



## Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland

**Co-production of an early years person-centre care programme in the context of evolving funding opportunities, research, education, practice and policy at national and community level**

June 2023

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*Supporting parents, communities and schools in the education of children*

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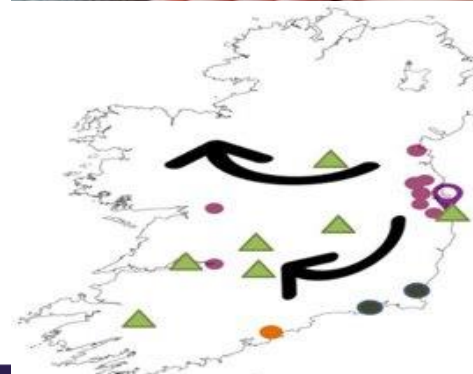


# Question: Does it work?

Scientific Research  
Controlled trials  
and experiments



ELI works with  
people (not on mice)  
to change lives  
through education

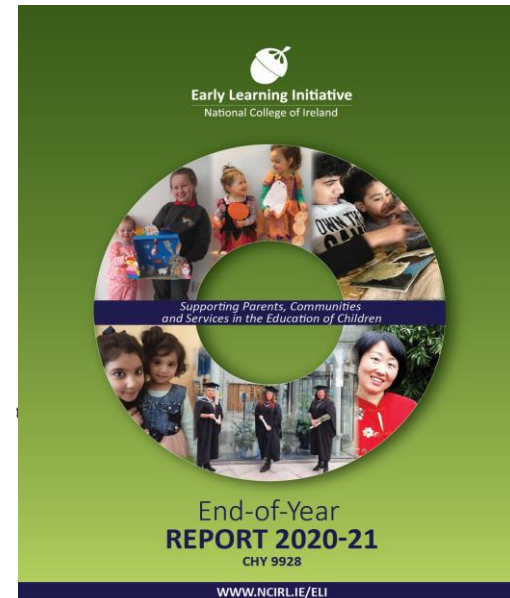


# Community Action Research

Create a learning community that works together to ‘nurture and sustain a knowledge-creating system’, based on valuing equally each other and the following three interacting domains of activity:

- ✓ **Research:** a discipline approach to discovery and understanding, with a commitment to share what is learned.
- ✓ **Capacity-building:** enhancing people’s awareness and capabilities, individually and collectively, to produce results they truly care about.
- ✓ **Practice:** people working together to achieve practical outcomes.

(Senge and Scharmer 2001, 240)



# Multiple Interventions and Complex Networks

*‘Multitudes of  
nodes, flows and connecting lines  
give rise to  
**rhizomatic growth**  
rather than  
clearly delineated systems’.*

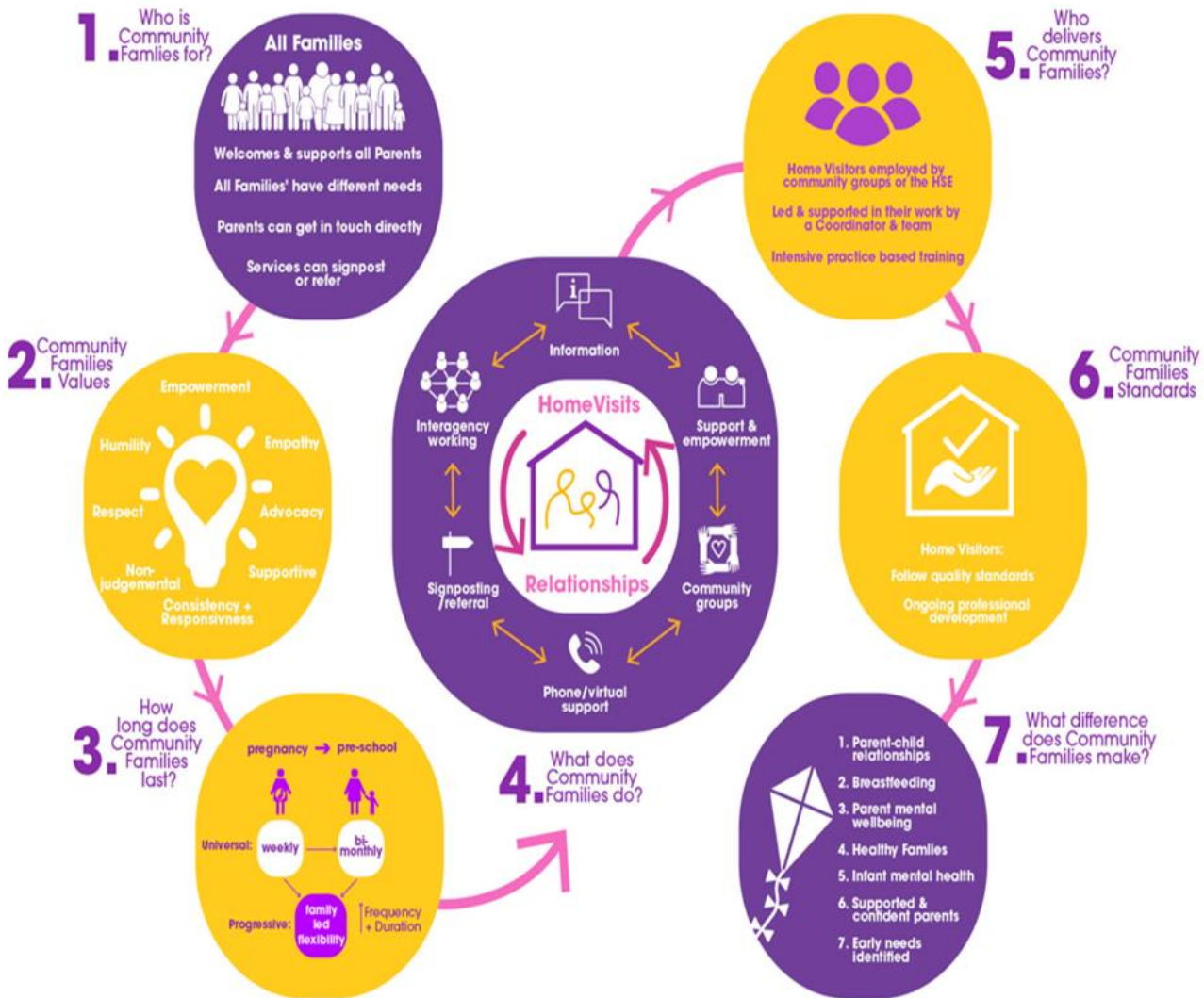
Chevalier and Buckles (2013: 32)



# From Docklands ABC 0-2 to Community Families

- Based on the Community Mothers Programme, the 0-2 Years Home Visiting Programme has been developed and delivered collaboratively since 2015 in Dublin's inner city as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme.
- A universal, prevention and early intervention programme, it has supported 500 parents to care for their own health and wellbeing and that of their children.
- Working closely with Public Health Nurses, it delivers key supports in relation to maternal and child diet, sleep, attachment, parenting and infant development.
- Participants reflect the diversity of the catchment area in terms of culture, accommodation, class, language, and ethnicity etc.

# COMMUNITY FAMILIES - SUPPORTING & EMPOWERING PARENTS THROUGH HOME VISITING



# Learning

- Building a strong team with lived experiences as well as knowledge and willing to learn.
- We maintain "*Hire for attitude, train for skill*" like minded staff team with a willing need to learn.
- Each child and family has different needs, many of our programmes and groups have grown from listening to the needs for the families ( e.g. mam and baby fitness, out and abouts, Parenting365)
- A need to have a diverse staff team speaking 7 different languages at present.
- Not one size fits all with the programme we need to plan Do, review. Reflect on our practice and plan again.



# Sláintecare Integration Fund

## From Community Mothers to Community Families

1983 - Developed in Ireland / Strong evidence base / at peak 17 communities – 3,500 parents

2008 – public service recruitment ban – PHNs not replaced

2013 – Only 3 HSE areas left in Dublin, 9 outside Dublin (8 Tusla and 1 HSE)

2014 – ABC 0-2 Programme established through NCI

2019 - National Strategic Review funded by KHF & CFI – 12 sites

2019 – Funding from Sláintecare Integration Fund and philanthropic donors led to the collaborative interagency development of an updated model led by NCI & KHF – 7 sites

2021 - Community Families developed





2022 - National Community Families Oversight and Support Group co-chaired by Tusla and HSE to support the transition of the Community Mothers Programme sites to Community Families and its continued roll out, quality assurance and future development.

- CRM system being rolled out through KHF & CFI
- NCI awarded contract to support the next stage
  - Readiness assessment underway on 7 remaining sites
  - Specialist to be recruited to support the implementation and roll out of the Community Families Programme

2024 Community Families being rolled out – Sustainable Funding?????

# Learning

- **Find allies and champions**
  - Katherine Howard Foundation & Community Foundation
  - HSE, PHNs, Healthy Communities, Maternity Hospitals
  - Tusla, ABC, CYPSCs, CFNs
  - Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN)
  - Home Visiting Alliance
- **Communicate with everyone and anyone**
- **Link in with National Policy**
  - Slaintecare
  - First Five
  - National model of parenting support
  - National approach to home visiting (Home Visiting Alliance & UNITES)
- **Persist and focused on your end goal – supporting parents to enable our most vulnerable children to thrive**