



**Early
Childhood
Ireland**

**Strategic Plan
2021 - 2026**

Early Childhood Ireland is the leading membership organisation in the Early Years sector, focused on our compelling vision of putting the child at the centre of our work. Early Childhood Ireland has a strong track record which spans over five decades, and we are delighted to present our new, ambitious strategic plan representing the shared goals of our Board of Directors, members and staff to provide access to affordable, quality and sustainable Early Years, School Age Care and Childminding services for all children.

This new strategic plan demonstrates the inspiring potential of Early Childhood Ireland and our proven ability to adapt and lead in a changing social, political and economic environment. The plan will guide our operations and be the basis of our reporting across the organisation. We will be effective and efficient in our work and with our resources and we hold an image of the competent child at the centre of all that we do.





Our Vision

Our Vision is that every young child is thriving and learning in quality Early Years and School Age Care in centre-based and Childminding settings.



Our Mission

Our Mission is to champion quality for children in Early Years, School Age Care and Childminding settings, through our work with our members and on the system.

By 2026 our two ambitions are that:

- Early Childhood Ireland is the largest membership organisation in the sector and our members are leading the way in achieving quality practice in their child-centred settings.
- Early Childhood Ireland is the leading advocate for children in EY, SAC and Childminding settings in Ireland, has influenced policy and legislative development in EY, SAC and Childminding settings, towards the quality system we have championed; and Ireland has achieved an investment level of 1% of GDP by 2025.

Our ethos and values

We have always believed that early childhood is a critical period for the nurturing of each individual child's curiosity, resilience, creativity, confidence and potential. We also believe that play is a right and is a key learning pathway in the lives of children. We are a professional and innovative membership organisation that works collaboratively with the relevant government departments, agencies and academic institutions to champion our vision and realise our mission. These core beliefs are consistent with our vision and they have shaped our values.



At Early Childhood Ireland we:

- Value our staff and our membership for their dedicated work with and for children;
- Believe that EY, SAC and Childminding services should be properly publicly funded and accessible to all;
- Lead by being ambitious, innovative and accountable;
- Champion equality, inclusion and diversity;
- Work with integrity, respect and behave in a way that is ethical and responsible;
- Value transparency, quality practice and good governance in our sector because it results in better experiences for children.

Strategic Objectives:

- Early Childhood Ireland members lead the way in achieving excellence in their child- centred settings.
- Early Childhood Ireland is the leading advocate for children in Early Years, School Age Care and Childminding services in Ireland.
- Early Childhood Ireland will empower and facilitate our members to undertake action research, use research in practice, and engage in reflective practice and peer learning activities, in order to champion and drive service excellence.
- We will also undertake, and commission applied research to better understand the factors influencing structural and process quality in EY, SAC and Childminding services and how best to enhance quality.
- We will build for future success as the leading membership organisation in the Early Years, School Age Care and Childminding sector, which is trusted, effective and accountable.



Our Common Purpose

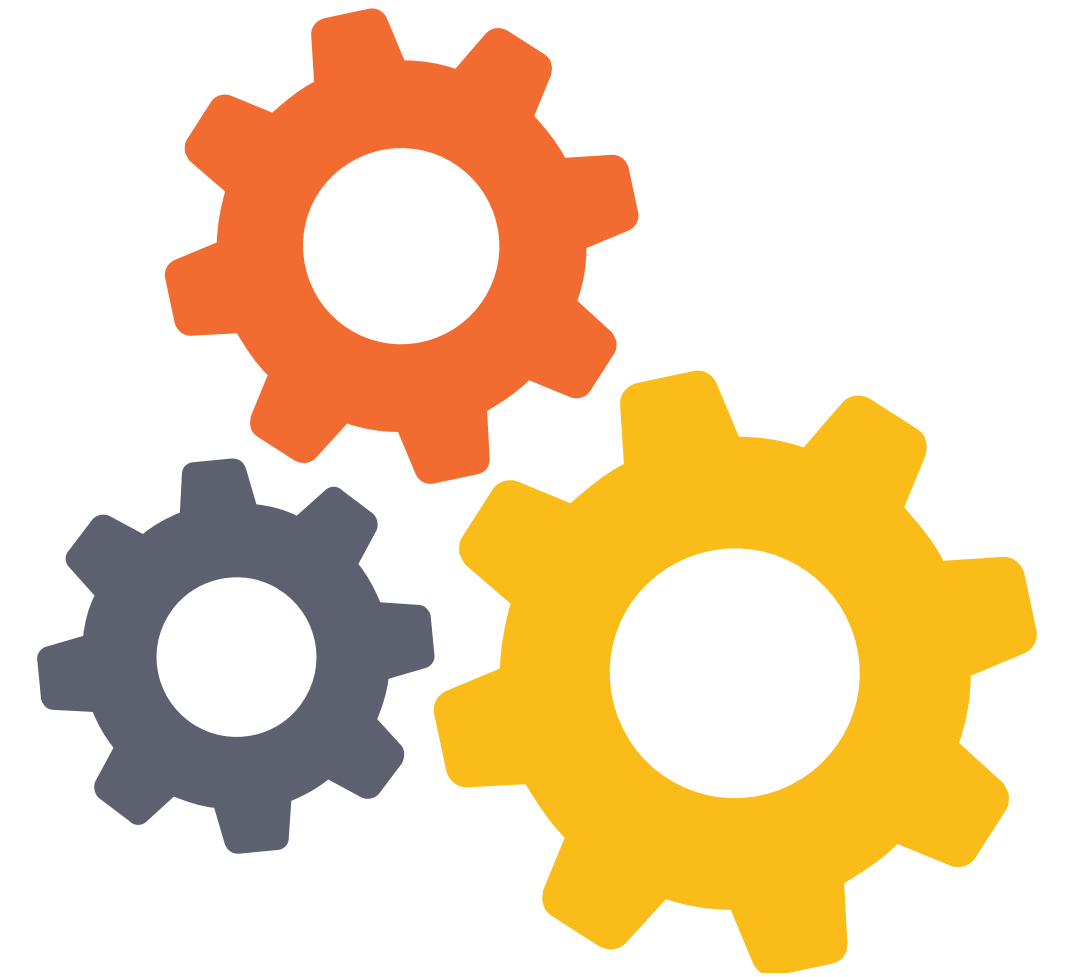
As ECI staff, we share a common purpose:

To support and empower our members so that they can consistently deliver the highest possible level of quality in their services to children and to advocate for a national ECEC system that supports them to do so.



Implementing the Strategic Plan

The implementation of this Strategic Plan began in the third quarter of 2021. We have moved to a new matrix organisational structure, we are building capacity to allow us to successfully deliver on the objectives of this Strategic Plan and a number of key projects are already underway. Our staff are fully engaged and understand the importance of delivering on this strategic plan, not only for us as an organisation, but also for the benefit of babies and children in Ireland.



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