

## Judging of Early Childhood Ireland Awards

### How are the awards judged?

The internal and external judges review all applications against the award criteria and mark the application accordingly. There is a different set of criteria for each award.

### The awards' scoring system is as follows:

- A total of 100 marks is available for each award.
- The criteria for judging each award is divided into 4 themes. 25 marks is the maximum that can be awarded in each theme.
- The marks for each of the 4 themes will be added to get a total.
- A minimum of 15 marks must be scored by applicants in each of the 4 themes, and 60 is the minimum total mark that must be achieved to remain a contender.

### Judges Responsibilities

- All award applications and marking sheets will be emailed to Judges to be viewed in advance of Judging day.
- Guest judges will join the core panel for award categories at an agreed time. This can be in person, online platform, or phone.
- In the case of a short time frame all judging will take place off site and communications will be via email/phone/online platform.
- Judges will apply the criteria for judging and the guiding framework for each award category and have a clear understanding of what each application should contain. It is of critical importance to Early Childhood Ireland that the judging process is confidential, fair, impartial, and transparent. All judges will sign a confidentiality agreement.
- The external Judges must jointly agree 8 Award winners and sign their name to the completed marking sheets for each award and fill in the reasons for each winning award application based on each award criteria.
- For transparency, a list of Judges names, their photo and their bios will be placed on Early Childhood Ireland's Awards web page.

### Judging individually and offsite

As a result of COVID19 our judging of the awards took place offsite, usually for our **ECI National Annual Awards** all judges meet face to face to discuss each application and come to an overall decision. We had to change how we worked, and all categories were judged individually and offsite. For this judging process to be robust and transparent we added extra steps in this process.

#### Step 1

- Each judge is emailed the shortlist application forms, marking sheets, criteria, and judging forms for the category they are judging. Each judge will fill in all forms and return.

#### Step 2

- When the judge's decision for a category is not unanimous all judges from that category will be emailed the judges top selected applications to review.

#### Step 3

- An online facilitated zoom meeting will be booked for the judges to discuss the top selections. The facilitator will keep notes and record the final unanimous decision on a winning form with judge's reasons.

### Judges Evaluation

Judges will be asked to fill out an evaluation on the judging and administrative processes to help ECI improve or maintain the quality of our Awards processes and criteria.



**Name: Aine Lynch**

**Organisation: National Parents Council**

Áine started her career as a trainee accountant, then changed direction and qualified as a general and paediatric nurse. After several years in nursing she went back to fulltime education where she completed an honours degree in Behavioural Sciences. Áine worked for two years in the area of child psychiatry following which she went on to work for the ISPCC as the Childline Manager and the Director of Services. In August 2007 Aine was appointed CEO of the National Parents Council Primary (NPC).

Áine was appointed to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) by the Minister for Education and Skills; served on the Board of the Children's Rights Alliance and was appointed to the Teaching Council in April 2016 and served on the first fitness-to-teach hearing panel.

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## **Name: Anne Fitzpatrick**

Anne Fitzpatrick worked for many years as a lecturer and tutor on the BA Early Childhood Education programme in the Technological University Dublin (formerly DIT). Before that she worked in a variety of early years services in both the community and disability sectors. Her teaching and research interests focus mainly on early years practice, including intergenerational learning, the professional development of early years practitioners and partnership with families and communities. Since 2012, she has participated in an EU-funded project entitled 'Together Old and Young' (TOY) that promotes intergenerational learning between young children and older people. As part of the project, she contributed to the development of a blended learning course on intergenerational learning that is now available online ([www.toyproject.net](http://www.toyproject.net)). She is currently researching intergenerational learning in the early childhood education sector from the perspectives of young children and early years practitioners



## **Name: Dr Anne-Marie Brooks**

### **Organisation: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)**

Anne-Marie is a Principal Officer in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. She oversaw the development of First 5, the Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families (2019-2028) and the initial First 5 Implementation Plan (2019-2021). She is responsible for progressing a range of First 5 actions, including the development of a new funding model for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare and the development of a new model of transition supports.

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**Name: Annette J. Kearns**

**Organisation: Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood,  
Maynooth University**

Annette J. Kearns is the Placement Co-ordinator and a lecturer on the B.A. in Early Childhood Teaching and Learning in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education where she has special responsibility for Professional Practice, Early Years Inclusion and Curriculum. Her experience ranges from working as an educator directly with children for 15 years, to working as an Early Childhood Specialist/Síolta Mentor with Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) and tutoring/lecturing in Early Childhood Education the over 20 years. Annette's research interests include early language and literacy development, special educational needs and inclusion, online programme development and learning and has presented her research widely, on both the national and international stage. Annette is currently undertaking a Doctor of Education with a curriculum specialism.



**Name: Chantal Williams**

**Organisation: Stepping Stones Children's Services Australia**

Chantal Williams founded Stepping Stones in 1996 with a small childcare centre in Ulverstone, Tasmania. Over the past 24 years the service has grown to operate 6 childcare centres and 15 school aged care programmes across 2 states. Chantal holds a master's degree in education, with a focus on leadership and is the recipient of state and national awards for leadership. She has been a presenter at national and international forums with a focus on leadership and staff relations. Her passion lies in a whole of service approach to the provision of care. Empowered families and staff, accessible care and great outcomes for children are the goals.

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**Name: Delia Goodman**

**Organisation: Better Start National Early Years Quality Development**

Delia Goodman has worked with Better Start National Early Years Quality Development since October of 2014; she is the AIM National Team Lead supporting the coordination and administration of Better Start AIM in ECCE settings. Delia has extensive experience of working in the early learning and care sector, from working with a variety of age groups and services, and has a BA Honours degree as well as a Masters in Early Years Education. Through her work with Better Start she promotes the importance of the sector and ongoing professional development to enhance early years. She sees first-hand the work practitioners do to support children and families and through this work supports the importance of CPD and the capacity building of the sector, whilst maintaining a focus on the strengths, interests and knowledge in the development of the Early Learning and Care sector.



**Name: Dr Judith Butler**

**Organisation: Cork Institute of Technology & President of OMEP Ireland**

**Dr Judith Butler** lectures in developmental, educational and child psychology on the BA Degree in ECEC at Cork Institute of Technology. Judith supervises both undergraduate and postgraduate research. She completed her PhD in UCC under the supervision of Prof Francis Douglas and her passion and research interests include the social domain of children's development and in particular, social competence, relationships and the impact of positive and adverse childhood experiences on children and their families. Judith has vast experience working with and on behalf of children in ECEC. She is also the editor of *An Leanbh Óg: The Irish Journal of Early Childhood Studies*. Judith is the President of OMEP Ireland and is a member of the scientific committee of World OMEP. OMEP is an international, non-governmental and non-profit organisation concerned with all aspects of Early Childhood Education and Care. Judith can be contacted at [Judith.butler@cit.ie](mailto:Judith.butler@cit.ie)

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**Name: Julie McNamara**

**Organisation: Kildare County Childcare Committee**

Julie McNamara is the CEO of Kildare County Childcare Committee. Julie is passionate about working for young children and families and values the rights of the child. Julie works from the principles of community development and believes everyone has the right to be heard, included, and empowered. Julie believes Early Childhood lays the foundations for the rest of the life cycle and is committed to working towards ensuring young children in Kildare receive the best outcomes possible. Julie is a UCC graduate, of the first BA in Early Childhood Studies Degree in Ireland. Julie also holds a M.Soc.Sc in Youth and Community work and a Diploma in Community Leadership. At Kildare County Childcare Julies work includes managing KCCC, responding to the needs of the childcare sector and representing the organisation at National and Local Fora to develop childcare in Ireland. Julie also works with Childcare Committees Ireland (CCI) at a policy level."



**Name: Lorraine Sands**

**Organisation: Educational Leadership Project / Greerton Early Learning Centre New Zealand**

Lorraine Sands is a Professional Learning Facilitator at Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand. In this role she has worked alongside teachers in a wide range of early learning settings, particularly to strengthen teaching teams' pedagogical engagement with the Principles and Strands of Te Whariki (NZ National Early Childhood Curriculum). She supports teachers to use thoughtfully written Learning Stories to grow children's identities as lifelong learners. These narratives embed children's learning inside the context of their communities. They are written from the perspective of teachers who have strong, enduring relationships with them. These emotionally connected descriptions of learning, over time, have a powerful effect, both on the quality of the learning environment offered, and on the opportunities created for children to learn together in ways that sustain and nurture collective wellbeing. Lorraine's other lifelong professional role is as a learner/teacher/ researcher inside Greerton Early Learning Centre. Shared leadership for all is an embedded feature of this community of learners. The Geerton teaching team have been involved in many research projects, most notably as a New Zealand Ministry of Education, Centre of Innovation.



### LINC Judging Panel

**Name: Professor Emer Ring, Dean of Early Childhood and Teacher Education at MIC Limerick.**

**Name: Dr Lisha O'Sullivan, Head of the Department of Reflective Pedagogy and Early Childhood Studies at MIC Limerick**

**Name: Anna Barr, (former) LINC Programme Tutor**

**Name: Carole Dee, LINC Programme Tutor**

**Name: Paula Hilliard, LINC Programme Tutor**

**Organisation: Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme**

The Leadership for INclusion in the Early Years programme, LINC, is a Level 6 Special Purpose Award (Higher Education) that is designed to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in the early years. Once qualified, graduates will perform the role of Inclusion Coordinator within their early years setting.

The judging panel for this award consists of two members of the LINC steering group, who were instrumental in the design and development of the programme, and three of the tutors that help deliver the course to early years teachers across Ireland.

Further information, including biographies of the judging panel members, is available at [www.lincprogramme.ie](http://www.lincprogramme.ie)

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**Name: Mary Daly**

**Organisation: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)**

Mary Daly lives in Tipperary and has worked in the area of early childhood care and education in Ireland in a number of different capacities over the past 19 years. Mary has a BA in Early Childhood Studies from University College Cork and in 2002 she completed a Ph. D. which focused on the emotional, social, moral and spiritual development of the young child. In 2004 she published a book based on her Ph. D. She has presented and published nationally and internationally. For more than a decade Mary has worked with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and she was involved in the development of *Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework*, the *Aistear Toolkit*, the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide*, and the *Mo Scéal Reporting* templates which support children's transition from preschool to primary school. She has been a member of ECI's Scientific Committee for the past number of years.



**Name: Mary Skillington**

**Organisation: Galway Mayo Institute of Technology**

Mary Skillington is a lecturer on the BA in Early Childhood Education and Care in GMIT, Mayo campus. Her specialist field is child development and learning with a particular interest in play and neuroscience. She has more than 20 years of experience in the field of early childhood education and care. Mary has completed an MA in "Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care". As an Early Years Specialist, she mentored educators in early years services in the west of Ireland. She is passionate about early childhood has delivered numerous workshops to parents and educators on the development of children between birth and six.

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**Name: Marlene McCormack**

**Organisation: DCU, Institute of Education**

I have been involved in early childhood education and care for the past 30 years, in practice, policy, training and currently teaching undergraduate and masters' students. I feel privileged to have developed personally and professionally through my involvement in IPPA and subsequently ECI over many years. Currently, I am the Chair of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education programme in DCU, I have been the coordinator for Professional Practice (Placement), and I teach in the broad areas of practice and play. I believe passionately in the rights of children to early education and the rights of those who work with them to professional pay, conditions, and progression paths. Some of my current research interests are in the areas of; pedagogical documentation and ways in which we see and capture children's learning; play as a powerful learning experience and professional practice as the basis for our work.



**Name: Michelle Hart**

**Organisation: National Childhood Network**

Michelle Hart is the Siolta/Aistear Manager with the National Childhood Network NCN (formerly the BCCN). She was employed in a variety of settings in the statutory and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland, before coming to work at the National Childhood Network eighteen years ago. Michelle has a BA (hons) in Early Years and an MSc in Inclusion and the Early Years.

Core work involves overseeing the implementation of Siolta/Aistear within NCN, supporting other Siolta/Aistear mentors within the organization and nationally. Michelle spends time advising on a range of early year's policy and practice at local, regional, and national level and working on a number of cross border programmes, including Sharing from The Start and Rural Respecting Difference Programme. Michelle has developed the nurturing emotional well-being element for the Healthy Ireland Smart Start programme. The programme is available nationwide, and is now extended for the under 3's. Other areas of interest include developing curriculum practice and listening to the voice of the child.