

# International Early Childhood Arts Commission 2016

Support Document / Early Childhood Arts in the  
Dublin region examples of previous work

Dublin City Council  
Fingal County Council  
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council  
South Dublin County Council



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



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# Context

Over the past five years, Dublin City Council, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Fingal County Council have sought to encourage the emerging sector of Early Childhood Arts in Ireland via the creation of opportunities and support for artists working within this strand of arts practice. South Dublin County Council has identified early childhood practice as an area for development in its new Arts Plan and is beginning to initiate relationships to foster new resources in this administrative area.

Listed below are the artists, artistic companies, researchers and partners that the four County Councils have worked with, in addition to some strong examples of early years work that have been created as a direct result of the various Councils' active support.

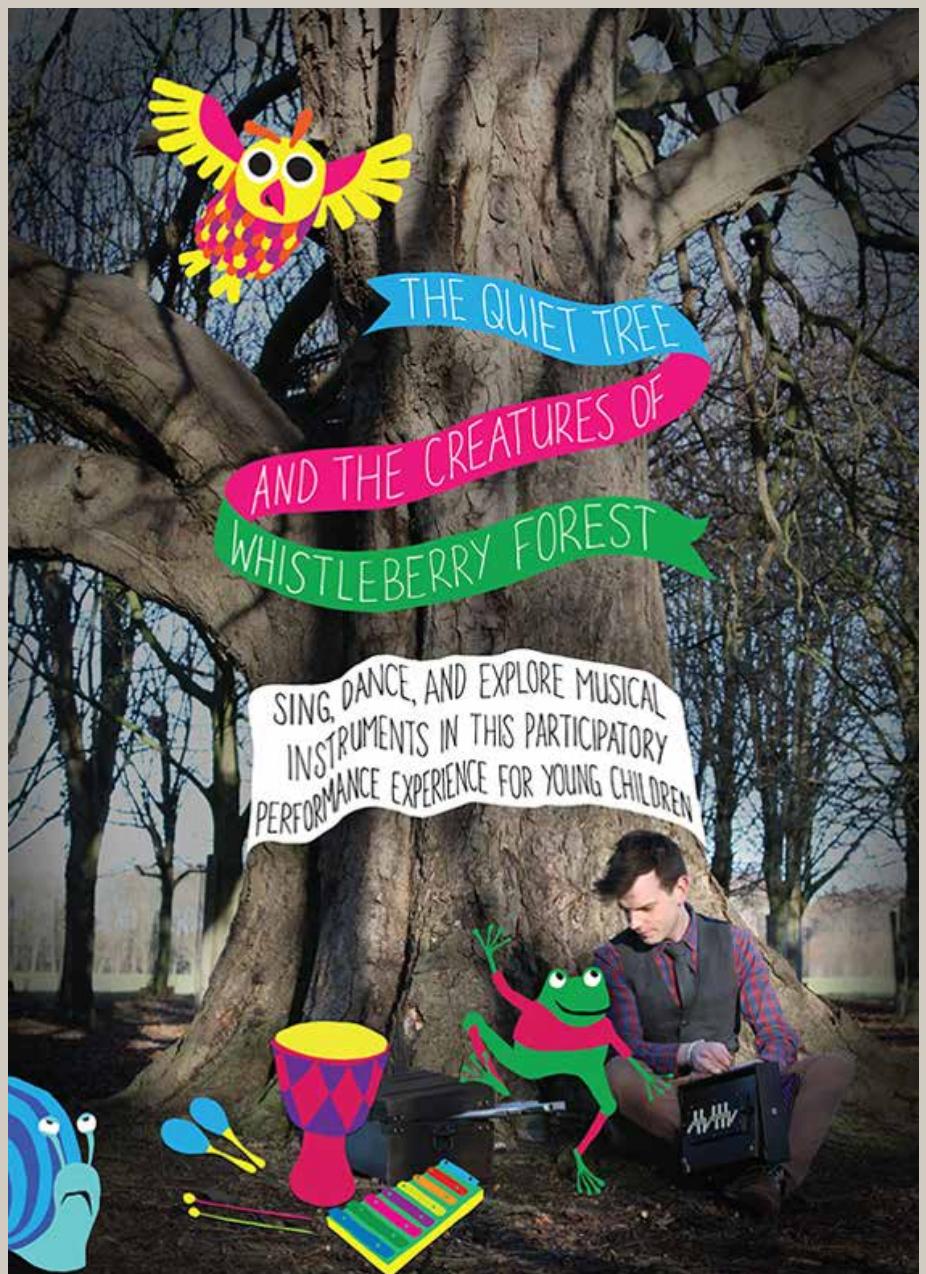


Image © Thomas Johnston

# Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Arts Office: Examples of previous work

In 2014 dlr Arts Office began working with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee. They identify where the need is and what would be most useful for the sector within the County. Before this from 2009 – 2013 we based some projects in community based childcare facilities and they ran in tandem with our Primary Arts Programme.

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## Nov 2014 – April 2015:

**'Artist at Work' programme with Helen Barry. Based in local crèches and one local school (Jnr and Snr class) Helen developed work with the children centred around milk cartons.**

During the same period she was also based in the Project Room of dlr Lexlcon and developed family and early years workshops. The public could drop in and see an 'Artist at Work' at designated times outside of the workshops.

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## Feb – May 2015:

**Music Programme with Eamon Sweeney based in dlr Lexlcon, workshops for 2-3 and 3-4 year olds.**

Accompanied by CPD sessions for early childhood educators and special sessions for parents/guardians as to the benefits of music for early years children.

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## Jun-Jul 2015:

**Gallery Learning Programme for Matisse: Drawing with Scissors.**

This manifested as a creative hub that the general public could interact with (without staff) in the Project Room and also as a series of workshops for children from 4+ months as well as family sessions and special grandparent sessions. These workshops and the creative hub were designed as responses to the gallery exhibition and a tour of the exhibition was used as a stimulus.

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**Sunlight - 4 to 14 months**

**Developed by artist Helen Barry, 45mins**

For the very very young these workshops will focus on exploring colour, shape and texture with your baby. Using age appropriate materials and fabrics to play, touch, feel, and begin the process of creating together with your child.

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### **Under The Sea – 2 to 3 year olds**

#### **Developed by artist Helen Barry, 60mins**

This multi-sensory workshop will use sound, movement and visual art to explore the world under the sea without getting wet. Parents will enjoy this workshop as it will give plenty of ideas to try out at home.

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### **Seilmidhe or Snail: an animal that carries his home on his back.**

#### **3 to 5 yrs**

#### **Developed by artist Helen Barry, 60mins**

This workshop uses movement, drama, visual art and a transparent umbrella to explore the idea of home through the life of a snail.

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### **Early Years Co-Commissions 2015-17**

In 2015 dlr Arts Office with support from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee sought individuals or organisations to research, develop and perform brand-new artistic and interactive experiences for pre-school children. An integral part of the commission was that successful applicants would be based in one of our local community childcare facilities to develop the work with the children (with the children being co-creators).

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### **Spine by Helen Barry**

'Spine' is made up of a number of interactive art works that invite very small children to move, to get into and out of, to fit together in different ways and to play with on their own or with their parents. The idea for 'Spine' came from observing how early years children learn, how and when they respond and how they express themselves through movement from the tops of their heads to the tips of their toes. 'Spine' was created by visual artist Helen Barry and the children from Casa Rosa Montessori in Dún Laoghaire. Every week over 5 months Helen led the children through a series of challenging and exciting workshops that explored movement, sound and construction through play and the visual arts.

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### **The Tail of Herman by Irma Grothuis**

#### **A performance is suitable for 3-4 year olds**

"Herman the mouse lives and plays in a beautiful garden with all his friends. But one day the animals meet a little bird who's lonely and has travelled far from home and they decide to help her."

This performance was written by Irma Grothuis and strongly influenced by the children attending the Early Years' Service facilitated by Ballyogan's Family Resource Centre.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u\\_OLKzfkYw&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u_OLKzfkYw&feature=youtu.be)

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# Dublin City Council

## Arts Office:

## Examples of previous work



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Dublin City Council's LAB Gallery supports emerging artists at the beginning of their careers and more established artists taking risks in their practice. Among its innovative education and learning programmes is Project 20/20, a visual literacy initiative for children in our neighbourhood, Dublin 1. Building over time, Project 20/20 focuses on developing the visual literacy of a specific cohort of children and young people, by connecting them with contemporary Irish art and artists and unlocking their voices as citizens – what they tell us about their lives, connections with others (family, teachers, community), how they learn and develop.

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### Seodín O'Sullivan – Contemporary Art, Ecology & Early Childhood (Ongoing)

Seodín is an artist and educator who developed an interest and practice in Early Years Art Education since becoming a mother five years ago. She is currently art lecturer at St Patrick's College, DCU, Drumcondra on their Bachelor in Early Years Education Degree. She exhibited her first collaborative project at The LAB Gallery - TRESPASS : a film, photography and performative exploration of wasteland spaces in inner city Dublin with Aoife Desmond in 2009. The LAB Gallery has been working with Seodín since 2012 developing an early years practice responding to the work exhibited within the gallery for the children in local early years crèche's.

Each exhibition in the LAB Gallery sees the artist using a different material, theme, response and media. For each session Seodín designs a response workshop to the contemporary artists and artwork, exploring multi- layered and multi sensory approaches to the making visible of their ideas and variety of materials, tools and tactics in the creation of their art works. Her pedagogical framework follows the work of Reggio Emilia, an educational approach initiated in Italy which looks at the child as citizen and High-Scope placing the child at the centre of their learning, a method largely used by Barnados who work with children who are at risk, through economic and social disenfranchisement and poverty.

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## DCC Children's Art in Libraries Programme (CAL)



Over the past six years CAL has commissioned a number of Early Years Programmes that have taken place within the Library context. In addition to this, where appropriate, the CAL programme has provided mentorship and support to artists who seek to develop their practice in relation to early years.

**Listed below are a selection of the programmes whose development the CAL Programme has supported over the past six years:**

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### **Sleeping Beauty**

**A Drama and Music event for young children and families with artists Gabrielle Breathnach and Eamon Sweeney**

*Once upon a time there was a very tired princess and she slept for one hundred years...*

Using the mediums of music and dramatic storytelling, this integrated series of workshops aims to unleash the creativity of a young child's imagination upon the telling of the hypnotic and familiar tale of Sleeping Beauty.

Working with the programme's artists over two sessions, young children and their parents explore key themes within the story of Sleeping Beauty, using the tools of dramatic development and musical composition. It is hoped that this process results in the creation of both characters and music that can animate this magical world from the child's unique perspective.

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### **The Mice and The Elephants**

**A puppetry and storytelling event for young children and their families, Developed by Púca Puppets**

*"Did anyone hear anything? I thought I heard a little creaky squeaking sound?" said the Elephant.*

*"Please can you ask the elephants to stop walking on us!" the Mouse King shouted. The Elephant looked around, "is that a tickly little noise or do my ears need cleaning? Oh my goodness, what a teeny, tiny, funny little furry thing you are, did you say something? Come up here beside my ear until I hear you speak".*

Created in 2014 to celebrate and mark the arrival of two new baby elephants in Dublin Zoo, the Children's Art in Libraries Programme in partnership with Púca Puppets present *The Mice and The Elephants*, a Panchatantra Hindu animal fable from India. Using, drawing, simple paper sets and puppets, the storyteller retells and re-enacts, this gentle and imaginative tale of the small saving the large.

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**Tother with artists Eamon Sweeney and Fiona Dowling  
A Storytelling and Music Show for 3-5 year olds**

*Today you are you! That is truer than true!  
There is no one alive who is you-er than you!*  
Dr Seuss

From the earliest moments of life we learn to recognise others and ourselves as separate beings. Through the use of stories, music and toys this playful and participative show investigates the mystery of 'otherness'; exploring how diversity leads to fun, friendship, confusion and sometimes... danger!

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**The Lost Sound with artists Neil Brown and Eamon Sweeney,  
Mentored by Ríonach Ní Néill  
A Dance and Music Show for Young Children and their families**

Neil has lost his sound – and without sound he can't do anything! He can't walk, talk or move at all. Luckily he's a friend of Eamon. Eamon is a sound doctor and will help Neil get his sound back, make some music and hopefully even find his inner voice! *The Lost Sound*.

<https://vimeo.com/146961296>

Created for children of all ages – but especially 4–7yr olds!

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**Arts in Early Childhood Education in Community  
settings – Professional Development**

In Winter 2016 /2017 DCC Arts Office / Children's Art in Libraries began a partnership with **Preparing for Life - an early childhood initiative of the Northside Partnership, under their Strengthening Foundations for Learning Programme** to develop a responsive early years arts development programme for **Doras Bui Parents Alone resource service, Coolock and Darndale Belcamp Integrated Childcare Service (Jigsaw)** within the local library and community childcare settings.

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# Fingal County Council

## Arts Office:

### Examples of previous work



In 2012 Fingal Arts Office began work in early years arts. Since then the programme has grown to include Space Invaders - an international arts festival for children, families and educators, and Artful Dodgers – a music and visual arts programme in crèche services which includes new research in partnership with the Arts Education Research Group (AERG), Trinity College Dublin.

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#### Artful Dodgers (2013-present)

*Artful Dodgers* is an early years music and visual arts programme, delivered in two community crèches in Fingal and engaging children aged three to five years. Fingal County Council's Arts Office, artists Jackie Maguire (music) and Naomi Draper (visual arts), Fingal County Childcare Committee and Trinity College Dublin are delivering *Artful Dodgers* in partnership with the children and staff of Ros Éo Community Childcare Centre, Rush and Little Learners Crèche, Mulhuddart. *Artful Dodgers* is a music and visual arts programme that includes an artist-in-residence phase, a creative exchange phase and a parental involvement phase. The programme engaged Dr. Lucie Corcoran and Prof. Carmel O'Sullivan of AERG at TCD to explore the following question in phase one:

*Does music and visual arts enhance children's early literacy and numeracy skills?*

In phase two the programme engaged Prof. Carmel O'Sullivan and Prof. Noirin Hayes directly to explore the following key questions:

*Does Artful Dodgers as a model sustain arts practices in early years settings? And Does Artful Dodgers qualify as a model of CPD for early years educators?*

The programme is currently in phase three – a parental involvement phase, which is also being researched by the AERG, Trinity College Dublin.

Footage of the *Artful Dodgers* research presentations given at *Space Invaders Early Years Arts Festival & Seminar* in 2015 is available from <https://vimeo.com/181648188>

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## Space Invaders, International Early Years Arts Festival and Seminar 2015

Fingal Arts Office produces *Space Invaders* in partnership with Clíodhna Noonan of *Acting Up Arts!*, artist Jackie Maguire of *Colourstrings Music with Jackie* and Farmleigh Estate. *Space Invaders* is an international arts festival for children, families and early years educators. Now in its third year, the festival includes a series of international performances created for an early years audience, and a series of artist-led workshops for early years educators and early years artists.

The 2015 festival programme included artists and companies from Belgium, Lithuania, Croatia, Austria, Great Britain and Ireland. A unique seminar focusing on early years arts practice and research was included. It featured a local perspective with *Artful Dodgers Research Collaborative* presenting findings on an ongoing action research project in community crèche settings in Fingal, that aims to contribute to the development of early years arts education in Ireland; *Starcatchers UK* presented an international perspective, speaking about their multi-agency partnership programmes that aim to put arts and creativity at the heart of early years practice in Scotland. A panel discussion included members from *The Arts Council of Ireland*, *Better Start*, *Early Childhood Ireland*, *Artful Dodgers* and *Starcatchers*. Each year the festival is oversubscribed with waiting lists to attend.

Please see the 2015 brochure:

[http://fingalarts.ie/resources/Space\\_Invaders\\_E\\_Brochure.pdf](http://fingalarts.ie/resources/Space_Invaders_E_Brochure.pdf)

And here is promotional footage of the 2015 festival:

<https://vimeo.com/181805264>



Image © Fingal County Council



## Space Invaders, International Early Years Arts Festival and Workshop Series (2014)

The 2014 programme included performances and workshops from artists and companies from Ireland, Great Britain, Austria, and Croatia. Families enjoyed activities exploring the infinite possibilities presented by our natural and built environment for creative play and artistic engagement at Farmleigh, while early years educators attended experiential workshops designed with their professional needs in mind.

Promotional footage of the 2014 festival is available here:  
<https://vimeo.com/121765574>

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## Now We Are Ready to Start! Workshop series (2012)

*Now We Are Ready to Start!* was delivered by Fingal Arts Office in collaboration with three Irish artists – Orla Kelly, Helen Barry and Laura de Burca. Each artist specialises in working creatively with children. A series of stimulating and playful workshops were devised specifically for those in their early years and their parents. The programme was delivered over four weeks and advertised to a general public.

Find programme details here:  
[http://fingalarts.ie/resources/Ready\\_to\\_Start\\_A4.pdf](http://fingalarts.ie/resources/Ready_to_Start_A4.pdf)

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For additional information of Fingal County Council's early years arts programme visit:

<http://fingalarts.ie/education/early-years/>  
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# South Dublin County Council Arts Office: Examples of previous work

Children's programming, and early childhood in particular has been identified as a priority area for service development in South Dublin County over the course of the next five years 2017- 2021. It's introduction to Early Childhood Arts has been through Ruaille Buaille Lucan Childrens Music Festival and through the programme of a local partner South Dublin County Childcare Committee.

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In 2015 South Dublin County Council introduced early years workshops for children (1-2yrs) and (3-4yrs) and their parents to Ruaille Buaille Lucan Childrens Music Festival which were delivered by musicians Paula Phelan and Eamon Sweeny, in Lucan Library. The festival takes place in June each year. Early childhood programming has been identified as an area for development in the 2017 festival programme.  
<http://www.ruaillebuaille.ie/>

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In 2015, local partner organisation South Dublin County Childcare Committee commissioned a residency *Our House* with visual artist Jackie Maguire engaging with 'transitioners', parents and educators in four creches in South Dublin County and a number of primary school teachers.

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