother, which in its self is a hard enough job. I had very little confidence in myself and personally thought I would never work again.

It all changed one morning when I dropped my daughter Sophie to playschool. I would always sit in the reading corner and read a story to her and by the end of the book there could be 6 to 7 children around me listening. One of the workers approached me and told me about this training that was coming up in the National College of Ireland for a new home visitor programme. At first I said "No, I couldn't do it", but then when I thought about it a bit more I decided to give it a go.

I went to the training at NCI and found it very interesting, I also learned more than I expected. The training was designed to give you a sense of what the job of a Home Visitor would be like and then afterwards you could decide if it was for you and apply for a job. I felt very comfortable with the group and everyone was really supportive. I gained so much confidence that I decided to apply for the job as a Home Visitor. Thankfully I got the job which to me was unbelievable! I felt I was back in society and once again my confidence got a boost.

Two years on, I have achieved so much. I'm a confident Home visitor and feel that I make a difference to the families in my community. I have recently been promoted to Co-coordinator with the programme. This involves continuing home visiting along with the organisation of the programme and supporting new home visitors. It is a new challenge but one I now feel ready for! And one of the nicest things about getting this new job is that Michelle Brazil, who started with me as a Home Visitor is my co-coordinator.

If you would like to know more about PCHP, a home based play and early literacy programme for young children and their parents, please contact Linda McGrath on 01 4498608, Michelle Brazil on 01 4498604 or Beth Fagan on 01 4498627.

Supporting Your Child on their Journey to Third Level

The 5th and 6th Classes in the primary schools are currently working on an Educational Guidance project. It involves the children exploring the huge range of career options available to them and the importance of education to access these opportunities. College students who are former students of the schools have also visited the classes to share their experience with the children. After Christmas the children will be doing some research themselves about the importance of third level education for their futures!

For parents who would like more information on how they can support their children on their journey to third level, NCI has organised a free seminar on Tuesday 12th January 2010. This seminar is open to all parents with children in the primary schools right up through secondary school and will also include an opportunity to ask any questions you might have.

For further information or to register for a place, please contact Brigina Crowe on 01 4498618.