

Organisational News

April 2025

StartBright

Early Learning for Our Community



On behalf of the StartBright Board of Directors, I would thank you for your continued hard work and commitment to the vision and mission of StartBright ELC.

We have much to celebrate over the first few months of 2025.



The latest news and developments at StartBright

This newsletter will focus on news and development from January to April 2025 as we continue to share organisational news to all employees across the organisation.

It is important to us, and to you, to know what is happening at organisational level and give you insight into the developments not only going on in StartBright, but across the sector.

Enjoy!

Welcome to Lauren StartBright Operations Manager



Welcome to Lauren Taaffe. Lauren started with us in February 2025 as operations manager. This is a new role in the organisation developed to support the head office team to deliver on the vision and mission of StartBright ELC's. I hope you all had the opportunity to meet Lauren over the last few weeks.

Lauren is looking forward to getting out to centres more often to work with centres on their operations and goals. Lauren can be contacted at manager@startbright.ie

As CEO, my role will now move focus to concentrate strategic and organisational development and implementation for StartBright. I will now have more time to engage in more advocacy work and networking to further opportunities for StartBright and across the sector.

I will continue to be involved in leading operations and quality across the organisation and work with Lauren and Mary as they lead and inspire you all to continue on this wonderful journey at StartBright and deliver on our vision and mission.

Welcome to Grace Family Facilitator Balgaddy



Welcome to Grace O'Brien. Grace started with us on the 24th February 2025 as the family participation facilitator at StartBright Balgaddy. This is the second family facilitator role in the organisation developed to support the parents and families at StartBright and support the team to continue to improve outcomes for their children and families, Grace is the Lucan family facilitator and in time will also support StartBright St Finians. Grace can be contacted at lucanfamily@startbright.ie

DCU Evaluation



Thank you to everyone including the Board of Management for participating in the first evaluation event in January and subsequent events in May 2025.

Its wonderful to have so much engagement across the organisation as we embark on reviewing and evaluating the StartBright Way and StartBright as a model of best practice in Early Childhood and Care in Ireland.

I look forward to the end assessment report highlighting the the way StartBright deliver high quality services. The areas evaluated are:

1. To assess service delivery effectiveness
2. To identify challenges and opportunities
3. To develop recommendations to design a model of social impact measurement which delivers evidence in South West Dublin of:
 - The positive impact of StartBright's service delivery
 - The positive impact of StartBright's investment in early years in the longer term for the individual, family and community.



Educator support and development at StartBright

StartBright are excited to be able to fund, using the equal start funding received, to expand the Educational leader role in centres. Educational leaders are covered by an additional educator to be out of ratio to mentor internally at their services. The Quality Mentor will continue to develop and train to meet the strategic goals of the organisation but it is wonderful to have mentors on hand to support you all everyday.

Time is a precious resource, and in addition to the non contact time already rolled out across all services, I look forward to the quality improvements and embedding excellent practices across your centres over the months and years to come.

StartBright have also increased investment to fund additional educators to lower ratios in our afterschools to support educators and children and ensure those children with additional needs or those that have SEN's in schools are also supported at StartBright. This additional educator is also to enable our skilled LINC coordinators in centres to have some additional time to meet with educators, children and their families to develop plans across all age groups. We believe having a skilled professional replacing you to complete additional tasks is vital to ensure you are equipped with the time and resources to excel in your role and also for the team to always be supported and happy at work.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Equal Start
A model to support access and participation
in early learning and childcare for all children

Educator and managers Appreciation days 2025



A lot of positive feedback from Educator Day 2025. Educators felt very much appreciated and felt their profession and their work was valued.

Educators felt valued as a team who are a big part of their community and the realisation that what they do has a positive impact on the children and families lives. Generally, Educators felt very appreciated and have pride in the work they do, and they enjoyed a nice day and getting the chance to bond more with their peers.

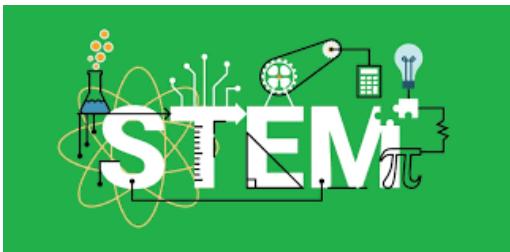
All feedback will be shared with individual centre managers to plan future appreciation days for our wonderful educators and teams across StartBright.

We received 43 out of 80+ responses. Educators are encouraged to participate in feedback to ensure their voice is part of future decision making and influences their motivation and engagement within the organisation.



The StartBright Employee Engagement Tool survey for 2024 had 73 full responses which represents a rate of 87%, up from last year's 67 responses. Overall, Startbright are only marginally below the sector benchmark, and the levels of engagement appear to be strong. Particular highlights this year are to be found in team morale and how your teams share information. There are some slight challenges with regards to staff relationships with their managers. However, staff also reported increased connection to the purpose of StartBright and overall levels of engagement are only marginally down on last year. We will continue to work with you at centre level to explore the results and ask the important questions on how to improve.

Research, developments and Initiatives



StartBright St. Finian's have just concluded their project on STEM within their centres and are now undergoing the evaluation section of the project in collaboration with DCU which is funded through EU funding.



StartBright Reggio inspired practice training workshops are organised for the week of May 19th and will run from Monday to Thursday. We look forward to seeing you all there.



Strengthening Ireland's Interagency Response to Child Sex Abuse

StartBright Deansrath collaborated with NCCA on the promotion of integrating the Traveller and Roma strategy into everyday pedagogy (Early Years context). Recording to be sent out soon.

St Finians & Greenhills participated in the review and designing of the logo for Barnhaus, by ECI. Barnahus is an establishment for supporting children who may have suffered child sexual abuse while accessing care and services. It constitutes a child friendly space in which agencies work together to support the child.

St Finians had 5 children between 7 & 9 years old took part and were invited to attend the conference with their parents in Dublin to present their Logo ideas.



Research, developments and Initiatives



Grants, donations and investments across StartBright ELC

- StartBright Deansrath received €82,000 from the Community recognition fund (Dept of Rural & Community through the County Council) which will fund garden redesign and development
- StartBright Balgaddy and Deansrath received community grants from a local developer at Seven Mills
- StartBright Brookview received a charitable donation from St Patricks Cathedral Dublin to fund school meals for the ECCE children for the rest of the year.
- StartBright have invested from reserves into StartBright Brookview's development and improvement of their outdoor space taking place in May 2025
- Toy Show Appeal Grant Applied for - €50,000 to implement an Artist in Residence for all centres across StartBright

Research, developments and Initiatives



StartBright have been notified by the County Council Arts Department that we have been selected once again to work with the organisation. They will be running a four week programme with StartBright Brookview and StartBright Balgaddy. The proposal is to develop a child-led, immersive story making program, introducing children to caring for animals in a creative, relevant and accessible way. Through puppetry they'll explore themes of kindness, respect, physical boundaries, companionship and responsibility. Over the 4 workshops the children will choose the right carer/home for our magical animal through activities like interviewing actors in character.



The StartBright Annual Conference will take place on Friday the 6th June at The Green Isle Hotel in Clondalkin. The theme for 2025 is Prevention and Early Intervention in StartBright ELC. We look forward to an inspiring day full of speakers in recognition of StartBright and the work we do for our children, families and communities.

Research, developments and Initiatives



Marlene Mc Cormack (DCU) has collected all data for the impact measurement piece on the Family Participation Facilitator role.



The StartBright annual Strategic Plan and Budget information night is arranged for the 19th June 2025. This is an opportunity for employees across the organisation to engage in information and feedback in response to the StartBright strategic implementation plan, budget and engagement tool survey data for 24/25.



StartBright was invited to speak out on behalf of children, their families and educators at the May Day demonstration at Leinster house as a member of the Together for public Alliance. More information can be found on the StartBright Linkedin page.



CREATED BY Elaine Mc Quillan

THANK YOU

Early Learning for Our Community

