

Early Learning Initiative Newsletter



Early Learning Initiative
National College of Ireland

Working in partnership: Supporting educational journeys and achievements

In 2012-13, approximately 3,400 children, young people, parents, professionals and volunteers took part in an ELI Programme. Evaluations are showing that children's oral language, literacy and numeracy skills are improving and that young people have high aspirations for the future. In this newsletter, we highlight just some of the ways ELI's cross sectorial network is supporting the children and young people in the Docklands to achieve their educational, career and life goals.



Six years on from our official launch in 2008, ELI is entering a new phase. Over the years, thanks to the input from all our partners, ELI's programmes are continually being developed to ensure they remain 'world class' and continue to meet the learning needs of the community. To reflect the changes and development of ELI since its inception, we have updated our vision, mission and logo.

Our new logo is an acorn. With the old proverb 'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow' in mind, the acorn reflects how ELI and its partners are nurturing and supporting the children and young people in the community to grow into strong individuals with the capacity and resolution to achieve their dreams.

Our new mission and vision is as follows:

Mission

Working in partnership with local communities to support educational journeys and achievements.

Vision

Our long-term vision is that ELI will lead the way in providing first class educational support programmes within local communities, thereby enabling children, young people and their families to develop the dispositions, skills and knowledge needed to achieve their educational, career and life goals.

Without the active engagement and participation of all our partners, ELI would not be successful in improving educational outcomes for children and their families in Docklands. Thank you to everyone who supported us over the past year. We look forward to working with you again in 2013-14 and building on our past successes.



Storytelling

Hi there everyone!

Come along to hear new and exciting stories, nursery rhymes and songs in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. No child is too young to join in on this learning journey.

Storytelling sessions take place in Pearse Street Library, Tuesdays at 10.45-11.45am. If you would like more information, please contact Linda McGrath on 01 4498608.

One parent's comment:

'My toddler has great fun in a warm and friendly environment – learning in an enjoyable way through stories, song and play'.



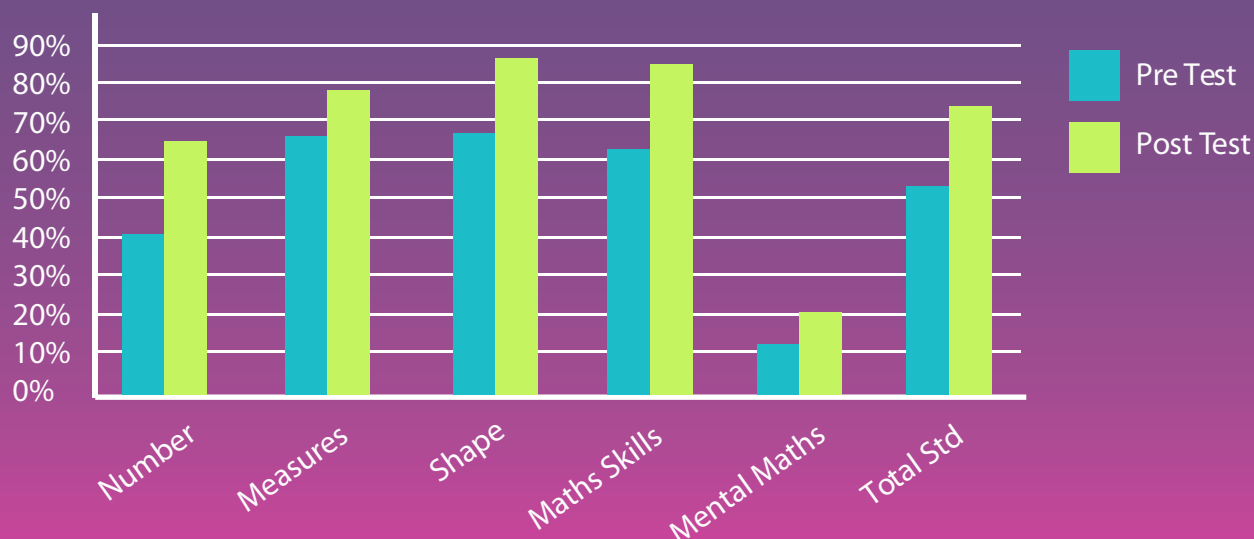
Are you interested in having storytelling sessions? Please contact Roisín Dunne at Roisin.Dunne@ncirl.ie.

NEYAI Docklands Early Numeracy Project - Working Group

The Docklands Early Numeracy Project has just kicked off its 3rd year of activities. The driving forces behind the project are the "Working Group" and the community. The working group is made up of early year's educators and teachers. It meets in the National College of Ireland 4 times a year to plan the activities and resources for the Docklands Early Numeracy Activity Week. Everybody gets involved in thinking up interesting and educational ways for young children to develop early numeracy skills. The Early Numeracy Activity Cards are given to every family with children under 6 years of age in the 16

services (around 800 children) involved in the project. PCHP Home Visitors and Public Health Nurses in the Docklands bring the cards to the children they visit. Parents, children and families get involved in completing the early numeracy activities. All of this community involvement is really paying off for the early numeracy skills of the children in the Docklands.

An assessment of preschool children's early numeracy has shown that their numeracy skills improved over a year of the Early Numeracy Project. The areas the children were tested on were: Number, Measures, Shapes and Maths.



What makes the Parent Child Home Programme work?

The Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) has a very simple plan – it is designed to help parents get their children ready for school. It does this by modelling to parents how to read, talk and play with their young children. During the course of the two year preschool programme, PCHP gives educational books and toys to families as part of the programme, which they can keep and use again.

Along the way the children will learn that print goes from left to right, pages turn in a right to left fashion and there is a connection between the written and spoken word. Children gain an understanding of colours, shapes, sizes and numbers - all the skills that are needed so that children are ready for 'big school'.

While the Home Visitors do a lot of work helping the parents, it is the effort put in by the parents that makes a difference as the parents are their children's first and best teacher.

Fifty-four parents filled out end-of-year evaluations in June 2013. All of them said that the programme (including the books and toys) was useful, and all of them felt confident using the strategies for reading and playing with their children.

Comments from parents included:

'Her speech has come on great. She is better at sharing.'

'He is learning more language, asking questions, looking at more books.'

'I have learned to take a more sit back approach. I was too quick to correct her when she is very capable of figuring things out for herself when given a little time.'

All parents want the best for their children, and parents in PCHP are ensuring their children have the best possible start.

A very big thank you to all the PCHP parents from the Home Visiting Team.

Discover University 2013

This summer, thirty-nine young people aged between 14 and 17 years old from the Docklands and Ballymun, took part in this year's Discover University programme.

As part of the programme, secondary school students had the opportunity to experience life in college and the students work on one of the two EU Interreg funded Open Innovation Projects – Citrus Saturday and Open Innovation App Challenge.



Citrus Saturday aims to give young people the opportunity to learn skills that will help them to plan and run a small business while students who took part in the Open Innovation App Challenge learned all the basics of app development. These were collaborative projects between the Early Learning Initiative, NCI's Schools of Business and Computing, NCI's Business Incubation Centre, UCL London, Dublin City Council and ELI's corporate partners.

The programme ran between Thursday 20th June and Wednesday 26th June, finishing with a project showcase and a graduation ceremony that was attended by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Oisín Quinn.



Above: NCI student Stephen Stafford and his group of second level students at the Discover University graduation, June 2013

ELI Volunteering

Last year, over 100 employees from our corporate partners volunteered with ELI. Their involvement was a key motivational factor for the young people in our community, who were delighted to meet 'real' people who were helping them to develop the skills they will need for education and employment. ELI's corporate volunteers are really impressed with the young people and believe that they are a credit to their parents and community and will succeed in whatever they do.



'It was a great buzz to MC the ELI schools quiz held in a cup final atmosphere at the National College of Ireland. Many of my colleagues had worked with the competing local schools in the run up to practice for the quizzing showdown and put together a fiendishly difficult set of questions. Far too hard I thought for the poor nine year olds. Several local businesses chipped in with spot prizes and there was terrific support from families and friends of the participating schools. None of the teams cracked under pressure, they showed intense focus and determination to blitz through the questions. Not too hard after all, they will have to be harder next year.'

Seán Barton (pictured) McCannFitzgerald
— Quiz Master

Corporate and individual support is fundamental to our success. We wish to thank all of our socially minded corporate and individual supporters, including Dermot Desmond, who play such an active role in the advancement of the ELI.

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HSBC



HSCL in Partnership with ELI

Helen Sherry, Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, St Patrick's Schools, Ringsend

The Early Learning Initiative have been fantastic education partners for nearly 10 years. The schools and community of Ringsend have received generously from them. They have provided support and resources for many programmes. It is fair to say that ELI have influenced and empowered the lives of children from 0-18 years and all their parents and extended families.

ELI, in liaison with the teachers and staff of each school, run a number of fun learning activities including Rummikub, Scrabble, Monopoly, & Table Quiz, which involve parents and their children to prepare for an Inter-school Challenge. Parents are invited into the classroom for four weeks leading up to the big event. This is usually a memorable occasion for the children and their family.

The NEYAI Numeracy Programme has been and continues to be a very successful ELI Maths Initiative run in our schools. The teachers are invited to a Working group meeting where we plan three community maths weeks a year using different mathematical themes based on the Siolta and Aistear frameworks. The ELI provide schools with fun activity ideas and children's worksheets for school and home based activities. The project ends with a Priority Event which involves having maths stations in the school, with parents' supporting their child's learning at each activity. The Priority event 'Measurement Madness' was probably my favourite event for NEYAI - it was messy, fun, full of activity and lots of parents came and got stuck in!

ELI also trained a number of people in facilitating and delivering The Parents Together Community Course, which provides parents with extra tools in their parenting tool box. They also supported the setting up of Ringsend Parent Toddler Group, which provides an excellent resource for the community.

The ELI programmes are tailored to the schools needs and wants. They are consistent and continuously communicating with schools on what they need and want to run each year. ELI are always trying to improve and better the service they provide. They encourage feedback and are always willing to take on board suggestions and additional needs as they arise. Their programmes are of an impeccably high standard, with their heart at the centre of all they do.

As a HSCL Coordinator, there is such variety in my job, from classroom activities to Home Visits to Parenting courses. Each day is different and full of wide range of experiences. I get to learn so much. I also get to relate to many wonderful people sharing their ideas and lives with me. It is a privilege.