Abstract

This presentation aims to provide an insight into the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP), an innovative home based literacy and parenting programme developed to support parents and prepare children to succeed academically.

Originally from the United States, the PCHP is one of the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) at the National College of Ireland (NCI)’s suite of programmes to address educational disadvantage in the Dublin Docklands. The PCHP aims to improve children’s language, literacy and numeracy skills such that they start school ready. Trained home visitors, all local women trained and employed by NCI, visit the parent and preschool child over a two-year period and bring age-appropriate books and toys to encourage verbal interaction, creative play and learning through play. Through PCHP, parents are supported in learning a more enjoyable approach to talking, reading and playing with their children. Their understanding of their child’s development subsequently improves and they are better able to support their child’s learning as they progress through school.

From 2007-14, 400 children and their families have taken part in the PCHP in the Dublin Docklands with over 17,000 home visits taken place. The PCHP has been found to produce positive outcomes at the individual, family and community level with over twenty years of rigorous research demonstrating the program’s success in various areas of the United States (Plymouth Public Schools, 2008). In Ireland, the evaluation by the Children’s Research Centre, Trinity College has highlighted the positive impact of the programme on the children and families involved (Share, 2011). Furthermore, a recent longitudinal study using the first cohort to progress through the programme found that all the children are doing well in school, are still using the books and toys and in some cases are reading them to their younger siblings.