

ECCE & Play Early Childhood Ireland
trading as

Early Childhood Ireland

A company limited by guarantee

Directors' / Trustees'
**Annual Report &
Financial Statements**

Year Ended 31 December 2019

Contents

Directors and Other Information	3
Directors' Report.....	4
A message from our Chairperson and CEO	5
1. Summary of Early Childhood Ireland's Purpose and Activities	6
2. Achievements and Performance of Early Childhood Ireland	12
3. Financial Review.....	27
4. Structure, Governance and Management	30
Directors Responsibilities Statement.....	38
Independent Auditors Report to the Members of ECCE & Play Early Childhood Ireland t/a Early Childhood Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2019	39
A. Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2019	42
B. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019	43
C. Statement of Changes in Funds for the year ended 31 December 2019	44
D. Statement of Cashflows for the year ended 31 December 2019	45
E. Notes to the Financial Statements	46

Directors and Other Information	
DIRECTORS	Paul Gilligan Catherine O'Brien Thomas Walsh Catherine Byrne Jillian van Turnhout Anne Looney Karen McGovern Breda Joyce Michele Akerlind
Retired Directors who served during the year:	Liam Fahy (resigned on 1 October 2019)
CHAIRPERSON	Jillian van Turnhout (term as Chairperson ended on 12 October 2019) Paul Gilligan (from 13 October 2019)
SECRETARY	Susan Selfridge
SOLICITORS	Crowley Millar 2-3 Lower Exchange Street IFSC Dublin 1
AUDITORS	Gerard O'Rorke and Company Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors Castle Street Kells, Co Meath
BANKERS	Allied Irish Bank 100/101 Grafton Street Dublin 2
REGISTERED OFFICE	Hainault House Belgard Square South Tallaght, Dublin 24 D24 RFV0
COMPANIES OFFICE NUMBER	506235
CHARITY NUMBER CHY	19987
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	20078904

Directors' Report

The Directors submit their Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2019 for consideration at the Annual General Meeting.

As a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital incorporated in the Republic of Ireland under the Companies Act 2014, these accounts are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Reference and Administrative Details

The organisation is a charitable company with a registered office at Hainault House, Belgard Square South, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 RFV0. The legal title of the charity is ECCE & Play Early Childhood Ireland and it trades under the name Early Childhood Ireland.

Accounting Records

To ensure proper books and accounting records are kept in accordance with Section 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, the company has established appropriate books to adequately record the transactions of the company. The company also ensures that the company retains the source of documentation for these transactions. The books of account are maintained at the company's registered office at Early Childhood Ireland, Hainault House, Belgard Square South, Tallaght, D24 RFV0.

Statement on Relevant Audit Information

In accordance with Section 330 of the Companies Act 2014:

- so far as each person who was a director at the date of approving of this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information, being information needed by the auditor in connection with preparing its report, of which the auditor is unaware; and
- each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Auditors

The Auditors, Gerard O'Rorke and Company, Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors, will continue in office in accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

A message from our Chairperson and CEO



Paul Gilligan, Chairperson



Teresa Heeney, Chief Executive Officer

“Every young child is thriving and learning in a quality early childhood setting”; this is the vision we continued to work towards in 2019.

Feedback from our members in 2019, told us that the year has been the single most challenging one in a series of difficult years. Recruitment and retention of staff remains a huge issue. The re-registration process and in particular Part B of the process, which has now been pushed out to June 2020, led to considerable concern and uncertainty. The autumn saw another year of payment delays, and further delays to the rollout of the National Childcare Scheme. By mid December, when the exit of an insurance Underwriter came to light, there were major concerns around the sustainability of the sector. Throughout 2019 we responded as flexibly as possible to our members’ needs. We received and responded to an unprecedented number of calls to our Early Years Employer Service. On member’s behalf, we engaged with the relevant Departments and agencies to lessen the impact of these major issues.

The organisation has also established key relationships with other organisations outside the early years sector to inform them of relevant developments, provide knowledge and expertise to contribute to their thinking and actions on the early years. Early Childhood Ireland worked collaboratively with the Irish Dental Health Foundation, safefood and the Irish Heart Foundation to bring programmes which supported children’s oral hygiene, physical activity for young children and handwashing hygiene to our sector. We were also involved in a number of international projects throughout the year, enhancing our expertise on childminding, accreditation of prior learning, transitions etc and allowing us develop new relationships for future partnerships.

There were a number of highlights for the organisation throughout the year.

190 delegates attended the National Research Day in April. Early Childhood Ireland's National Early Years’ Research Day Proceedings publication opened to accept papers and is due for publication in 2020. It is the first time Early Childhood Ireland has planned to produce a publication like this and it has been a significant learning experience and welcome additional resource for our sector.

Our National Awards and Gala Dinner was a sold-out event this year with 300 attending to celebrate and acknowledge the quality of early years educators' work and commitment in the sector. Two new award categories were introduced this year and we have had requests for additional awards to be added next year.

In May, our National Pyjama Day saw 65,000 children from 1,300 crèches and preschools nationwide raise €280,000 for six charities: AsIAM, ReCreate; Central Remedial Clinic; Respond Housing Association and Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency (DESSA).

The Board also worked hard throughout the year to ensure good governance and oversight of the organisation. The Board completed the Charity Regulator's Governance Code, held a Board Residential, completed governance training and conducted a Board skills audit. We would like to thank our outgoing chairperson, Jillian van Turnhout, for her work and dedication to the organisation over the last number of years.

Early Childhood Ireland is committed to a reflective process. 2020 will mark the beginning of developing a new Strategic Plan for the organisation. Processes have been put in place to reflect on 2019 and to ensure feedback from members, staff and the Board will inform the development of the next Strategic Plan.

We would like to thank our members for their continued support, and we look forward to an exciting and productive 2020.



1. Summary of Early Childhood Ireland's Purpose and Activities

Early Childhood Ireland is the largest national representative organisation in the early learning and care (ELC) sector in Ireland with over 3,700 members, representing almost 70% of childcare service provision in the country.

Through our membership, the organisation reaches over 25,000 early childhood educators and almost 200,000 families daily. As a national organisation, Early Childhood Ireland's vision is that every young child is thriving and learning in a quality early childhood setting. This vision is based on the knowledge that early childhood is a critical period for the nurturing of each individual child's curiosity, resilience, creativity, confidence and potential. The vision is also based on a principle that every child has a right to a childhood that is loving, secure and stimulating.

Early Childhood Ireland is committed to collaborative working at a national and international level. The primary role of the organisation is to support and advocate for the people who play a role in the development and delivery of early years and school age care services and policies in order to ensure good quality experiences for children. We achieve this through providing pedagogical and governance leadership as well as supporting new developments and providing opportunities and possibilities for the sector.

As a membership organisation, we are committed to a learning partnership with our members and a close working relationship with a cohort of very engaged and progressive service providers and educators with valued practitioner research.

In supporting and advocating on behalf of the sector, children and their families, Early Childhood Ireland provides information, advice, support and mentoring. We also offer continuing professional learning (CPL) on practice, pedagogy, governance and operational issues which support legislative compliance and quality in practice. The organisation has a particular focus on highlighting learning from practice and empowering educators as researchers. Over the years, we have developed a wide range of resources aimed at bringing together research and practice. We are currently scoping out an online learning hub to meet the needs of members and the wider early years and school age care sector for compliance, training and ongoing CPL.

1.1 Objects of the Organisation

1.1.1 Main Object

The main object for which the Company is established (the "Main Object") is to advance education by promoting childcare and education services that facilitate children's learning, development and wellbeing; to promote, maintain, improve and advance the education of parents and families of such children and other appropriate persons, with an emphasis on play experience and to work to increase the quality of ELC services and after-school settings for children in Ireland.

1.1.2 Subsidiary Objects

As objects incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the Main Object, the Company shall have the following subsidiary objects:

- to promote the welfare of children;
- to increase public awareness of the needs of children and to highlight the need for and the value of Early Years Settings and After-schools;
- to act as an advisory body with statutory authorities with regard to policymaking, finance and other matters ancillary thereto;

- to increase and maintain high standards provided by Early Years Settings and After-schools by developing awareness of the importance of high quality care through the development and dissemination of information, by educating Members, staff, parents and legislators; to inform and educate the public generally about Early Years Settings and After-schools through the medium of internet, information technology, web and by publishing, distributing, buying and selling books, reports, articles, periodicals circulars and other publications containing materials relating to Early Years Settings and After-schools;
- to encourage appropriate parental involvement in promoting Early Years Settings and After-schools;
- to operate and maintain a service for the provision of advice and support on all matters relating to Early Years Settings and After-schools to Members and parents and to collaborate with and assist other organisations, bodies and persons in Ireland and elsewhere in the provision of such advice;
- to organise and hold meetings, discussions, lectures, seminars, conferences, appropriate training courses and study groups relating to the main object of the Company and generally to engage in all such publicity as may be deemed expedient for the purposes of promoting the main object of the Company;
- to conduct research, either by its own officers, agents and staff or by other persons and institutions, into the facts relating to Early Years Settings and After-schools and matters associated therewith and disseminate the learning to Members and others;
- to partner, collaborate, associate or liaise for educational and/or commercial purposes, with persons and organisations connected with or interested in Early Years Settings and After-schools and/or the activities of the Company in pursuit of the main object of the Company and to disseminate and/or otherwise use the results or information gleaned from such partnerships, collaborations, associations or liaisons in furtherance of the main object;
- to maintain a national support network of Early Years Settings and After-schools.

1.2 Vision, Mission and Values

Early Childhood Ireland's objects are articulated in our Vision, Mission and Values.:

Vision

Every young child is thriving and learning in quality early childhood settings.

Mission

Our mission is to inspire and enable members to provide quality experiences for young children and their families in their settings.

Values

As a membership-based organisation, we value:

- Children as competent learners and as citizens with rights;
- Parents as champions and as the most important people in the lives of children;
- Early childhood professionals; their commitment, dedication and professionalism in working with young children and their families;
- Play as a right and as a key learning pathway in the lives of children;

- Collaborative working to achieve our aims and bring about change;
- Knowledge building and sharing to inform, enrich and empower;
- Integrity, respect and ethical behaviour at the heart of how we work.

1.3 Our Staff Team

The organisation is managed by a Senior Management Team, headed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and comprising the Deputy CEO with responsibility for Membership and Operations, Director of Research and Professional Learning, Director of Policy and Advocacy and Director of Communications and Development.

In 2019, Early Childhood Ireland had four staff teams: Membership and Operations; Research and Professional Learning; Policy and Advocacy; Communications and Development.

The Membership and Operations team has two core functions: to support the membership through the provision of member services, such as Garda Vetting, running of the online shop and operation of our Early Years Employer Service (EYES); to ensure the smooth and effective running of the organisation itself through the provision of ICT support, finance, governance support and office management. The HR manager is an integral part of this team and has a dual role in that she leads the EYES team while also supporting the internal management team. EYES was launched at the Annual Conference in April 2019 and is an evolution of our Support Point service. EYES provides a helpline for members in relation to all aspects of operating their childcare service and also offers HR advice, as well as providing additional HR resources. The EYES team took 3,134 calls in 2019 which was an increase of 54% on the previous year. The highest category of calls from members related to the re-registration process for early years settings, which accounts for 30% of the queries received in 2019.

The Policy and Advocacy team advocates for our members and the wider early years sector and undertakes media work to improve public information and awareness about the early years sector. The team also co-ordinates our advocacy and representation work with and on behalf of members on a wide range of policy and implementation forums and committees, nationally and internationally. The team engages in research and every year, is responsible for publishing the Annual Childcare Barometer, now in its 2nd year, which is an independent opinion poll to gauge and track public opinion on our issues.

The Communications and Development team is responsible for internal and external communications through our website, targeted emails, weekly ezine, quarterly magazine, other publications, and digital platforms. This team is also responsible for business development and looking after affinities which members can avail of, as well as liaising with sponsors.

The Research and Professional Learning team is made up of Early Childhood Specialists who provide training, mentoring and support to our members. This team delivers modules on the BA in Early Childhood Teaching & Learning in Maynooth University and lectures in a number of other third level institutions. Team members are active participants on forums and working groups representing the sector. There are 42 services engaging in the National Siolta Quality Assurance Program for the 2019-2020 program which is managed by the team. The team has expertise in the Marte Meo and Reggio inspired approaches as well as in risk rich play, outdoor play and practice

with babies and children under 3. Action based research is an integral part of their work. At the end of 2019, there were 3 European Erasmus funded international projects ongoing, also enhancing our expertise.

1.3.1 Remuneration and Performance Management

Early Childhood Ireland has set salary scales which it adheres to for all employees. The Remuneration Sub-Committee of the Board is responsible for setting and reviewing the CEO's salary. In terms of performance management, each line manager is responsible for reviewing the performance of the staff within his or her team. This is achieved through a performance management, one to one support and supervision meetings on a regular basis and by setting a work plan for the year.

1.4 Broader Sector and Environment

The early childhood care and education sector is predominantly female. Each day women of all ages are engaged in caring for and educating babies and children, with our members also playing an additional and vital leadership and guidance role with their staff. It remains a sad fact that despite the hard work of our members, and all those working in the sector, education, learning and care-work in the early years remain under-resourced and undervalued in the public policy process. Despite this, Early Childhood Ireland's second Childcare Barometer¹ showed the huge value which the Irish public places on the early years of the lives of babies and young children, as well as on those who provide this care. Throughout 2019, we continued calls for greater government investment in the early years sector.

Feedback from our members, in particular through our Early Years Employer Service, tells us that 2019 has been the single most challenging in a series of difficult years. Recruitment and retention of staff, the re-registration process, the lack of choice in insurance, high insurance costs and delays in payments and uncertainty around the rollout of the National Childcare Scheme have led to concerns around the sustainability of the sector for members. While we have an implementation plan for the year ahead, we still need to be able to flexibly respond to changes as they emerge in order to continue to meet the needs of our members.

First 5, the Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families was launched in 2018 by the Department of Children and Youth. It is a ten-year plan to improve the lives of babies, young children and their families. The National Childcare Scheme (NCS) was introduced in 2019 and is a new scheme that provides financial support to help parents to meet the costs of childcare.

1.5 Our Impact – What our members say

One of our main events throughout the year is our National Awards, which celebrate and showcase our members' ambition and commitment to continuously improve the quality of their practice and their services to children and their families. The night shines a light on the creativity, innovation,

¹ Early Childhood Ireland's Childcare Barometer 2019, available at:

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/advocacy/childcare-barometer/childcare-barometer-2019/>

impact, leadership and the advancement of professionalism in our sector. In 2019, five awards were presented in five categories and here are some words from the winners:

Winner of the National Parents Council Award:

‘... supports them (parents) in choosing an early years setting for their child.’

‘NPC is in the early stages of developing services and advocacy for parents in the early years sector.’

‘Contributing towards improved outcomes for all children remains the focus of our work.’

Winner of Inspired Practice:

‘It demonstrates what can be achieved when we listen to and value the voice of the child’

‘The children at ABC club are well used to having discussion and being heard.’

‘The team asked the children for ideas on how the could teach adults to how to pick up after their dogs.’

Winner of Learning Stories:

‘They are an opportune tool for tuning into the world of children in a deeper, more meaningful way.’

‘The children were so excited to tell their families about their plans to build a castle.’

‘With great support from families in supplying us with cardboard, and with planning permission granted, we began to build.’

Winner of LINC Award:

‘We strive to provide an environment that is inclusive to every child and family in our service.’

‘.... The child at the heart of every interaction, relationship, learning experience and outcome.’

Winner of Early Childhood Ireland’s Educator of the Year:

‘...created a community within Tír na nÓg where, as a team, we all do this together for the children in the service.’

‘I want every child in my service to reach their potential and to be happy and content when they leave.’

2. Achievements and Performance of Early Childhood Ireland

The organisation is guided by a Strategic Plan covering 2015 – 2020. This Strategic Plan sets out its broad direction and priorities over the the five year period and has four goals.



Within each goal, there are key objectives which are used to develop workplans and performance indicators. Some of the organisation's key achievements in 2019 have been categorised under the objectives and goals of the strategic plan below.

Goal 1: ECI is the first port of call for supports to early childhood providers, enabling members to deliver quality experiences and outcomes for children and their families

Objectives	Activities to achieve objectives
Members' settings are well governed and meet national standards.	<p>Garda Vetting: 32,619 applications were processed in 2019, an increase of 2,091 on 2018.</p> <p>Total Garda Vetting Interactions in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls: 4,085 • Emails: 11,802 • Applications returned with errors: 3,866

	<p>Applications returned with errors have reduced substantially during the year due to the continuous updates via Ezine, email and Early Times Magazine to members on how to complete the forms correctly. Returns did increase towards the end of the year as the new Compliance Unit in the National Vetting Bureau began to return forms where they deemed certain roles were not compliant with the Act and therefore should not be vetted i.e. Boards of Directors and certain ancillary staff.</p> <p>The RTÉ Investigates programme during the summer resulted in a huge increase in Garda Vetting applications. Applications went from an average of 500 per week before the programme to 708 in the week after the programme, up by 275 per week for the same period in 2018.</p> <p>We met with the Garda Vetting (GV) Bureau in November to discuss the issue of vetting for Registered Providers, Boards of Directors and ancillary staff. The Bureau cannot vet those who are not compliant with the Act, as the Act does not provide a legal framework for us to make applications for vetting disclosures for any person unless the person is conducting relevant work/activities as defined in the Act i.e. those do not have regular and necessary contact with the children. We also met with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in November to highlight this issue.</p> <p>Plans for 2020 involve a move to online vetting for members. This will cut costs and times for members associated with printing and posting applications forms.</p>																		
Members are informed and supported with all relevant developments - legislative, policy and practice.	<p>Early Years Employer Service (EYES)</p> <p>Total number of calls by end of year was 3,134 and the breakdown by category was as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Funding</td><td>340</td></tr> <tr> <td>HR</td><td>419</td></tr> <tr> <td>Inspection</td><td>98</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other</td><td>44</td></tr> <tr> <td>Outbound campaign</td><td>112</td></tr> <tr> <td>Parents</td><td>157</td></tr> <tr> <td>Policies and procedures</td><td>398</td></tr> <tr> <td>Practice</td><td>51</td></tr> <tr> <td>Qualification</td><td>130</td></tr> </table>	Funding	340	HR	419	Inspection	98	Other	44	Outbound campaign	112	Parents	157	Policies and procedures	398	Practice	51	Qualification	130
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	Re-registration	939
	Regulation	446
<p>Re-registration</p> <p>The highest number of calls received in a specific category was for re-registration of settings with Tusla. We contacted members directly by email in relation to this issue and this proved to be a very successful email campaign that offered advice, guidance and support. Approaching the deadline, the helpdesk also operated until 7pm over several nights to provide extra support to members.</p> <p>Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework (“QRF”) Training Project</p> <p>We were successful in our bid to develop online training for Tusla on the Quality and Regulatory Framework. We are working with ProfileTree to develop this programme for Tusla. At the end of 2019, the project is in its final stages, with modules being reviewed and the facilitators workshops being planned.</p> <p>Tusla Service Level Agreement</p> <p>Corrective and Preventative Action and Unsolicited information online training was delivered to the sector in conjunction with Tusla. This training is live on Tusla’s website for providers to access.</p> <p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>All policies on the website were updated for download by members with school-aged childcare policies prioritized.</p>		
Members value and provide for play in the daily lives of young children.	<p>A key value of Early Childhood Ireland is <i>Play as a right and as a key learning pathway in the lives of children</i>. As such, much of our work is focused on play and detailed below are a few examples.</p> <p>A number of blog posts by guest contributors and the ECI staff team focused on play opportunities for children were posted throughout 2019. These included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Play is a Child’s Right” by June O’Sullivan MBE, CEO of London Early Years Foundation. • “Books and Stories are important in the early years” by Dr. Mary Roche, an educational consultant. • “Together we can do so much” by our member Kathleen Cash, winner of our Educator of the Year Award. • “Where did summer go?” by Arlene Forster, Deputy Chief Executive of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. • “Relationships matter” by our member Anne Macken, manager of a community setting in Ballyporeen, South Tipperary 	

<p>Members deliver curricula that are reflective, emergent and support the learning, development and wellbeing of all children.</p>	<p>The sharing of practice on our social media throughout the year gave visibility to members' delivery of curricula supporting children's wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Síolta</i> continued to be a big focus of our work in 2019. There are 42 services engaging in the National <i>Síolta</i> Quality Assurance Program for the 2019-2020.</p> <p>The Early Pedagogy Supplement was developed and the first few issues were sent out to members in 2019. The supplement is focused on bringing theory, practice and innovative approaches of pedagogy to our members within the Early Times magazine.</p> <p>Several of our members were showcased in the Universal Design Guidelines publication, highlighting their inclusive practice.</p>
<p>Early childhood professionals have access to and gain from high quality and relevant learning opportunities provided by qualified and experienced educators, enhancing their work with young children and their families.</p>	<p>The provision of learning and networking events characterises much of the annual workplan and we welcome opportunities to deliver these events in partnership with other organisations.</p> <p>A partnership with IT Carlow delivering the seminar, 'Exploring the confident and competent child through the San Miniato approach' with Aldo Fortunati and Barbara Pagni was held on September 19th. This seminar is part of the 4 Nations tour organised by Early Childhood Ireland, Early Years Northern Ireland, Early Years Scotland and Early Years Wales.</p> <p>The annual conference delivered a total of 5 self-organised symposia, 7 Poster presentations, 36 research presentations and 24 masterclasses. The masterclasses were aligned to the 4 goals of the First 5 Strategy and delivered by policymakers and known specialists in the sector.</p> <p>Planning for our 2020 Annual Conference began and keynote Anthony Semann, of Semann & Slattery, Australia has been secured. Anthony is primarily a presenter and researcher. His ability to deliver inspirational conference key notes and facilitate innovative and transformative professional development programs is renowned. His background is in education, research and management in government, corporate and community-based organisations.</p>
<p>Early Childhood Ireland members are connected and learn with and from others.</p>	<p>As a membership organisation, we are committed to a learning partnership with our membership and to disseminating the knowledge of that partnership widely. Some examples of these connections and dissemination include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three papers were accepted and presented at OMEP 2019 in Cork;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We supported an international outdoor play event held in Maynooth University in May. • Papers were presented at the 2019 European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Conference in August: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How Community of Practice (COP) can be applied to the Early Years Sector in County Kildare Ireland; ○ Universal Design creating nurturing spaces for all; ○ Leading inclusion: Participants' views of the effectiveness of the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) Continuing Professional Learning Programme in Ireland; ○ Making public opinion about early years count.
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Goal 2: ECI mobilises its members, parents and others to drive change, as the most prominent and effective advocate for the early years sector and for young children and their families.

Objectives	Activities to achieve objectives
Children's rights and wellbeing underpin policy making on matters affecting young children.	<p>Our second Childcare Barometer asked the public about vetting of and training for childminders, which is in the best interests of children, and the results were overwhelmingly favourable.</p> <p>We sought and received a high-level meeting with DCYA on compliance issues which members had raised with us since December.</p> <p>Our analysis of the issues captured in the RTÉ Investigates exposé informed the development of our 2020 pre-Budget submission.</p> <p>Following a competitive process, our Director of Policy and Advocacy was selected from among Eurochild's membership to attend a 'Peer Review' on furthering quality and flexibility of Early Childhood Education and Care in Copenhagen.</p>
Policy makers are informed on and equipped to respond to matters that affect young children, early childhood professionals and the sector.	<p>Advocacy in Action</p> <p>We revamped and re-launched 'Advocacy in Action', our monthly ezine which is disseminated to members of the Oireachtas, officials, academics, members and subscribers.</p> <p>Budget 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-budget briefings took place with the various spokespersons and political parties and with the Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General of the DCYA. • We sent our 2020 Budget submission to every member of the Oireachtas. • A post-budget and pre-election briefings took place with various spokespersons and political parties.

Meet the Members Event

Our second “Meet the Members” event took place on 5 December in Buswell’s Hotel and was well attended by members. Representatives from three Parties joined our political panel. Planning of a series of Winter Member meetings to be held in January and February 2020 is also underway.

Submissions

We made a number of submissions throughout the year including:

- to the *Draft Childminding Action Plan*;
- in response to the *United Nations Committee on Human Rights in relation to the digital environment*;
- to the *Data Protection Commission’s Public Consultation on the Processing of Children’s Personal Data*;
- Parliamentary Questions on a range of issues including use of the Public Services Card to access the National Childcare Scheme; Sponsorship Agreements under the National Childcare Scheme; Higher Capitation payment delays; Budget 2020 Breakdown; Pobal and AIM;
- to the *Department of Rural and Community Development’s Public Consultation on the Draft National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022*;
- the only Irish case study to Eurochild, which will contribute to the Child Guarantee being developed by the European Commission.

The Childcare Barometer, along with our Staffing Survey, provided policy makers with timely and accurate facts and findings about various aspects or issues impacting on the sector, including:

- Terms & conditions of staff;
- Valuing the first 5 years;
- Support for properly funded parental leave.

Our member providers and staff members attended the two government-convened Open Policy Debates on School Age Childcare and Child Poverty. Our Policy and Research Manager facilitated a workshop at the Open Policy Debate on Child Poverty.

ECI staff and members represented ECI on multiple fora throughout the year:

- Government advisory groups on workforce development in the early years sector;
- The DCYA consultative forum;
- Local Childcare Committees and networks;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Years Forum Professionalisation Sub-group; • Outcomes4Children National Information and Consultation Forum; • Tusla Consultation on Policy Blueprint for educational services under the remit of Tusla; • Better Outcomes Brighter Futures.
Investment in the early years sector is increased towards the target of 1% of GDP so that it provides the best quality education and care for young children, it is sustainable for providers and staff, and affordable for parents.	<p>Our Childcare Barometer saw huge public agreement for greater support for our sector and will help us to continue to advocate for increased investment for the sector.</p> <p>Our 2020 Pre-Budget submission was published and recommended one specific ask for the sector: to establish an Early Years and School Age Childcare Agency which would be responsible for coordinating and integrating quality assurance, planning and administrative work across the early years sector.</p>
The early years sector and parents are actively involved as agents in driving policy change on matters affecting young children and the sector.	<p>ECI has a Policy and Implementation Panel comprised of approx. 30 people drawn from a broad cross-section of ECI's members. The aim of the Panel is to take part in discussions and consultations on key policy issues concerning early childhood education and care, and how policy is being implemented. Members of the Panel are asked to attend meetings to discuss issues that arise from time to time, to contribute to ECI's positioning on these issues, and in some circumstances to attend meetings with officials from relevant government departments.</p> <p>We applied to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and received funding to conduct research on other sectors' strategies and actions to deliver improved terms and conditions and professional recognition. This research will begin in 2020.</p> <p>We delivered a School-Age Childcare consultation with our members, and made a submission based on this process; as well as completing the DCYA's survey. A delegation made up of staff and members attended the Open Policy Debate on School-Age Childcare.</p>
Early childhood educators are recognised as professionals	<p>Following the CEO's appointment to the DCYA's Workforce Planning steering group in April, monthly meetings have taken place. A member and our Policy & Research Manager were appointed to the Workforce Planning stakeholder group, which met throughout the year.</p> <p>In September 2019, our national spokespeople took part in advanced/refresher media training to improve our communications output.</p>
The early years sector is better understood,	National Pyjama Day

<p>recognised and valued across society for the contribution it makes to children's education and development</p>	<p>Early Childhood Ireland's National Pyjama Day is the largest one-day fundraising event organised by the early childhood care and education sector in Ireland. Now in its 16th year, the event has raised more than €3 million for charities that support children with additional needs. The total amount raised for 2019 was €280,000 and the recipient charities selected were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AslAm; • ReCreate; • Central Remedial Clinic; • Respond Housing Association; • Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency (DESSA). <p>Traditionally National Pyjama Day took place on the first Friday of March each year. In 2019, National Pyjama Day 2019 took place on the later date of Friday 10 May 2019. Over 65,000 children at 1,300 settings participated.</p> <p>Childcare Barometer</p> <p>Our Barometer received significant media coverage – 75 national and local outputs in all – and presented a great opportunity to meet this objective.</p>
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Goal 3: ECI is the recognised expert in relation to quality early years practice, sharing learning throughout the sector, among parents and in wider society. With our members and partners, we are a leader of innovation and quality in early years practice, working collaboratively to create and share new knowledge in order to remain at the leading edge of early years practice.

Objectives	Activities to achieve objectives
<p>Early Childhood Ireland is at the cutting edge of early childhood education and care, gaining from and contributing to building expertise through strong partnerships with members, other thought leaders and change agents at home and abroad.</p>	<p>By the end of 2019, we were involved in 3 international partnership supported under the Erasmus programme. As a learning organisation, internationalisation is a key strategic objective for Early Childhood Ireland, building partnerships and extending our professional networks. The organisation's contributions at an international level ensure that Ireland engages in a transnational exchange of ideas that supports and improves quality in practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valchild – Validation of non-formal and informal learning in child-minding This project, which Early Childhood Ireland leads, began in October 2018. The Valchild project aims to increase the quality, supply and accessibility of vocational education and training for childminders, by providing guidance and resources for personalised learning pathways. The partnership will develop an assessment tool and make recommendations around the development of a certification scheme to facilitate assessment and recognition of prior learning.

	<p>2. Child-Centred Competences Project</p> <p>The partners on this new project 'Child-Centred Competences for Early Childhood Education and Care', are Via University College Denmark, University Zagreb Croatia, University Da Coruna, Spain, University Di Trieste Italy, The British Association for Early Childhood Education, United Kingdom, University Babes Bolyai Romania and Early Childhood Ireland. The project will run until 31 November 2021. The first meeting of the project was held in Plymouth in December 2019.</p> <p>The first stage of the project will review the existing practice developed in the previous project "Interpreting Child-Centredness to Support Quality and Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)", refining the three courses that have been piloted and extending their delivery to different European countries. The second stage of the project will build on and develop the research undertaken in the "Interpreting Child-Centredness to Support Quality and Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)" project to develop a child-centred competences framework and a supporting online course for students. The digital learning will support Higher Education Early Childhood Education and Care students in acquiring and developing their skills in child-centred practice and to document their child-centred competences in relation to different theoretical concepts of the term.</p> <p>3. TRAP – Enhancing Transition Practices in Early Childhood Education</p> <p>This project began in October 2018. The project aims to enhance and extend understandings of the practice required for transitions from ECEC contexts to primary schools. It will focus on how the primary school can prepare for the child instead of the practice where the preschool prepares the child for school. This partnership will develop a research instrument for assessing the quality and existing practice of transitions, then focus on innovative professional development for teachers through a teacher training module and manual.</p> <p>Education Matters: Early Childhood Ireland contributed two articles for the 2019 edition of Education Matters on Universal Design and Creative Pedagogy.</p>
<p>Early Childhood Ireland learns from and contributes to a growing expertise in the</p>	<p>National Early Years Research Day Proceedings</p> <p>In June 2019, we accepted submissions to our inaugural National Early Years Research Day Proceedings. We received 30 submissions which were a mixture of formal academic and reflective papers. We invited</p>

<p>early years, based on focused and relevant research and best practice. Early Childhood Ireland contributes to the dissemination of good practice and works to ensure a bedding in of good practice in all Early Years settings.</p>	<p>academics to form a Scientific Committee and this Committee reviewed all papers. It is hoped that this Proceedings publication will be launched at our Research Day in 2020.</p> <p>Universal Design Guidelines The Launch of the Guidelines took place on 10 June in the DCYA Offices. The keynote speaker at the launch was Mr. Takaharu Tezuka of Tezuka Architects, Tokyo. The launch was followed by a working lunch with Mr Tezuka, Department Officials, the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, the National Disability Authority, Architects and Early Childhood Ireland.</p> <p>Strategic Planning for Research The Research and Professional Learning team undertook a planning day with Brendan O’Keeffe of The Institute for Action Research. The focus of this day was to interrogate the relationship between research and professional learning, where and how their work can bring added value to our members, the sector more broadly, and to practice and pedagogical improvement to benefit babies and young children to implement <i>First 5</i>.</p>
<p>Ireland’s early years sector has easy access to and is informed by relevant and meaningful developments and thinking</p>	<p>Kids Active Work has taken place on the development of the Kids Active resources into an online training programme and its delivery of 2 regional seminars.</p> <p>Early Pedagogy Supplement The fourth edition of this supplement focused on a positive response to the issues which arose in the RTÉ Investigates programme. Topics included: Interactions, care routines, children’s rights, pedagogical leadership, partnerships with parents & families, child-centeredness</p>
<p>Members of Early Childhood Ireland are able to generate, share and celebrate their own best practice and contribute to a growing expertise in the sector</p>	<p>Providing Leadership to the First 5 was the theme for the National Conference & AGM 2019. The conference brought together leaders, academic experts, regulators, thinkers, writers and practice specialists to explore how best to bring leadership to Ireland’s First 5 Strategy. The keynote speakers on the day were Professor Cathy Nutbrown (Sheffield) and Independent Senator Lynn Ruane.</p> <p>Our National Early Childhood Research Conference included a keynote address from Professor Emer Ring, a tailored masterclass on conducting research by Dr Brendan O’Keeffe, as well as a range of research presentations, poster presentations and self-organised symposia.</p> <p>Our National Awards and Gala Dinner was a sold-out event this year with 300 attending on the night. It was a night of celebration where we</p>

	<p>acknowledged the quality of early years educators' work and commitment. Two new award categories were introduced this year. In total, there were five categories in which members could apply for an award:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category 1: Learning Stories Award • Category 2: Inspired Practice Award • Category 3: Early Childhood Ireland Educator of the Year Award • Category 4: (NEW) Partnership with Families Innovation Award • Category 5: (NEW) LINC Award for Leadership in Inclusion <p>We have received requests for additional awards to be added next year. This is testament to the value of these awards in our sector. Many stakeholders also attended this year's event.</p> <p>The weekend also included the largest EXPO in our sector with over 30 exhibitors displaying sector specific products/resources. Feedback from exhibitors was very positive.</p> <p>Over 840 members attended over the two days where students, practitioners and researchers shared and discussed their work with fellow professionals in our sector.</p> <p>What Works Network Funding</p> <p>The Research and Professional Learning team was successful in a funding application to DCYA's <i>What Works Network</i> Funding in 2019. In 2020 we will be undertaking work on Communities of Practice (where educators meet regularly to learn from each other) based on work with Kildare County Childcare Committee for 7 years now. This work will start in February 2020.</p>
<p>Parents are better aware of and value play inside and outside the home and recognise and appreciate quality in early childhood care and education.</p>	<p>66,000 leaflets were circulated to parents through Early Childhood Ireland member settings in the Spring Early Times Magazine to provide information to families prior to children transitioning to primary school.</p> <p>Our Research and Professional Learning Manager continues to be part of the Steering Committee for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library ("DPIL"). The DPIL is a book-giving programme whereby registered children receive developmentally appropriate books every month from birth to their fifth birthday. Over 5,300 children under the age of 5 are registered and have received books. Together with the support of An Post and Tusla, 33,108 books were delivered in the past year.</p>

Goal 4: ECI is a strategic, effective and sustainable organisation, firmly rooted in its membership, with the capacity to achieve the above goals.

Objectives	Activities to achieve objectives
<p>Is a well-governed, strong, sustainable and financially secure organisation</p>	<p>Charities Regulator Governance Code</p> <p>Over the course of 2019, the Board comprehensively reviewed each principle under the Governance Code issued by the Charity Regulator including the additional standards under each principle. At the Board meeting in October 2019, the Board did its final review of the compliance checklist. It was agreed that the Board approve the contents of the compliance checklist for each principle and this will be reported as part of the organisation's annual return to the Charity Regulator by the deadline in 2021. It was agreed that the principles would be continuously monitored and reviewed, and any necessary changes would be made on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Shop</p> <p>Top selling products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance Record - Accident/Incident Book - Our Learning Journal - Child Records - Admin of Medicine <p>There were a number of additions of new products to support compliance – thermometers, rug grippers, manifestations and first aid kits.</p> <p>We continue to promote our online shop through social media, ezine and our magazine.</p> <p>The shop working group carried out a SWOT analysis on the shop at the end of 2019 and has identified strengths and some challenges for 2020. The group will continue to monitor these in the coming months.</p> <p>Insurance Crisis</p> <p>The last few months of 2019 has seen increasing pressure in the sector particularly in relation to the difficulties experienced by some providers accessing insurance in the wake of Insurance Broker R. Smith exiting the sector at short notice.</p> <p>ECI had raised this issue with the DCYA. As a result, the Group Scheme provided by ECI became the one of two offerings in the sector and both were underwritten by Allianz. Our Group Scheme offered a discount of approximately 30% to ECI members on the basis of a group insurance</p>

	<p>cover arrangement where we worked consistently to raise standards with our members. The size of the continues to grow and now includes over 3000 policies.</p> <p>ICT Grant In collaboration with Microsoft and Wriggle, we developed an ICT offering for members to avail of the ICT grant which was offered by DCYA to encourage service providers to sign up to the NCS.</p>
<p>Has a dynamic and effective Board to oversee and regularly review and strengthen its governance actively seeking out examples of best practice and ensuring it meets its statutory obligations</p>	<p>We entered the Good Governance Awards in the category for Annual Accounts.</p> <p>All regulatory filing deadlines were met in 2019, including the filing on the newly introduced Beneficial Ownership Register and the Lobbying Register.</p> <p>Over the summer, the Board completed a skills' audit and the findings of this skills' audit were used for the development of a board training and development plan to ensure that the organisation has all the skills required to ensure good governance.</p> <p>The Board undertook a Board Residential Event in October 2019 and this included Governance Training.</p> <p>The work on the next strategic plan began at the Board Residential Event and together with the management team, the Board discussed the future direction of the organisation. This work is ongoing.</p> <p>Pobal conducted a one-day audit in June 2019. The report was sent to the Board and the relevant items were addressed by the Senior Management Team.</p>
<p>Has an engaged, growing and diverse membership base who share our Goals</p>	<p>Membership continued to grow throughout 2019 and the membership team began to develop a membership engagement strategy.</p> <p>The membership officer role was filled during the course of 2019 and this person is responsible for developing and maintaining the organisation's membership base.</p>
<p>Is a learning organisation, continuously generating and creating knowledge and disseminating that knowledge in the Early Years sector.</p>	<p>CPD Event We hosted a CPD event in one of our member services, Carrig Briste in Wexford. Practitioners from the setting accompanied participants as they explored the setting, sharing their way of working and examples of practice.</p> <p>Website Re-Design In 2019, we started the process of re-designing the main website in order to make it more user friendly and mobile responsive for our members. The new website will give a fresh new look and feel using a</p>

	<p>fold approach, and will allow us to grow all areas of engagement and income.</p> <p>Hub Development Plan We have agreed our new learning hub high level strategy and have begun scoping out Phase 1 - which will result in the launch of our service-based learning platform during 2020.</p> <p>Wendy Lee - Director of the Educational Leadership Project (Ltd) We organised a series of events with Wendy Lee over three days in September 2019. This included CPD with mentors from numerous agencies including Better Start, NGOs, Síolta, LINC and Inspectors from the Department of Education and Skills. She also contributed to a meeting with policy makers sharing experience from the New Zealand context. In Partnership with Technological University Dublin, ECI hosted "An Appreciation of Meaningful Documentation" masterclass that 71 people attended.</p> <p>Aldo Fortunati & Barbara Pagni As part of Early Childhood Ireland's involvement in the five Nations, a four Nations tour was organized with NI, Wales and Scotland. Aldo Fortunati and Barbara Pagni completed the last leg of the tour in Ireland with an event in IT Carlow. 82 were in attendance. Inputs included photos, videos and documentation on the daily experience of settings for under 3s in San Miniato, where they have developed a network of settings that exemplify the Tuscan approach.</p> <p>Wexford County Childcare Committee ("CCC") and Children and Young People's Services Committee ("CYPSC") Outdoor Mentoring Programme: ECI was awarded the provision of mentoring support to early years and after school settings in outdoor play. This project will be undertaken in the first half of 2020.</p>
Is an employer of choice that values and invests in its people and provides a stimulating environment for growth and development	<p>Six staff were supported both financially and with study leave to pursue continuing professional development including masters' and degree level qualifications.</p> <p>A number of staff members travelled abroad as part of our work on European Erasmus Projects and to further develop international relationships in ECEC. Locations included Paris, Iceland, Holland and Reggio Emilia.</p> <p>Hospital Saturday Fund ECI introduced the Hospital Saturday Fund for staff in January 2019, offering employees the option to join the health insurance scheme. ECI</p>

	<p>committed to making a contribution towards this health insurance scheme.</p> <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practical one-day Microsoft Project Training has been delivered to almost all staff to upskill for project work. • A one- day Digital Strategy Masterclass took place on 21st August with both the Communication and Development Team and the Policy and Advocacy Team attending. This was an excellent masterclass outlining all of the newest developments on digital marketing. <p>Wellbeing events for staff were held throughout the year.</p>
Early Childhood Ireland invests in its future through continuous review of processes, technological advances and skills requirements.	<p>ECI has undertaken a review of the CRM, online learning platform, the phone and the broadband systems to ensure they are fit for future purpose. A strategic hr review will be undertaken as part of the strategic planning process in 2020.</p>

Future Planning

2020 will be the last year of this current strategic plan and work has already begun to develop the next strategic plan for the organisation. It is important to learn from previous strategic plans and assess what has been successful and what requires further development. A monitoring and evaluation tool will be essential for the next strategic plan and key performance indicators will be set in order to ensure that the organisation's goals are measurable and can be monitored on a monthly basis.

Our Plans for 2020

Every November, ECI provides an implementation plan to Pobal for the following year which sets out the organisation's core work and priorities for the following year. Within this plan, ECI includes planned or proposed collaborations with other organisations to achieve joint goals. Some key work priorities for 2020 are outlined below:

- ECI successfully sought additional funding for a research study to develop the evidence base on the professionalisation journey of the sector. We will make the findings of this report available to the DCYA and key stakeholders in order to inform the planning process of the Workforce Development Plan;
- Our Early Years Employer Service will continue to build resources and supports around best practice in human resources;
- With a General Election confirmed for 2020, Early Childhood Ireland's election manifesto will identify the priority issues affecting childcare providers and focus on ensuring that childcare remains a key national policy issue in the next Programme for Government;

- We will continue to be a key consortium member of the LINC programme and follow through on new opportunities for the project in 2020.
- We will support DCYA in the delivery of National Childcare Programmes;
- We will provide support and training to our members and parents;
- ECI will contribute to National Policy Development and participation in national collaborations to develop and improve quality standards in childcare;
- We will continue our seven-year partnership with Kildare County Childcare Committee, organising and facilitating ELC CoP in the county. They were established to enhance learning and improve practice through peer-to-peer sharing and learning and to improve outcomes for babies, young children and their families, within a context where some settings are challenged to attain regulatory compliance and meet quality standards, while others exhibit good practice and pedagogical leadership;
- We will continue our partnership with Maynooth University in the delivery of the BA in Early Years Teaching and Learning. This initiative supports the First 5 target on a graduate-led ELC sector;
- ECI will partner with the DCYA in the third Peer Learning Activity (PLA) of the European Union's ET2020 Working Group on ECEC, which is being hosted by the Irish Government (DCYA and DES). The PLA will take place in Dublin on 10-12 March on the theme of "Leadership and professionalisation for inclusion". It is envisaged that ECI's role will relate to ECEC site visits and exploring the LINC Programme with the Working Group, with the programme to be further defined with the hosts;
- We will continue to work with the Irish Heart Foundation to develop our Kids Active Programme by launching an online version of the programme in Quarter 1, 2020;
- We will continue to provide a quality eVetting Support Service for members with a turnaround time of 10 days or less for 80% of the Garda Vetting applications;
- We will support communications around the provision of high-quality learning and care.
- ECI will work with a cross section of settings across the spectrum of quality and capacity. ECI will aim to engage a minimum of 35 settings to strengthen quality provision;
- ECI will develop and undertake 8 research projects in-house and in partnership with EU organisations that aim to inform practice for centre-based and home-based providers on:
 - Universal Design Guidelines;
 - Communities of Practice;
 - Childminding training;
 - Childminding -validation of prior learning;
 - School-age Childcare;
 - Child-centred practice;
 - Transitions;
 - Mental health of infants and under-3s.

3. Financial Review

The statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of changes in funds and statement of cashflow for the year ended 31 December 2019 are set out on the pages following the directors' report.

3.1 Reserves Policy

ECI's Board of Directors has established and implemented a Reserves Policy to ensure the stability of the mission, programs, employment and on-going operations of the organisation and to provide

a source of internal funds for organisational priorities. It is intended to support the goals and strategies contained in the governance and financial policies of the organisation. The target minimum operating reserve will be equal to four months of average operating costs of the organisation. The reserves policy is reviewed annually by the Audit Sub-Committee or sooner if warranted by internal or external events or changes. The three reserves that Early Childhood Ireland implements are an Operating Reserve, a Building and Capital Asset Reserve and an Opportunity Reserve;

- The Operating Reserve is intended to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses. The target minimum Operating Reserve Fund is equal to six months of average operating costs. The calculation of average monthly operating costs includes all recurring, predictable expenses such as salaries and benefits, occupancy, office, travel, program, and on-going professional services.
- The Building and Capital Asset Reserve is intended to provide a ready source of funds for repair or acquisition of buildings, leaseholds, furniture, fixtures, and equipment necessary for the effective operation of the organization and programs. The target amount of the Building and Capital Asset Reserve will be determined through the following formula: (Closing balance less (Working Capital + 10%) less Operating Reserves divided by 2).
- The Opportunity Reserve is intended to provide funds to meet special targets of opportunity or need that further the mission of the organization which may or may not have specific expectation of incremental or long-term increased income. The target amount of the Opportunity Reserve will be determined through the following formula: (Closing balance less (Working Capital + 10%) less Operating Reserves divided by 2).

3.2 Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The organisation maintains a risk register to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to identify, assess and manage risk from a strategic and operational perspective. The tasks involved in same are to:

- Complete a template of identified risks in the organisation;
- Assess the risks identified and implement a plan of procedures to mitigate those risks;
- Review the activities and associated outcomes of the risk reduction or elimination.

Operational risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects and the requirements for budgets covering all activities. Procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff.

We are reliant on grants from funders, as well as membership fees, to have sufficient funding to deliver our mission and vision. Annual funding cycles and commissioning for funded projects brings greater uncertainty and makes it challenging for the Board and senior management team to fund core activities and plan activities year on year.

Government policy related to the Early Years Sector also impacts on the organisation's work. In recent years the DCYA has published a number of policy documents relating to the Early Years Sector, as well as engaging in policy initiatives with stakeholders.

Another key risk of the organisation is reputational damage. This could be caused by an event either within or outside the organisation's control. In order to mitigate this risk, the organisation continues to adopt best practices.

3.3 Funding

The principal funding sources for the organisation are currently grants, tenders, service level agreements, membership fees, and earned income from sales of resources and training. A breakdown of funding received from grant making agencies is provided in Note 3 to the accounts.

3.3.1 Department of Public Expenditure & Reform

As Early Childhood Ireland is in receipt of public funding the organisation complies with relevant Department Circulars.

3.3.2 Early Childhood Ireland's National Pyjama Day Fund

The National Pyjama Day Fund has its own dedicated bank account which is segregated from any other ECI income. Services who participate in National Pyjama Day transfer funds raised, by cheque or bank transfer, to this bank account once they have participated in PJ Day. Once a service transfers its funds to the bank account and these funds are checked and verified, the service is automatically issued with a receipt of payment and a certificate to display. All funds received remain in this dedicated bank account until they are transferred to the Community Foundation of Ireland (CFI) for distribution to the chosen charities. In 2019, administration costs for PJ day amounted to 22% of the funds raised. These administration costs include balloons, printed materials, postage and staff management of the event.

The allocation of funding to recipients is managed by the CFI. CFI has been contracted by ECI to run this fund in order to ensure transparency in allocating the funding. The process of selecting the charities who qualify for funding is as follows:

- Once the money is donated by members, the CFI determines the amount of the fund and puts out a call/ expression of interest to charities;
- Charities make an application directly to the CFI and the CFI reviews and shortlists these based on the agreed criteria of the fund. For example, the initiative must be for children under 5, it must be a national organisation or initiative etc;
- The CFI then puts a judging panel together; one of these panellists is an ECI member nominated by the Board and another panellist is a member of Early Childhood Ireland's Management Team;
- The applications are judged blind, in that the other panellists do not see what marks are given by each other. The applicants scoring the highest marks are recommended for funding by the CFI;
- This is a donor advised fund and CFI run the due diligence process completely independently of ECI.

3.3.3 Sustainability of Future Funding

Annual funding cycles mean uncertainty for the organisation to fund core activities and plan future activities. While ECI is dependent on funding provided by the relevant grant making agencies, the organisation also has other income streams which are increasing. This includes membership fees from our growing membership base and income from the sales of our online shop. In addition to

this, in 2019 the organisation hired a Business Development Manager who is responsible for driving the implementation of the new income generation strategy and who will manage the organisation's brand, interface with key partners and ensure that ECI's income is increased through growth and diversification.

4. Structure, Governance and Management

Early Childhood Ireland is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company does not have a share capital and consequently the liability of the members is limited, subject to an undertaking by each member to contribute to the net assets or liabilities of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding one Euro (€1). The company was established under a Constitution which established the objects and powers of the charitable company is governed under its Articles of Association and is managed by a Board of Directors. The company has been granted charitable status under Sections 207 to 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1996, Charity No. CHY 19987 and is registered with the Charity Regulatory Authority. The company makes returns and meets all its obligations under the Lobbying Act (2015).

4.1 Our Board

The organisation is governed by a Board of Directors, currently comprised of 9 Directors. The Board of Directors is committed to achieving and maintaining high standards of governance. All Board members work in a voluntary capacity and do not receive any remuneration in respect of their services to the charity. Expenses are reimbursed where claimed.

Each Director has a variety of skills that s/he brings to their role on the Board. These skills include audit / risk management, financial knowledge, governance, expertise in training and education, knowledge of policy, organizational development, operational management and income generation/fundraising. Three Directors own or manage an early years' service which helps the Board to consider the impact of its decisions on our membership. Many of the other members of the Board hold roles or have held previous roles in the education and not for profit sector, so they have extensive knowledge of the external environment within which the organisation is working.

4.1.1 Selection and Induction of Board Members

The Board of Directors of ECI is a body of elected or, in a minority of cases, appointed (co-opted) individuals who jointly oversee and govern the activities of the organisation. In line with the Constitution, the number of Directors shall be no more than ten. At every AGM, one third of elected Board members must retire under rotation arrangements according to Articles 88 and 89 of the Constitution. All Board members who retire by rotation are eligible for re-election if they wish to continue on the Board according to Article 97 of the Constitution. A Director may serve for two consecutive terms of three years each and may be subsequently re-appointed to the Board after a period of one year has elapsed. The Board can also co-opt a Director onto the Board. Co-opted Directors will only hold office until the next AGM after which time they may either be reappointed or vacate the office.

New directors receive an induction pack in advance of their first Board meeting which includes the Directors' Handbook, the Strategic Plan and the Constitution of the organisation. Detailed Policies and Procedures of the organisation are available to Board members on request. The Directors' Handbook includes the following:

- Vision, mission and values of the organisation;
- Organisation overview;
- Function of the Board of Directors;
- Responsibilities of Directors;
- Appointment and rotation of Directors;
- Defined roles on the Board;
- Operation and running of Board Meetings;
- Matters reserved for decision by the Board;
- Conflict of interest;
- Conflict of loyalty;
- Gifts and benefits;
- Directors' expenses;
- Garda Vetting;
- Protected disclosures;
- Lobbying;
- Data Protection;
- Confidentiality;
- ECI's representation;
- Terms of References of the subcommittees; and
- Directors' Code of Conduct.

4.1.2 Rotation of Directors

In accordance with Articles 88 and 89 of the Constitution, the following Directors resigned at the AGM in 2019 and were re-elected for a further term of three years: Paul Gilligan, Anne Looney and Breda Joyce.

In accordance with Article 97 of the Constitution, any Director appointed either to fill a casual vacancy or as an addition to the existing Directors shall hold office only until the next AGM and shall then be eligible for re-election but shall not be taken into account in determining the Directors who are to retire by rotation at such meeting. The Board had a full complement of Directors for the majority of 2019, and therefore no Directors were put forward for re-election to the AGM in this manner.

4.2 Board Meetings

The Board meets no less than four times per annum. In 2019, the Board met six times and the Board also attended the AGM. A Board pack containing all relevant documents is distributed electronically to Directors one week in advance of the Board meeting. The Board also has access to a confidential online portal where key Board documents are stored and can be viewed at its convenience.

In consultation with the Board and the CEO, the Chairperson maps out and ensures the Board agenda allocates adequate time for future opportunities and challenges facing the organisation.

The Board also allocates time during the year to take a deep dive on key areas of work for the organisation.

The Board pack includes an agenda, the minutes of the previous meeting, CEO report, finance report and other documentation relevant to the agenda. The CEO report sets out the goals and outcomes under the organisation's strategic plan and each staff team outlines the activities they have undertaken during the period in relation to each goal. The CEO then presents this report at the Board meeting and answers any queries the Board may have in relation to the organisation's activities.

The CEO's role includes the following key objectives: advise the Board on new policies and updates to existing policies; report to the Board on progress against the strategic and annual operational plans of the organisation; ensure that the Board is given all the information necessary to perform its duties and make decisions; alert the Board to matters that it should consider and decide upon.

The Chairperson of the Audit Sub-Committee gives the finance report and outlines key discussions that took place at the Audit Sub-Committee meeting. Audit Sub-Committee meetings generally take place one week in advance of a Board meeting. The Remuneration Sub-Committee also provides reports to the Board as needed.

In 2019, the Board attended a residential meeting which was held in Castleknock Hotel for two days. As part of this residential, a regular Board meeting took place. In addition to this, the Board attended governance training which was delivered by a trainer from the Institute of Directors. The objectives of this three-hour training included:

- consideration of what is expected individually and collectively as a Board;
- discussion around the elements of good corporate governance;
- consideration of some of the attributes of high performing Boards;
- identification of some areas for action for the Board.

4.2.1 Attendance at Board Meetings

Attendance by Directors at Board meetings in 2019 is outlined in the table below:

Name	Jan	March	May	Aug (by phone)	Sept	Oct	Total Attendance
Paul Gilligan (Chairperson from 12 October 2019)	Y	Y	Y (by phone)	Y	Y	Y	6/6
Jillian van Turnout (Chairperson until 12 October 2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	6/6
Catherine O'Brien (Vice Chairperson)	Y (by phone)	N	Y	Y	Y	N	4/6
Thomas Walsh	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	3/6
Catherine Byrne	Y (by phone)	Y	Y	N	Y	N	4/6

Liam Fahy (resigned 1 October 2019)	Y (by phone)	Y	N	N	N	N/A	2/5
Anne Looney	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	3/6
Karen McGovern	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	3/6
Breda Joyce	Y (by phone)	Y (by phone)	N	Y	Y (by phone)	Y	5/6
Michele Akerlind	Y (by phone)	Y (by phone)	Y	N	Y (by phone)	Y	5/6

Teresa Heeney (CEO) and Susan Selfridge (Deputy CEO) were in attendance at all Board meetings.

4.3 Board Structure and Committees

There are currently two formal sub-committees of the Board: the Audit Sub-Committee, and the Remuneration Sub-Committee.

The Audit Sub-Committee has been established by the Board to ensure: effective review and monitoring of financial risks; reliable management and financial reporting; compliance with laws and regulation; and maintenance of an effective and efficient audit. The sub-committee is currently comprised of 4 members; 3 Directors and 1 external member. In 2019, the sub-committee met five times.

The Remuneration Sub-Committee has been established to set the pay and conditions of the CEO, to support the CEO in setting the remuneration policy for senior management and to consider HR policy and related matters brought to the attention of the sub-committee by the CEO. The sub-committee comprises of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and one other member of the board and meets at least once per year.

4.3.1 Membership of Sub-Committees of the Board

The Board subcommittees and membership at 31 December 2019 was as follows:

Audit	Remuneration	Risk Management
Michele Akerlind (Chair)	Paul Gilligan (Chair)	Michele Akerlind
Catherine O'Brien	Catherine O'Brien	Anne Looney
Karen McGovern	Catherine Byrne	Thomas Walsh
Deirdre Mulligan (External member)		

4.3.2 Attendance at Sub-Committee Meetings

Audit Sub-Committee Attendance 2019						
Name	Jan	March	May	Sept	Nov	Total Attendance
Catherine O'Brien	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5/5
Liam Fahy (resigned 1 October 2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	4/4
Deirdre Mulligan (external member)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4/5

Karen McGovern	N	Y	N	Y	Y	3/5
Michele Akerlind (appointed 1 September 2019)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	Y	1/2

Remuneration Sub-Committee Attendance 2019		
Name	May	Total Attendance
Jillian van Turnout	Y	1/1
Catherine O'Brien	Y	1/1
Catherine Byrne	Y	1/1

Teresa Heeney (CEO) and Susan Selfridge (Deputy CEO) were in attendance at all audit sub-committee meetings. Although the CEO and Deputy CEO are in attendance at Board meetings, they are not Directors of the Board and have no vote at meetings.

4.3 Good Governance Standards

Charity Regulator Governance Code

The Charity Regulator introduced a new Governance Code towards the end of 2018 which outlines the minimum standards that should be met to effectively manage and control a charity.

Early Childhood Ireland became compliant with the Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary Sector in September 2018. Following the introduction of the new code, these activities needed to be transferred to the Charities Regulator Governance Code template. In order to ensure compliance by January 2020, a timeline was proposed to the Board whereby two principles were discussed at each Board meeting with the final review and sign off taking place in November 2019.

Timeline for Compliance	
Principle 1: Advancing its charitable purpose	March 2019 Board Meeting
Principle 2: Behaving with integrity	March 2019 Board Meeting
Principle 3: Leading People	May 2019 Board Meeting
Principle 4: Exercising Control	May 2019 Board Meeting
Principle 5: Working Effectively	September 2019 Board Meeting
Principle 6: Being accountable and transparent	September 2019 Board Meeting
Final review and sign off	October 2019 Board Meeting

In advance of each meeting and as part of the Board pack, the draft compliance checklist (as issued by the Charity Regulator) for each principle for discussion for that meeting was circulated to the Board. At the Board meeting, significant time was given for discussion around the principles being reviewed. All changes and comments suggested by the Board were then incorporated and the complete compliance checklist was reviewed and approved by the Board at the October Board Meeting. This checklist will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is up to date and in keeping with the organisation's procedures.

Board Skills Audit

In summer 2019, the Board undertook a skills audit in order to identify the skills of each individual board member and to address any gap in the skills that may be missing from the Board. The Board Skills Audit aimed to ensure that the leadership of the organisation is well equipped to oversee the delivery of the goals within the Strategic Plan of the organisation effectively. The last skills audit undertaken by the Board of Early Childhood Ireland took place in 2015 and it was felt that this exercise should be carried out in 2019 as new Board members had joined the Board since 2015.

A self-assessment questionnaire was distributed to all Board members and asked them to assess:

- the general composition of the Board;
- their individual skills and experience (including their hard and soft skills);
- their training needs.

The responses were then collated and presented at the September 2019 Board meeting. The Board then used these responses to determine what training would be provided for the October Board residential. The Board Skills Audit will also be used to ensure Board members with appropriate and relevant skills are recruited in the future. At the end of 2019, the Board had a gap in terms of audit skills. The Board intends to use the results of the skills audit to identify individuals with specific skills that would be useful to the Board's work.

Board Evaluation

In order to ensure best practice and maintain Board performance, Board members completed a Board evaluation questionnaire following each meeting which is used to evaluate its performance. A summary of these evaluations was presented at the May Board Meeting. Any changes that Board members mention within this evaluation are made in discussion with the Chair.

Conflicts of Interest and Loyalty

The policies in relation to conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty for Directors are detailed in the Directors' Handbook which is reviewed on an annual basis. For staff, the conflicts of interest policy is detailed in the Staff Handbook.

- **Conflicts of Interest**

If it is proposed if ECI enter a contract or a financial or professional arrangement with any organisation or individual, then any Director who has an interest in or connection with that organisation, either directly or indirectly, must declare his/her interest to the Board.

The Director must make a statement and answer any questions put to them on the issue by other Directors. Following the statement and answering of questions, the Director should be asked to leave the room and not vote on the particular issue.

In the interest of avoiding conflicts of interest, a former CEO of ECI may not be appointed to the Board of Directors until a minimum of two years has elapsed since he/she ceased to be CEO/employed by the organisation.

- **Conflicts of Loyalty**

The duty of loyalty is a standard of commitment; a Director must give undivided faithfulness when making decisions affecting the organisation. A Director can never use information obtained as a Director for personal gain or for a role in another organisation but must act in the best interests of ECI.

At the beginning of each Board meeting, the Chair will ask Directors present to declare any conflicts of interest or loyalty related to any agenda items for that meeting. These conflicts are noted within the Board meeting minutes. This declaration is a standard item on every Board agenda.

Other

- As an organisation, we are constantly monitoring our processes to ensure we are accountable and responsive to changes in the external environment. For example, in 2019, the Central Register for Beneficial Ownership was established, and all relevant details were collected from Directors and uploaded to this register in advance of the deadline. All Lobbying returns were submitted on time in accordance with regulations.
- This year, we entered the Good Governance Awards for charities and although we were unsuccessful this time around, we have used the feedback from the judging panel to inform the annual accounts for 2019.

4.4 Effective Controls

The Board may delegate tasks; however, the following matters are specifically reserved for the Board and are laid out in the Constitution:

- Strategic Plan;
- Financial reporting and controls;
- Membership of the organisation;
- Election of Chairperson;
- Executive remuneration and evaluation of performance;
- Delegation of authority;
- Corporate governance matters.

In order to ensure effective controls are in place, the Board has set out the delegated authorities and levels at which staff are authorised to approve not only in relation to financial management but also in relation to other areas of work. Examples of specific procedures in place are as follows:

- The CEO is responsible for the control and monitoring of the organisation's activities and expenditure in line with the annual budget which is approved by the Board. This is then monitored on a regular basis by the Board and the Audit Sub-Committee;
- Re-allocation of resources during the year to meet emerging requirements is the responsibility of the CEO, assessed by the Audit Sub-Committee and approved by the Board. Re-allocation of budgets requires Board approval;
- The CEO is responsible for the formulation and recommendation of the organisation's annual operating plan and budget. This is then assessed by the Audit Sub-Committee and approved by the Board;
- The CEO and Deputy CEO are approved to sign cheques up to the value of €20k;

- The CEO is responsible for approving all contracts up to the value of €49k and Board approval is required for all contracts over €50k. All contracts over €10k are also reviewed by the Audit Sub-Committee prior to signing;
- The Audit-Sub-Committee is responsible for the approval of expenditure for items over €10k which are outside current contracts;
- The CEO and Deputy CEO are responsible for the authorisation of statutory and other routine reports to regulatory bodies. This is monitored by the Board.

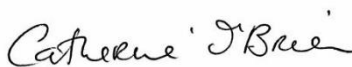
4.5 Risk Management

The organisation maintains a risk register to ensure that Early Childhood Ireland is a strong and compliant organisation. This ensures best practice in the areas of compliance and governance, while being a dynamic and effective organisation which invests in and improves its processes, to enable it to reach and support its members more effectively and remain a financially healthy organisation. The risk register ensures that appropriate procedures are in place to identify, assess and manage risk from a strategic and operational perspective. The risk register specifies the risk area, potential triggers, possible consequences and mitigating actions to identify the overall level of risk. A risk rating mechanism has been developed to look at the consequences of the risk. The likelihood of the risk is ranked on a scale from 1-5, where one is rare or very remote and five is certain to occur. This score is then multiplied by the potential impact of the risk, which is again rated on a scale of 1-5, where one is minor and five is catastrophic. This risk register is reviewed by Senior Management on an ongoing basis. Critically, the organisation will ensure that personnel involved in the governance and management of the organisation will have requisite knowledge, skills, experience, expertise, capability and competencies to deliver a high-quality service for our membership.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



PAUL GILLIGAN
DIRECTOR



CATHERINE O'BRIEN
DIRECTOR

DATE: 9TH MARCH 2020

Directors Responsibilities Statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and regulations.

Irish Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council including FRS 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company, as at the end of the financial year end date, and profit or loss, for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

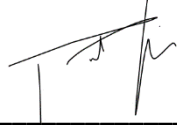
In preparing those financial statements the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities and financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy and enable them to ensure that the financial statements and the directors report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

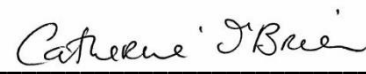
The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



PAUL GILLIGAN

DIRECTOR



CATHERINE O'BRIEN

DIRECTOR

DATE: 9TH MARCH 2020

Independent Auditors Report to the Members of ECCE & Play Early Childhood Ireland t/a Early Childhood Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2019

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of ECCE & Play Early Childhood Ireland T/A Early Childhood Ireland for the year ended 31st December 2019, which comprises of the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Changes in Funds, Statement of Cashflows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of the significant accounting policies set out in Note 1. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and Accounting Standards, including FRS 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31st December 2019 and of its results for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and,
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts 2014.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statement in Ireland, including the Irish Auditing and Accounting Service Authority ("IAASA") Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Material Uncertainty related Going Concern

In forming our opinion on the financial statements, which is not modified, we have considered the adequacy of the disclosure in note 1 to the financial statements concerning the company's ability to continue as a going concern. The company is reliant on the support of funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla, the Child & Family Agency, as well as membership income, in order to continue providing its services on an ongoing basis. The company has prepared the Financial Statements on a going concern basis and have not taken into account any adjustments that may be necessary should this funding be significantly reduced or discontinued.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Acts 2014

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- we have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit;
- the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited;
- the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records;
- the information given in the director's report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Director's Report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Acts 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion the disclosures of director's remuneration and transactions specified by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement on page 14, the directors are responsible for the preparation of financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operation, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

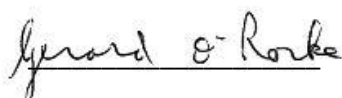
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of the users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA website at: http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf. This description forms part of our audit report.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

This report is made solely to the company's members as a body in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Signed:



Gerard O'Rourke

For and on behalf of:

GERARD O'RORKE & COMPANY

CASTLE STREET, KELLS, CO. MEATH

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & STATUTORY AUDIT FIRM

DATE: 9TH MARCH 2020

A. Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2019

		2019			2018		
	Note	Unrestricted Funds €	Restricted Funds €	Total €	Unrestricted Funds €	Restricted Funds €	Total €
Income From:							
Grants	3	179,792	1,411,952	1,591,744	208,467	1,441,755	1,650,222
Membership Fees		624,517	-	624,517	618,382	-	618,382
Other Income		749,461	-	749,461	675,795	-	675,795
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Income		1,553,770	1,411,952	2,965,722	1,502,644	1,441,755	2,944,399
Expenditure		1,448,759	1,411,952	2,860,711	1,374,257	1,441,755	2,816,021
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Operating Surplus		105,011	-	105,011	128,387	-	128,387
Interest Earned		171	-	171	175	-	175
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Surplus for Year	4	105,182	-	105,182	128,562	-	128,562
		=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

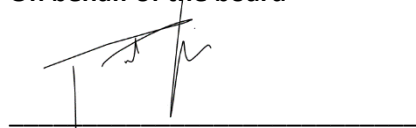
B. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019

	Note	2019	2018
		€	€
<u>Fixed Assets</u>			
Tangible assets	7	94,412 -----	154,677 -----
<u>Current Assets</u>			
Stock	8	55,529	51,769
Debtors	9	171,814	186,345
Cash at Bank and on Hand		2,583,941 -----	2,612,090 -----
		2,811,284	2,850,204
Creditors (Amounts falling due within 1 year)	10	629,240 -----	833,607 -----
Net Current Assets		2,182,044 -----	2,016,597 -----
Net Assets		2,276,456 =====	2,171,274 =====
<u>Financed By:</u>			
Unrestricted Funds	11	435,132	329,950
Capital Reserves	12	1,841,324 -----	1,841,324 -----
		2,276,456 =====	2,171,274 =====

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 9th March 2020 and authorised for issue on 9th March 2020.

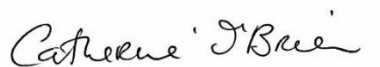
On behalf of the board



PAUL GILLIGAN

Director

DATE: 9TH MARCH 2020



CATHERINE O'BRIEN

Director

C. Statement of Changes in Funds for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
	€	€	€
Opening Balance 01/01/18	201,388	-	201,388
Surplus / (Deficit) for year	128,562	-	128,562
	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 31 st December 2018	329,950	-	329,950
	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 1 st January 2019	329,950	-	329,950
Surplus / (Deficit) for year	105,182	-	105,182
	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 31 st December 2019	435,132	-	435,132
	=====	=====	=====

D. Statement of Cashflows for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Note	2019 €	2018 €
Net Cashflow from Operating Activities	17	<u>(20,111)</u>	<u>338,802</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(8,209)	(83,671)
Net cash generated/used in investing activities		<u>(8,209)</u>	<u>(83,671)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest received		171	175
Net cash generated/used in financing activities		<u>171</u>	<u>175</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(28,149)	255,306
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		2,612,090	2,356,784
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		<u>2,583,941</u> =====	<u>2,612,090</u> =====

E. Notes to the Financial Statements

NOTE 1 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

ECCE & Play Early Childhood Ireland is a nationwide voluntary organisation that supports early years providers and parents in the provision of quality early childhood education and care. The company's registered office is at Hainault House, Belgard Square South, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

The company is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in the Republic of Ireland and its company registration number is 506235.

The significant accounting policies adopted by the company and applied consistently as follows:

(a) Basis of Preparation

The Financial Statements are prepared on the going concern basis under the historical cost convention and comply with the financial reporting standards of the Financial Reporting Council including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Companies Act 2014.

The company is reliant on the support of funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla, the Child & Family Agency, as well as membership income, in order to continue providing its services on an ongoing basis. The company has prepared the Financial Statements on a going concern basis and have not taken account of any adjustment that may be necessary should this funding be significantly reduced or discontinued.

The financial statements are prepared in Euro which is the functional currency of the company.

(b) Fund Accounting

The following funds are operated by the company:

Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds represent grant, donations and sponsorships received which can only be used for particular purposes specified by the donors or sponsorship programme binding on the directors. Such purposes are within the overall aim of the company. These are subject to verification checks by the fund providers.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted Funds represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the directors in the furtherance of the objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes. Such funds may be held in order to finance working capital or capital expenditure.

Designated Funds

Designated Funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the directors for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements. The designations have an administrative purpose only and do not legally restrict the Board's discretion in applying the funds.

Endowment Funds

Endowment Funds represent those assets which must be held permanently by the company, principally investments. Income arising on endowment funds can be used in accordance with the objects of the company and is included in unrestricted income.

(c) Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible Fixed Assets are recorded at historic cost. The company undertakes a review for impairment of a fixed asset if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of the fixed asset may not be recoverable.

(d) Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated on the original cost to write off the assets over their useful lives at the following annual rates:

- Renovations Hainault House - 25% Straight Line
- Office Fit-out - 33.33% Straight Line
- Fixtures and Fittings - 33.33% Straight Line
- Computer Equipment - 33.33% Straight Line
- Computer Software - 33.33% Straight Line
- Website - 20% Straight Line

(e) Stock

Stocks and work in progress are stated at the lower of standard cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell.

Cost is calculated on a first in, first out basis and includes invoice price, import duties and transportation costs.

Standard Cost comprises cost of purchase, substituted with replacement cost as determined by updated price lists etc, following review by management on a regular basis. No account is taken of costs of conversion.

(f) Debtors

Trade and other debtors including amounts owed to group companies are recognised initially at transaction price (including transaction costs) unless a financing arrangement exists in which case they are measured at the present value of future receipts discounted at a market rate. Subsequently these are measured at amortised cost less any provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of trade receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables. The amount of the provision is the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at the effective interest rate. All movements in the level of provision required are recognised in the profit and loss account.

(g) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, demand deposits and other short-term high liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in the current liabilities on the balance sheet.

(h) Creditors and Accruals

Creditors and accruals are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade payables are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate.

(l) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the company has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

(j) Income

Income consists of amounts received from Pobal, the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, Tusla, Child & Family Agency, Membership fees, training income, events and other miscellaneous income. Income is included in the financial statements only when realised or when the ultimate cash realisation of which can be assessed with reasonable certainty.

(k) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

(l) Taxation

The company is limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts 2014 and is not established for the profit or gain of its members. The company is solely trading for the mutual benefit of its members and accordingly is not liable to Corporation Tax in the current period.

(m) Government Grants

Grants are recognised when there is reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and all attaching conditions have been complied with. Grants awarded to assist with capital expenditure are credited to deferred income and are released to the profit and loss account on a straight line over the expected useful life of the related. Grants awarded to assist with revenue expenditure are realised to the profit and loss account as the related expenditure is incurred.

(n) Leased Assets

Assets held under leasing arrangements that transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the company are capitalised.

The capital element of the related rental obligations is included in creditors. The interest element of the rental obligations is charged to the profit and loss account so as to produce a constant annual charge.

Rentals in respect of operating leases are charged to the profit and loss account as incurred.

(o) Pensions

Pension benefits are met by payments to a defined contribution pension fund. Contributions are charged to the income and expenditure in the year in which they fall due. The assets are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund. Differences between the

amounts charged in the income and expenditure account and payments made to the pension fund are treated as assets or liabilities.

(p) Reserves

The Board of Early Childhood Ireland has set aside reserves in order to ensure the stability of the mission, programs, employment and on-going operations of the organisation. These reserves will provide a source of internal funds for organisational priorities such as the ongoing operations of the organisation and an opportunity reserve to provide funds to meet special targets of opportunity or need that further the mission of the organisation. The target minimum operating reserve will be equal to four months of average operating costs.

NOTE 2 - CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND ESTIMATES

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The company makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a

significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(a) Establishing lives for depreciation purposes

The annual depreciation charge of assets depends primarily on the estimated lives of each asset and the estimates of residual value. The company's policy is to review the remaining economic lives and the residual value of assets on an on-going basis and to adjust the depreciation charge when necessary. Details of depreciation rates are included in the accounting policies.

(b) Stock

When calculating the value of stock the company has to consider the net realisable value of all stock including stock that is slow moving or obsolete in its estimations.

(c) Providing for doubtful debts

The company makes an estimate of the recoverable value of trade and other debtors. The company uses estimates based on objective evidence of the level of debt, which the company believe, will not be collected. The level of the provision required is reviewed on an on-going basis.

(d) Deferred Income

The company calculates deferred income using estimates based on objective evidence, which the company believes, should be deferred to a future period.

NOTE 3 - INCOME

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014 (previously 17/2010) requires grantees to disclose, in their financial statements, all income received from grant making agencies. The Income has been arrived at after including the following:

Programme For Funding	Agency	Sponsoring Government Department	Grant Taken to Income	Total Project Expenditure	Funding Received in the Accounting Period	Term of Contract for the Funding	Capital Element	Restriction/ Purpose
National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP)	POBAL	DCYA	1,190,000	1,190,000	1,190,000	01/01/19 – 31/12/19	0	Under NCIP, the funding will be restricted to use towards the cost of staffing, overheads and administration
Garda Vetting	DCYA	DCYA	221,952	221,952	221,952	01/01/19 – 31/12/19	0	Under Garda Vetting, the funding will be restricted to use against the cost of staff salaries, overheads and direct costs for delivery of service
Section 56 Service Arrangement Structure	TUSLA	DCYA	122,000	122,000	122,000	01/01/19 – 31/12/19	0	Under the Service Level Agreement (SLA), the purpose of the funding will be to deliver the objectives, targets and activities as set out in the SLA
Universal Design Guidelines	DCYA	DCYA	30,000	30,000	0	01/01/18 – 19/06/19	0	Under the contract, the purpose of the funding will be to deliver on universal guidelines for early childhood settings to include project management, direct costs, overheads and administration costs incurred in the delivery
Train The Trainer	POBAL	DCYA	0	0	16,000 B/F		0	Under this grant the purpose of the funding will be to deliver a Train the Trainer programme, including project management, direct costs, overheads and administration costs incurred in the delivery
TUSLA Quality & Regulatory Framework (QRF)	TUSLA	TUSLA	27,822	27,822	0	31/07/19 – 31/07/22	0	Under this contract, the purpose of the funding will be for the project management, direct costs, overheads and administration costs incurred in the delivery of the eLearning programme on the QRF
TOTAL			1,591,744	1,591,744				

NOTE 4 - OPERATING SURPLUS

The Surplus of Income over Expenditure has been arrived at after charging the following items:

	2019	2018
	€	€
Depreciation: Owned Tangible fixed assets	68,487	61,883
	=====	=====

NOTE 5 – EMPLOYEES

Average number of employees	2019	2018
Permanent Staff	33	34
Fixed Term Contracts	5	5
	-----	-----
	38	39
	=====	=====

Employees Earning Over €60,000:

	2019	2018
€60,000 to €69,999	1	1
€70,000 to €79,999	2	1
€80,000 to €89,999	1	1
€90,000 to €99,999	0	0

NOTE 6 – DIRECTORS REMUNERATION AND TRANSACTIONS

No member of the Board of Directors received any remuneration during the year. Travel costs amounting to €nil (2018: €nil) were reimbursed to members of the Board of Directors.

No director or other person related to the company had any interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the company during the year.

NOTE 7 - TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	<u>HH Reno- vations</u>	<u>Office Fitout</u>	<u>Fixtures & Fittings</u>	<u>Computer</u>	<u>Computer Software</u>	<i>Website</i>	<u>Total</u>
Cost	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Cost 1/1/19	75,000	90,911	196,239	156,718	183,158	131,178	833,204
Additions	-	-	-	8,209	-	-	8,209
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
							-
Cost 31/12/19	75,000	90,911	196,239	164,927	183,158	131,178	841,413
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
						-	
Aggregate Depreciation							
1/1/19	18,750	71,060	180,054	123,935	153,538	131,178	678,514
Charge for year	18,750	6,672	5,448	14,201	23,416	-	68,487
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
							-
Agg. Dep. 31/12/19	37,500	77,732	185,502	138,136	176,953	131,178	747,001
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Net Book Value							
31/12/19	37,500	13,179	10,737	26,791	6,205	-	94,412
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
31/12/18	56,250	19,842	16,186	32,782	29,618	-	154,677
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

There were no assets held under finance lease included in the tangible fixed assets.

NOTE 8 - STOCK

	2019	2018
	€	€
Stock	55,529	51,769
	-----	-----
	55,529	51,769
	=====	=====

The net replacement cost of stock is not expected to be materially different from that shown above. Inventories are stated after provisions for impairment of €nil (2018: €nil).

NOTE 9 - DEBTORS

	2019	2018
	€	€
Debtors	27,533	68,454
Prepayments	144,281	117,891
	-----	-----
	171,814	186,345
	=====	=====

NOTE 10 - CREDITORS**Amounts Falling Due Within 1 Year**

	2019	2018
	€	€
Creditors	16,665	129,658
Accruals	53,140	171,535
Taxation & Social Security	46,620	41,156
Deferred Grant Income	-	25,301
Deferred Course Income	16,001	16,001
Deferred Project Income	18,700	42,050
Deferred Membership Income	478,114	407,906
	-----	-----
	629,240	833,607
	=====	=====

NOTE 11 - UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2019	2018
	€	€
Opening Balance 01/01/19	329,950	201,388
Surplus/ (Deficit)	105,182	128,562
	-----	-----
Closing Balance 31/12/19	435,132	329,950
	=====	=====

NOTE 12- ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds	Capital Reserves	Total
	€	€	€
Opening Balance 01/01/19	329,950	1,841,324	2,171,274
Surplus/ (Deficit) for year	105,182	-	105,182
	-----	-----	-----
Closing Balance 31/12/19	435,132	1,841,324	2,276,456
	=====	=====	=====

	Unrestricted Funds	Capital Reserves	Total
	€	€	€
Opening Balance 01/01/18	201,388	1,841,324	2,042,712
Surplus/ (Deficit) for year	128,562	-	128,562
	-----	-----	-----
Closing Balance 31/12/18	329,950	1,841,324	2,171,274
	=====	=====	=====

NOTE 13 - LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

The company is limited by guarantee not having a share capital and consequently the liability of the members is limited, subject to an undertaking by each member to contribute to the net assets or liabilities of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding one Euro (€1).

NOTE 14 - CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments at the year end.

NOTE 15 - PENSION INFORMATION

	2019	2018
	€	€
Contribution to Pension Scheme	100,842	98,625
	-----	-----
	100,842	98,625
	=====	=====

The company operate a defined contribution pension scheme that covers certain employees.

NOTE 16 - POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the year-end.

NOTE 17 - RECONCILIATION OF OPERATING PROFIT TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2019	2018
	€	€
Operating Profit/ (Loss)	105,011	128,387
Depreciation	68,487	61,883
(Increase)/Decrease in Stock	(3,760)	(16,689)
(Increase)/ Decrease in Debtors	14,531	(11,912)
Increase/ (Decrease) in Creditors / Provisions	(204,380)	177,133
	-----	-----
Net cash inflow from operating activities	(20,111)	338,802
	=====	=====

NOTE 18 – RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transactions for the current financial year or for the previous financial year.

NOTE 19 - APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The directors approved the financial statements on the 9th March 2020.

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