

# Early Learning Initiative

## National College of Ireland



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## Pre Numeracy Tips from PCHP

**PCHP** is excited to be starting another year reading and playing with children and parents. In the Docklands area, there are now over 60 families involved in the programme. With the support of ELI, PCHP has also spread to other communities in Dublin. Families join PCHP when the child is around 18 months old and are then involved for 2 years. The home visitors come to the home twice a week, and bring educational books and toys to encourage and support the children's learning. Families find it an enjoyable learning experience. One parent commented, "*Loves to see Home Visitor, gets all excited. I can see a big change in him, shares more with his brother, talks about colours and shapes, more interested in the books than the toys.*"



Here are some ways to introduce numeracy ideas with your children through every-day activities:

- Sing Nursery Rhymes: *Ten in the bed, Two Little Dicky Birds, Five Little Ducks.*
- Nature Walks: *Collect and count chestnuts, leaves, even try bird watching.*
- Meal Time: *Let your child set the table, labelling and counting each item.*
- Getting Dressed: *Two socks, one coat, three buttons.*

Remember children learn through play so make it **Fun, Fun, Fun!**

Here is a list of pre numeracy books to get you started:

- *I Spy* by Jean Marzallo and Walter Wick
- *One Wet Welly* by Gill Matthews and Belinda Worsley
- *Five Little Ducks* by Zeta Newcome
- *Ten Little Fingers* by Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury.



Nichola Jones and daughter Laura Jones enjoy building blocks together at PCHP's Easter Egg Hunt, April 2010

## 'Sport is Spraoi' Parent Toddler Groups Begin Again!

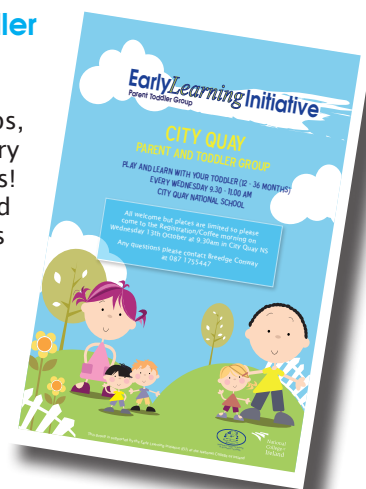
The ELI Parent and Toddler groups, offer families a play session every week that's safe, fun and full of toys! Every week parents are offered ideas on how to play in ways that support toddlers' learning. For example, we look at how sounds, words, rhymes, songs, books and games can develop children's language and wellbeing.

The sessions take place in 4 different community centres in the Docklands area and the atmosphere is relaxed, warm, friendly and lots of fun.

If you're interested, or if you know someone who may be interested, please contact the people below as soon as possible:

- East Wall:** Contact Eva Dillon (Tel: 01-8509030) in Sean O' Casey Community Centre
- City Quay:** Contact Breedge Conway (Tel: 087-1755447) in City Quay National School
- Ringsend:** Contact Helen Sherry (Tel: 086-9863813) in St Patricks National School
- St Laurence O'Tooles:** Contact Tracey Dunne (Tel: 01-8363995) in St Laurence O'Tooles Community Centre.

Any questions about the Parent & Toddler groups, please contact Lorna Ní Chéirín, Early Years Coordinator in ELI. Tel: 01 4498604 or email [lnicheirin@ncirl.ie](mailto:lnicheirin@ncirl.ie).



## Discover national college of ireland

During the summer, National College of Ireland teamed up with Duke University, USA, to run its unique and highly successful third-level taster programme, Discover University.

More than 40 young people, aged between 14 and 17 years old, from a variety of communities in Dublin took part in the programme.

The students sampled modules from NCI's core subjects of business, computing and community studies, worked on group projects addressing issues in the community and took part in a range of fun extra-curricular activities ranging from drama to sport.

Keziah Aguila (17) from Pearse Street, Dublin 1, commented on her experience: *"I really enjoyed the group work. I liked my team and the activities. I like how they help you build up your confidence and teach you stuff that is helpful in real life, like talking in public."*

The programme ran between Thursday 24th of June and Wednesday 30th June, with an extension programme taking place until the end of July.

The extension programme involved young people working in groups to create a series of short films that highlighted contemporary community challenges in Dublin.

If you are interested in learning more about the Discover University Programme, please contact Stretch to Learn Coordinator Brigina Crowe on 01 4498618 or email [bcrowe@ncirl.ie](mailto:bcrowe@ncirl.ie).



L-R Ashley Maughan, aged 14 from Ballymun and Right Keziah Aguila, ages 17 from Docklands who both took part in the Discover University programme 2010



### Snakes and Ladders, Ludo, Draughts, Monopoly, Scrabble..the list goes on!

Playing board games at home is a fantastic way of supporting your child's learning. The skills they can learn and develop include; numeracy, spelling, vocabulary, general knowledge, thinking ahead and strategizing, not to mention the social and personal skills and confidence they get from playing together. It is also an ideal way to spend quality time as a family during the dark winter evenings, while having lots of fun!

The NCI Primary Challenge Events encourage the children to play boardgames in the classroom and give them the chance to come to NCI and represent their school. Watch out for the Table Quiz in December and the Monopoly Challenge in March where children from 3rd & 4th class in Docklands will be competing!



Primary school children from Docklands compete at the NCI Monopoly Challenge, supported by a parent volunteer

## Maths a key requirement for College

There is much talk about the importance of Maths and Science skills for our so called 'Knowledge Economy'. Passing Ordinary level Maths in your Leaving Certificate is important if you wish to go on to a higher education course at College. Maths at Foundation Level is accepted for further education course like a PLC, but many third level colleges will require a pass at Ordinary Level, especially if Maths is part of the course.

## Early Numeracy, Literacy & Play at Home

ELI's September 2010 storytelling sessions were held in 12 Early Years Settings in the Docklands. Focused on making links between Early Literacy and Numeracy activities, we selected a book called 'Over in the Meadow: A Counting Rhyme' by Louise Voce (available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)), it tells the story of animal mothers and their babies having a wonderfully active and noisy time!

Reading books with counting/number as part of the story can benefit children of all ages and can be a fun way to make Literacy and Numeracy activities part of everyday routines. For babies and toddlers, simple and sturdy books (e.g. board books and bath books) with interesting textures and flaps are ideal. Older children especially enjoy books with rhyme, repetition and an engaging storyline.

**These everyday activities to try at home help make learning about number fun!**

- 1 While helping your child to dress, in the bath, getting ready for bed at night, sing simple number/counting rhymes and play simple counting games.
- 2 Count every-day, simple objects together, making a game out of counting - toys, pieces of fruit on the plate, counting on their fingers, steps on the stairs.
- 3 Hunt for numbers everywhere! Numbers on houses, in your phone, at the shops - count fruit and vegetables as you put them in the bag.
- 4 For older children, continue everyday counting of objects, at this stage, you may need to remind them gently and model for them that numbers go in order starting with one and go straight on, and that the last number is the number of objects in the group.
- 5 Play games with dominoes and dice, fun games like this can increase confidence and ease with numbers, as well as good guesswork.



Docklands pre-schoolers enjoy reading together

It is important that young people, and their parents, consider this when deciding what level Maths to do in Secondary school. It is advisable to speak with the Maths Teacher and also to the Guidance Counsellor, in case the decision limits choices at a later stage.

It is also important to understand that if a young person does Foundation Level in a subject at Junior Cert, you must do it at Foundation Level for the Leaving Cert.

If you do decide to take Maths at Foundation Level, there are still many opportunities available to you after school, but there be some careers that you will have difficulty getting into.

### Tuition Support

Maths is still a big issue for young people studying for their exams in school, with many reporting that they are struggling and need extra help.

NCI is continuing to offer the 'NCI Counts' afterschool programme for Leaving Cert students doing Ordinary Level Maths. It is a group based revision course and is facilitated by a faculty member from NCI, along with a group of NCI students. The programme will start on Monday 1st November for six weeks. Maths support is also available for Junior Cert students of all levels in community centres around the Docklands.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Brigina Crowe on 01 4498618. Places are extremely limited, so cannot be guaranteed.



### Upcoming Events

**18th November**  
Parents Seminar on "Irish Education System"

**1st December**  
NCI Table Quiz Challenge

**1st December**  
PCHP Christmas Event

**8th December**  
Parent and Toddler Group Play Session at NCI



# Top Tips to Help Your Toddler Develop Pre-Numeracy Skills

You can help your toddler to develop pre-numeracy skills in daily activities. Try some of the suggestions below to support your toddler's skills to work with numbers, shapes, amount and patterns.

1

Encourage your toddler to notice things that are the same or different, or things that are bigger or smaller. 'Let's find the biggest ball'.

2

Count going up and down the stairs or while you're helping your toddler get dressed 'One sock for this foot, and one sock for the other foot. One, two!'

7

Provide large cardboard boxes so toddlers can explore what is over, under, through, inside, outside.

6

Link different shapes to common objects 'That square block is shaped like our cheddar cheese!'



Children from Little Treasures Community Crèche concentrating on their early numeracy activities

3

Put containers of different sizes into the bath or sand tray to help your toddler understand quantity and measurement. Use old margarine tubs, plastic bottles and spoons.

5

Make patterns with objects such as stones and shells, jar lids, simple jigsaw puzzles, coloured wooden blocks, large beads and laces.

4

Repeat nursery rhymes and tell stories again and again – this builds brain pathways for memory and patterns!

You can find more ideas on how to support your child's learning from Aistear, The Early Years Curriculum Framework, on the website [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

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