

# HEALTHY IRELAND FUNDING ROUND 3

## ACTIVITIES

### EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE (ELI)

#### PROMOTING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT FOR MOTHERS & FATHERS

Health and wellbeing programmes for disadvantaged communities that target parents but with specific recruitment strategies for fathers are limited across Ireland. Research is showing that father involvement has significant positive impact on a child's learning and development, it is imperative that high-quality programmes are offered and delivered to fathers, particularly those who may already be experiencing disadvantage in other areas of their lives. By increasing father involvement, children will benefit from an increased positivity in their learning environments and may bridge the health inequality gap between disadvantaged and more affluent communities.

The Early Learning Initiative ELI worked with Dublin City South CYPSC to provide this **health and wellbeing programme** that will engage parents living in disadvantaged communities in the South City area. Activities will focus on **promoting healthy attachment between mothers, fathers and their children** in order to encourage positive parental involvement from an early age through

- *Baby massage – father involvement*
- *Baby and Toddler Yoga*
- *Father involvement events*
- *Baby weaning booklets and information sessions*
- *Continued professional development ELI Staff*
- *Research and evaluation*

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ACTION	ACTIVITY
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Baby Massage Training	Provide Baby Massage training to 3 Home Visitors in order to implement with fathers
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3 Home Visitors *ELI* Staff participated in this continued professional development training Baby Massage training to implement with fathers. The programme allowed them to deliver the subsequent training for fathers as part of this funding programme. The training is to

- *Promote bonding and attachment, between you and your baby*
- *Help to relieve colic and constipation, and aids digestion*
- *Strengthen immunity, by fighting off germs*
- *Support verbal and non-verbal communication*
- *Improve baby's sleep patterns*
- *Give parents confidence in listening to their child's needs.*

ACTION	ACTIVITY
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Baby & Toddler Yoga Training	Provide Baby and Toddler Yoga Training to 5 Home Visitors in order to implement with families
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5 Home Visitor *ELI* Staff participated in this continued professional development training Baby Massage training to implement with families. The programme allowed them to deliver the subsequent training for families as part of this funding programme. The training allows for delivery of yoga exercise to

- infants 3-14 months and their parents
- children 14months to 4 years of age and their parents
- children of all ages and their families

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## ACTION

## ACTIVITY

Baby Massage Courses for Fathers

Run 2 Baby Massage courses for fathers

This baby massage course aimed at Dads is baby-led (meaning you follow your baby's needs during the class if baby is crying, needs to be fed, changed or held), and supports the parent providing multiple benefits for your baby.

Baby massage can be shown to:

- Promote bonding and attachment, between you and your baby
- Help to relieve colic and constipation, and aids digestion
- Strengthen immunity, by fighting off germs
- Support verbal and non-verbal communication
- Improve baby's sleep patterns
- Give parents confidence in listening to their child's needs.

Two courses of Baby Massage for fathers were completed on Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. The groups were also held on Saturdays to facilitate more participation from fathers. 4 fathers participated in the first course programme as is this was the maximum allowed by IAIM for online delivery of baby massage at the time (September 2020). 8 fathers took part in the second programme as the maximum allowed by IAIM for online delivery of baby massage has increased by then (April 2021).

**Early Learning Initiative**  
**DADS' BABY MASSAGE CLASSES**  
**SATURDAYS AT 10.30AM**

Our baby massage **online** course for dads starts this Saturday, March 27th at 10.30am – for three weeks. Suitable for babies from birth to pre-mobile, our **online** Zoom sessions allow you to join in at home, and are a great opportunity to meet other dads and enjoy a unique bonding experience with your baby.

**How do I use Zoom?**

- Download the Zoom app for free – available on a laptop, tablet or phone
- Email [info@earlylearninginitiative.ie](mailto:info@earlylearninginitiative.ie) or text 011 011 011 011 to request the Zoom link
- Check your email before the session starts – click on the Zoom link, enter the Meeting ID and Password when asked on screen, and enjoy!

This course will allow you to learn baby massage strokes and techniques that will help you and your baby relax, in the comfort of your home.

Our baby massage course is baby-led (meaning you can follow your baby's needs during the class if baby is crying, needs to be fed, changed or held), can support you as a parent, and provides multiple benefits for your baby. Baby massage can be shown to:

- Promote bonding and attachment, between you and your baby
- Help to relieve colic and constipation, and aids digestion
- Strengthen immunity, by fighting off germs
- Support verbal and non-verbal communication
- Improve baby's sleep patterns
- Give parents confidence in listening to their child's needs.

Click our Facebook page for updates @earlylearninginitiative

## FEEDBACK

The participants were asked to complete a post programme evaluation and we received 7 forms, much higher return rate than the first course. The feedback was very positive, with 100% of participants finding that the course benefitted their baby and were glad they attended. A few of the participants noted that they would have preferred this course to be in person, but one parent mentioned the benefits of participating from home as their baby is very young. We will take this feedback into consideration when running courses once restrictions permit face to face sessions.

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## ACTION

## ACTIVITY

## Baby and Toddler Yoga

Run 1 course of baby yoga and 1 toddler yoga with disadvantaged parents, specific recruitment strategies will be used to involve fathers

Both courses are complete and ran in May 2020. Based on the needs of participants, the two courses were broken into 3 to include a family yoga session for children of all ages. The course included:

- 2 baby yoga with 36 infants 3-14 months and their parents
- 2 toddler yoga sessions with 38 children aged 14months to 4 years of age
- 2 family yoga sessions with 8 children of all ages and their families

The courses were run via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time.

## FEEDBACK

Gathering evaluations post session was more challenging than anticipated. All participants were sent a link to an online post-evaluation, however, there has only been one response to date. It is important to note that the facilitator felt the sessions were received well, and that the participant evaluation highlighted that they strongly agreed that the class was supportive to providing a safe and comfortable way to exercise with their child.

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Father Involvement events

Run 2 events specifically aimed at engaging fathers in their child's learning and development

Two online STEM events that catered to engaging fathers and other male role models in the families were completed throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. Both events ran via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions.

One event focused on teaching the families how to create a working solar oven through materials funded by Healthy Ireland. 8 families engaged in this STEM workshop. The post programme evaluations were completed online, and we gathered the evaluations from all eight families.

#### FEEDBACK

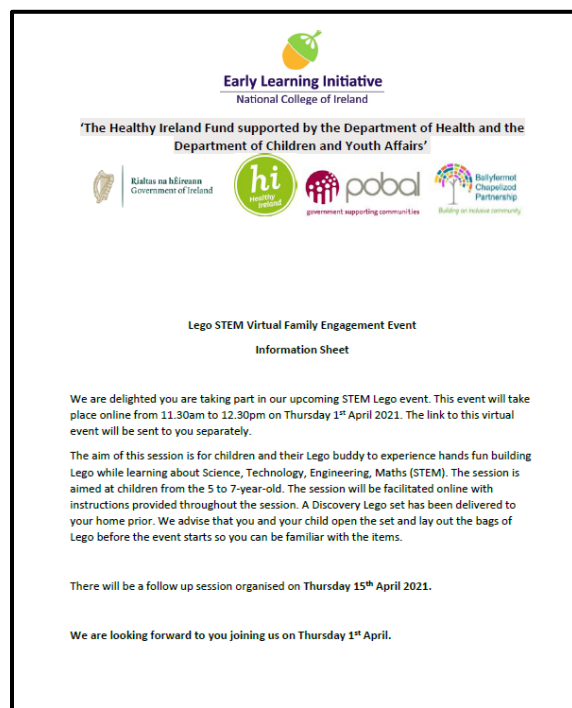
The feedback received from the post programme evaluations was very positive. All the parents and children that participated, reported that the workshop was enjoyable and 88% n=7 of parents found the workshop made them want to be more involved in helping their child learn STEM.

Participants also had the chance to provide qualitative feedback on how they think the event went.

*"Brilliant the way they sent the material out and let the child make it as they were learning." - Quote from a parent*

*"Being online with familiar faces, learning new things in a fun way but especially making the solar oven" -Quote from child*

The second event was the STEM Lego programme that ran in April 2021. This event was completed through Zoom due to on-going COVID-19 restrictions. Six families participated in this event and completed a pre-programme evaluation to inform us if there was enough technology at home to support their children's learning. A post programme evaluation form was distributed and five of the families completed the form. The feedback was very positive with 100% of participants agreeing that workshop made them want to be more involved in helping their child learn STEM and found the activity packs provided to be very beneficial.



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Baby Food Workshop

Provide 2 workshops in Family HUBS on preparing baby food – *Changed due to COVID restrictions*

This element did not take place as originally planned. COVID19 restrictions didn't allow for any in-person work in homeless hubs and engaging virtually was challenging. To maximise the future potential, it was agreed that, ELI Home Visitors would take part in a Baby Food Made Easy -Zoom Webinar training in order to provide relevant supports to families and services in future in person work.

A baby nutrition booklet was produced as part of the weaning/ baby food preparation course (right) . Families in the Homeless hubs were given the booklet and supporting in using it by the ELI Home Visitors who attended the Baby Food Made Easy training.

Baby Weaning Booklet available on CYPSC.ie/Dublin City South [HERE](#)



#### FEEDBACK

The Baby Food Made Easy training was completed through Zoom and 9 ELI Home Visitors attended. Four home visitors filled out a post-training survey and reported the key things they learned from the training. A list of the key learnings from the training are below.

- The amount of milk feeds a baby should be having based on their age
- The appropriate age for when babies are ready to eat food other than milk
- How and when to introduce new foods into a baby's diet
- Allergy tips for when preparing easy food.

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Infant and Toddler Nutrition Course

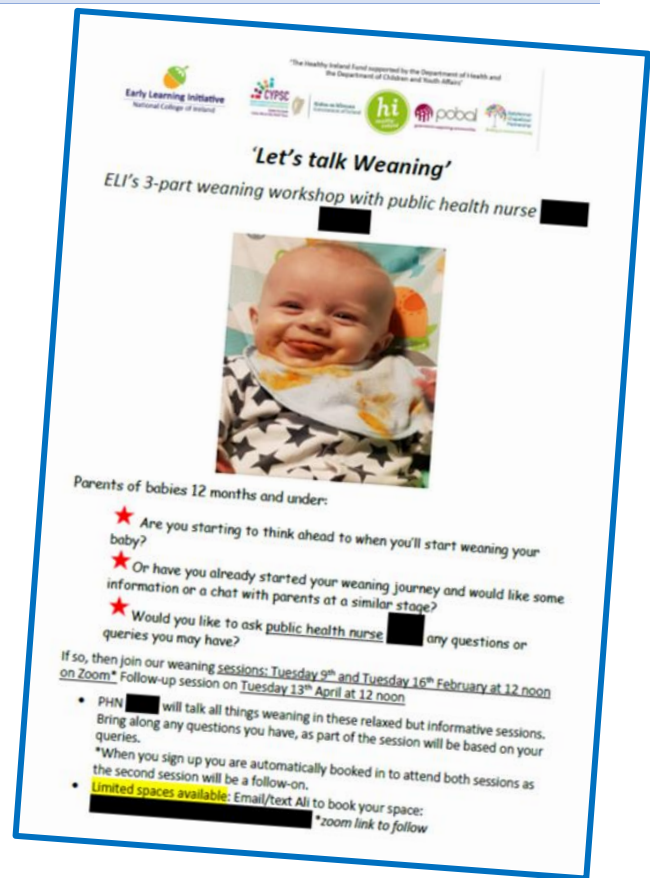
Run 2 Courses on weaning & subsequent baby food preparation

The two courses were completed and ran in February 2021. An additional follow-up session was completed in April 2021.

14 families attended the two virtual weaning courses and were sent an online post-programme evaluation. Four evaluations were completed, and the feedback was incredibly positive. 100% of participants reported having a better understanding of the process of weaning and reported gaining confidence in how to approach/continue their baby's weaning journey. When asked in the evaluation what further support is needed, a parent mentioned having a third session to put what they learned into practice and raise more questions with the facilitators.

#### FEEDBACK

Based on the feedback provided, a follow-up session was organised and three of the families attended. One family completed an evaluation for the follow-up course and found the follow-up session to be helpful and allowed them to discuss their questions/issues with weaning. The participant also mentioned that having the PHN at the session was beneficial.



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## EVALUATION

PRE AND POST EVALUATIONS OF ALL GROUPS RAN, COLLATION OF DATA, INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTS

COURSE NAME	DELIVERY	PARTICIPANTS	FEEDBACK
Baby Massage Courses for Fathers	Zoom	12	8 post-programme evaluations completed - 100% of participants found that the course benefitted their baby and were glad they attended
Baby and Toddler Yoga	Zoom	82	<i>Unfortunately gathering evaluations post session was more challenging than anticipated. All participants were sent a link to an online post-evaluation, however, there has only been one response to date. It is important to note that the facilitator felt it the sessions were received well, and that the participant evaluation highlighted that they strongly agreed that the class was supportive to providing a safe and comfortable way to exercise with their child.</i>
Father Involvement events	Zoom	14	14 post-programme evaluations completed- 100% of participants enjoyed the workshop and 92% reported learning something new
Baby Food Workshop	Zoom	9	4 post-training evaluations completed. Participants reflected on the key learnings from the training and will share with their families
Infant and Toddler Nutrition Course	Zoom	14	4 post-programme evaluations completed. 100% of participants reported having a better understanding of the process of weaning and reported gaining confidence in how to approach/continue their baby's weaning journey

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