

Organisational News

December 2025

On behalf of the StartBright Board of Directors, I would thank you for your hard work and commitment to the vision and mission of StartBright ELC's over the past year.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy & Healthy 2025.

Elaine

The latest news and developments at StartBright

This newsletter will focus on news and development for the final part of the year from May to December 2025.

Discover what has been happening at an organisational level and gain insight into the developments not only going on in StartBright, but across the sector and how Startbright are engaged and involved.

Enjoy!



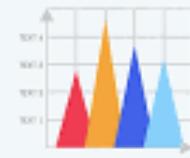
StartBright Impact Measurement & Action Research 2025

StartBright Educators, Educational Leaders and Centre Managers have worked with the Quality Mentor to collect data to measure the impact of developing initiatives and implementing evidence informed programmes at StartBright. The impact reports are owned by the centres and educators involved, showcasing their reflection, and direct action to improve practice, processes to bridge the gap in meeting educator, family and children's needs.

The family facilitator role at StartBright is informed by the evidence-based Childhood Development Initiative, PCF role in Tallaght ABC. DCU have partnered with StartBright to undertake the initial impact measurement of the role across 2024/2025. StartBright educators and mentors have continued to gather data to measure the impact of the family facilitator roles across all Startbright centres. The impact of the Educational Leader role from the pilot in 2022 highlights the importance of internal peer mentorship for leading and embedding quality across StartBright.

The Impact of the Sensory Rooms at StartBright has examined our responsiveness to individual children needs and improving educational outcomes for children at StartBright.

Reports are with the design team and we look forward to sharing with everyone in the new year. These will be a valuable resource tool for everyone across the organisation to empower educators, lead change in practice, support funding applications, board investment and value the StartBright Way.



DCU Evaluation



On Monday the 20th October, StartBright hosted the final reflective session with Mathias and Carolina from the Early Childhood Research Centre at DCU, with representatives from across StartBright in attendance to share their feedback and reflect on what StartBright do well and what current challenges we face that restrict opportunities. I look forward to the final evaluation report on the way StartBright deliver high quality services in our communities.

Thank you to everyone who took part in person, online surveys, team meetings, steering groups and supporting parental engagement. We appreciate your time and dedication to the research and look forward to everyone seeing their voice and experience throughout the report.



Deansrath Garden Project

StartBright Deansrath received €82,000 funding from the Community Recognition Fund, a Government initiative which aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities for the entire community in recognition of the contribution being made by communities. Deansrath received the funds to develop their outdoor space and install a sensory room for the children. The project began in October/November 2025 and is at the finishing stages.

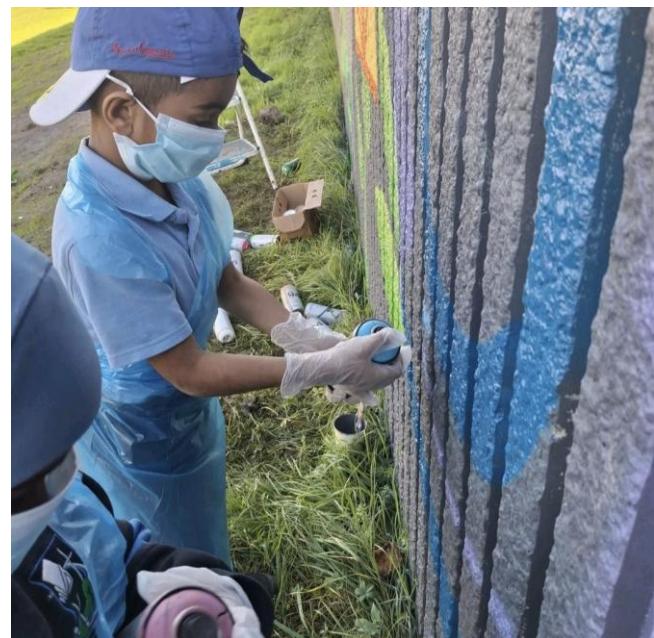
The transformation underway is a testament not only to the investment in high-quality, inclusive learning environments but also to the dedication of the staff, children and leadership team who have worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition. Their careful planning, creativity and perseverance are evident at every stage of development. As we look forward to opening these spaces in the new year, there is good reason for everyone involved to feel immense pride. These new facilities will offer our children a place to explore, connect and thrive, and their creation stands as a significant achievement for the centre.



Balgaddy Mural Project 2025



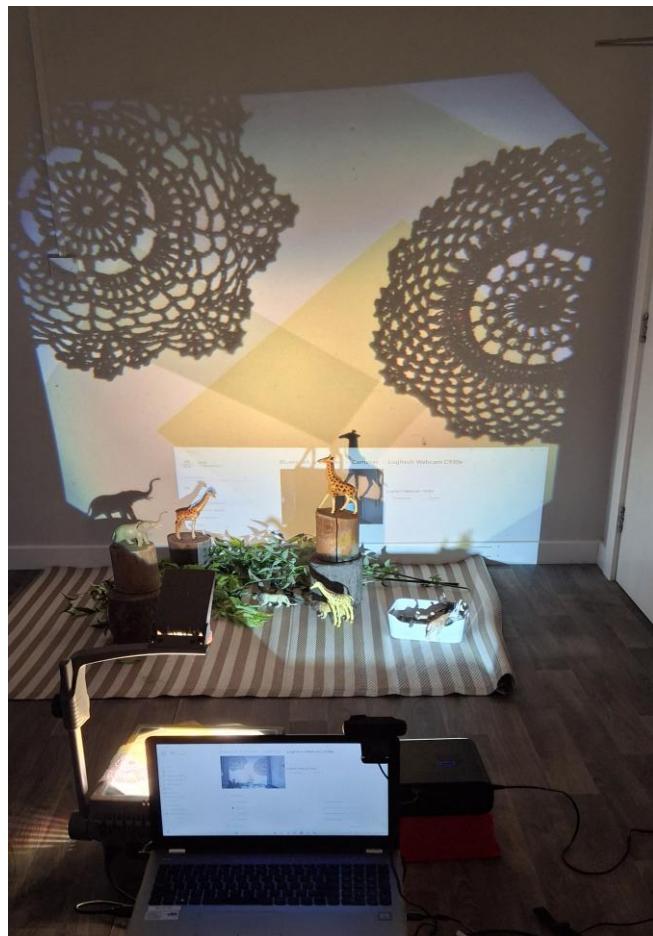
Children from the StartBright Balgaddy afterschool programme recently collaborated with South Dublin County Partnership and artist Chloe Mowlds to create a striking new mural for the local community. The children chose the title 'Our Voice' to reflect their belief in the importance of being heard and taken seriously. Every stage of the creative process was shaped by their decisions, from selecting the colour palette to choosing the images that would bring their message to life. Small groups visited the mural site, where each child had the opportunity to contribute through spray painting, adding their own mark to the artwork. The completed mural stands as a vibrant celebration of their creativity, their ownership of the project and, most importantly, their collective voice.



Research, developments and Initiatives



StartBright St Ronan's and Deansrath are engaging in the Preparation for Preschool evidence informed programmed from Hill Street Family Resource Centre. Educators and the Family Facilitator are working with children under 2 and their parents to engage them prior to preschool enrolment and offer supports and activities to meet their individual needs, and also from a community perspective. We look forward to evaluating the impact of this initiative at StartBright over the rest of 2026.



StartBright Reggio inspired practice training workshops ran for the week of May 19th, led by the Quality Mentor. Educators from across all centres attended the Atelier and engaged and immersed themselves into the experience to gain practical understanding and ideas to bring back to their centres.



Research, developments and Initiatives



StartBright Brookview received investment from StartBright reserves to design and develop their outdoor space to make it more accessible, child friendly, welcoming and natural.

The children and educators had a vision of what they would like to change and develop in their space and worked with Max and JJ from Ever Green Grass Ltd to bring it to life. We officially launched the new space in June 2025 with parents, children and community representatives to celebrate and share the initial impact a more natural space has had on the children and educators at Brookview.

We look forward to evaluating the impact of this initiative at StartBright over the rest of 2026 and track how it develops over time.



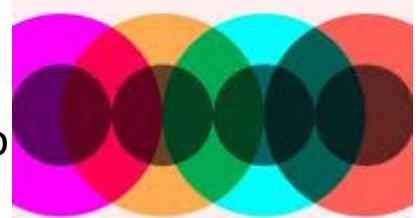
Research, developments and Initiatives



exploring
and thinking
award
2025–26

Barnlár Award now open for applications
Apply before 01.10.23

Arts Council of Ireland, BDC, Ealaíon, TD, TDCC, TDCC



The Arts Council Ireland through its Arts in Early Learning and Childcare Scheme, provides funding for projects that bring artists and early years educators together to create arts experiences for babies and young children in preschool settings, focusing on collaboration and development within the Creative Ireland Programme.

StartBright were delighted to engage again and it was an absolute pleasure to welcome Bronwen and Michelle back to Balgaddy and Brookview, where their artistic energy once again created moments of joy, curiosity and imagination for the children. Their sessions continue to enrich the learning environment, offering opportunities for creative exploration that resonate deeply with families and staff alike. We are especially delighted that they have been awarded the Exploring and Thinking Grant to continue their work with StartBright in the new year. This recognition not only celebrates their artistic contribution but also underscores the value of the creative projects taking place within our centres. The grant will allow for an expansion of the magic they bring, and it is wonderful to see our commitment to the arts reflected in such a positive and affirming way.

Funding & Supports



Bia Blasta

The roll-out of Bia Blasta across all centres has been one of the real highlights of recent months. It is already making a noticeable difference for children and their families, creating warm, positive experiences around shared food and connection. The enthusiastic feedback has been genuinely heartening, and it is clear that the success of the initiative rests on the commitment, care and creativity shown by educators and managers.



Supporting Our Children at Christmas

Brookview has been selected as a Toy Show Appeal recipient which has created a lovely sense of excitement, ensuring that many children will experience an extra layer of joy this Christmas.



Balgaddy and Deasnraí's receipt of the Winter Food Poverty Grant is equally significant, offering valuable support at a time when some families may be under increased strain. These achievements reflect the compassionate, community-focused ethos of staff across all centres, and they serve as a reminder of the meaningful difference that thoughtful, responsive initiatives can make.

Team Building & Engagement

The StartBright Annual Conference was held on Friday the 6th June at The Green Isle Hotel in Clondalkin. The theme was Prevention and Early Intervention in StartBright ELC.

It was a day filled with inspiring speakers and in recognition of StartBright and the work we do in partnership with our children, families and communities. The team building and awards dinner were also lots of fun and important for building relationships and culture across the organisation.

Centre awards and Long Service Awards and prizes were presented on the night. All teams across the organisation celebrated each other throughout the evening.

Thank you to everyone who took part and thank you to the Teams across StartBright ELC for everything you do!



Team Building & Engagement



Training and professional learning have continued to play an important role in strengthening practice across our organisation. Forty-two staff members successfully completed Child paths Respond Training, demonstrating a commendable commitment to ongoing development. In addition, the Little Humans training facilitated by our Educational Leaders, Ciara and Tina, in November highlighted the depth of expertise emerging within our own team. Their leadership has supported colleagues in deepening their understanding and enhancing their confidence, creating a strong foundation for future practice.



The StartBright annual Strategic Plan and Budget information night was held on the 27th November 2025. This was an important 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 25/26.

Networking & Research

Our participation in several key national events over the past months has helped ensure that StartBright remains actively engaged with important sector-wide discussions. The organisation was proudly represented at the Children's Rights Alliance - Ending Child Poverty Conference, the National Women's Council's - Recipes for Gender Equality event and the SAC Development focus groups hosted by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. We were also delighted to be present for the launch of 'Nurturing Distributed Leadership in Early Years Services' report commissioned by Preparing for Life.

As a member of the Together for Public Alliance StartBright represented community Early Childhood services in the discussions surrounding a public Early Childhood system in Ireland at the national Women's Council Gender & early Childhood policies across Europe.

StartBright also represented Early Childhood at the DCU cross disciplinary seminar discussing opportunities for investment in ECEC in Ireland.



These engagements are not only valuable for staying informed, but they also reflect the hard work, insight and professionalism of the staff and leaders who attend on our behalf, strengthening our voice, deepen our connections and ensure that our practical experience informs broader conversations about policy and equality.

Networking & Research



StartBright have been invited to engage directly with the Minister and Department of Children, Disability & Equality. This opportunity builds on the Departments strong commitment to engage directly with Early Childhood and School Aged Childcare providers. Our hope as providers is to have positive and meaningful engagement that will result in changes and development that support and build the sector..

StartBright Greenhills welcomed TU Dublin and International Students and their Professor from Hawk University, Germany, to discuss 'The StartBright Way' and the role of our Educational Leaders and our commitment to quality. StartBright are committed to keeping informed and sharing experiences nationally and internationally to support and develop our teams and practice in improving outcomes for children and their families.





CREATED BY Elaine Mc Quillan

THANK YOU

Early Learning for Our Community

