

Welcome to the 2023 OMEP Ireland Conference

OMEP



IRELAND

Play, Grow, Sustain: Integrating the Four Pillars of Sustainability in Early Childhood

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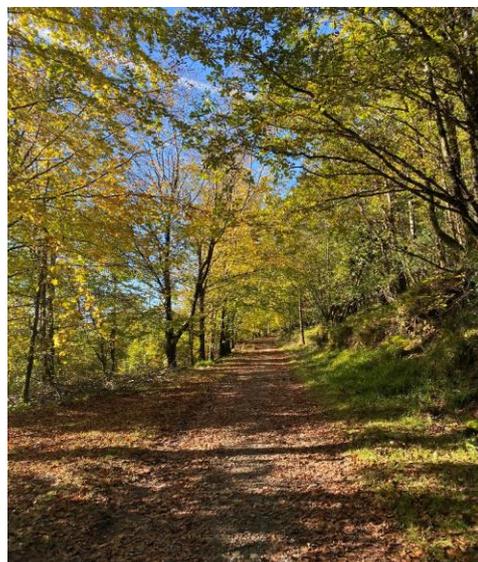
Foreword



Dear Attendee,

The OMEP Ireland Committee welcomes you to this year's conference, *Play, Grow, Sustain: Integrating the Four Pillars of Sustainability in Early Childhood*. OMEP, the World Organisation for Early Childhood, is an NGO founded in 1948 and operates in more than 60 countries to defend the human rights of children from birth until they are eight years of age. OMEP advocates for early childhood education and care (ECEC) as a right and as a tool to attaining other rights including citizenship, wellbeing, and dignity for all children in the world. OMEP Ireland is part of this world-wide organisation and celebrates its 75th birthday today with an early childhood conference that focuses on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The integral position of ECEC in promoting education for sustainable development (ESD) is well-documented (UNESCO, 2008; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2010). Research indicates that children possess substantial knowledge about environmental issues, along with an understanding of individual responsibilities for sustainability in a world devastated by severe biodiversity loss, pervasive pollution, extreme weather conditions, resulting in insurmountable human suffering especially for children and for future generations (UNCRC, 2023 UNICEF, 2021: UNGA, 2018). This is why recent reports emphasise the importance of recognising babies, toddlers and young children as rights holders in their education spaces as set out under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN 1989).

This conference positions babies, toddlers and young children as rights holders and contributing global citizens and places significant emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015) in realising this potential. OMEP Ireland celebrates the endeavours of early childhood educators, academics and researchers in promoting ESD with children, families, early childhood students and the wider community. Today's conference offers a first-hand look at the valuable work taking place both in practice and at research level to support babies, toddlers and young children to enjoy their rights to a healthy environment as well as to social and economic security in a sustainable world (UNCRC, 1989; UN, 2015).



OMEP Ireland Committee 2023

Conference Schedule

09:30: Registration.

10:00: Welcome address by Dr. Mary Moloney, President of OMEP Ireland.

10:10: Address by Adrijana Višnjić Jevtić, Vice President of OMEP for the European Region.

10:15: Keynote 1 – Professor Francis Douglas, Patron of OMEP Ireland.

10:40: Keynote 2 – Dr. Mary Daly and Dr. Sharon Skehill, NCCA.

11:10: Coffee break.

11:35: Keynote 3 – Valerie Gaynor, Creative Kids.

11:55: Presentations – Session 1.

12:55: Lunch.

13:40: Workshops.

14:20: Presentations – Session 2.

15:20: Close- Dr Mary Moloney, President of OMEP Ireland.



Keynotes

Professor Francis Douglas– ‘Celebrating OMEP in Ireland: A Brief Historical Overview’

Francis Douglas is an Emeritus Professor. He was the Director of the BA degree in Early Childhood Studies in University College Cork from its inception in 1995 until his retirement in 2009. He has published widely in journals, books, reports, and periodicals. He has been involved in curriculum development, evaluations, and consultancies in relation to Early Childhood Education and Care both at home and abroad. He was responsible for organising numerous conferences and since 1992 he has given 163 public lectures on Early Childhood Education and Care in Ireland, the United Kingdom and in different areas of Europe. Francis, together with Professor Nóirín Hayes and Dr. Mary Horgan are the three patrons of O.M.E.P. Ireland.



Dr. Sharon Skehill & Dr. Mary Daly - ‘Embedding Sustainability in an Updated Aistear’.

Dr. Sharon Skehill works as an Education Officer with the NCCA on the Early Childhood and Primary team and is working on updating Aistear: the early childhood curriculum framework. Sharon has worked for several years as a Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies and has also worked directly with babies, toddlers, and young children for many years in practice. Sharon has extensive experience developing curriculum content for ECEC programmes at university level and has published work relating to early childhood education; leadership; inclusion; outdoor learning and nature-pedagogy.



Dr. Mary Daly has a BA in Early Childhood Studies from University College Cork. In 2002, she completed her Ph.D. which focused on the emotional, social, moral, and spiritual development of the young child; and in 2004, published a book based on her findings. Mary has worked in the area of early childhood education and care in Ireland for over 20 years. She has been employed as an Education Officer with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) for a number of years. In this role, Mary has contributed to the development of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009); the Aistear Toolkit and the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (online resources to support good curriculum practice); and the Mo Scéal Reporting templates which help support children's transition from preschool to primary school. In her current work, Mary is part of the team focused on the updating of Aistear involving research and consultation with key stakeholders, including children.

Valorie Gaynor – ‘First 5 Garden of Wonder: A Garden Designed for Children by Children’.

Valerie Gaynor is the manager of Creative Kids Preschool and School-aged Service in Dublin City, which is a multi-award-winning service, and has more than 20 years' experience working in ECEC. Valerie's work has children's rights at the core and is focused on how educators can improve outcomes for children by listening to children and meeting them in this moment of the development stage they are currently in. Valerie advocates for children's participatory rights as active citizens and believes that young children must have their voices present in all that affects them. Valerie is a member of the training panel for early years with Barnardos and is currently an external examiner for SETU. Valerie sits on the Updating Aistear Development group as well as being a preschool representative on the school's forum for redeveloped Primary School Curriculum.



Session 1 – Pillars 1 & 2 – Political and Social & Cultural

Main Conference Room – Seasons Room (Downstairs)

Time	Presentation Number	Presenter	Title
11:55-12:10	1	Maureen Dwyer	Sowing the Seeds of Sustainability: Putting theory into practice in an early childhood classroom and museum context
12:10-12:25	2	Dr. Sheila Garrity & Sarah Collins	Early Childhood Educators engagement with Education for Sustainable Development through Aistear: a systems analysis
12:25-12:40	3	Monika Haid, Dr. Sheila Garrity & Dr. Aidan Harte	Spaces and Traces: Young children's meaning making through digital methodologies in a time of global pandemic
12:40-12:55	4	Melissa Bonotto	Have we moved on from a tokenism approach in cultural diversity?

Room 1 – Crescent Suite (Upstairs)

Time	Presentation Number	Name	Title
11:55-12:10	1	Siobhan Fitzpatrick	Recognizing the global importance and challenges of Peace Education in Early Childhood (EC)
12:10-12:25	2	Dr. Mary Moloney & Dr. Jennifer Pope	Who CARES? Nurturing Citizenship, Agency, Responsibility, Empathy and Sustainability in Early Childhood Education
12:25-12:40	3	Caroline Guard	Sustaining moments of unhurried social encounters with babies through Adagio interactions
12:40-12:55	Q+A Discussion Panel	Facilitator: Dr. Mary Moloney	

Room 2 – Garryowen Suite (Upstairs)

Time	Presentation Number	Name	Title
11:55-12:10	1	Muireann Ranta	'Chicken soup' or transformative approach in ESD policy for early childhood under the UNCRC
12:10-12:25	2	Dr. Leah O'Toole & Deirdre Forde	Fostering social, cultural and political sustainability by listening to the voices of babies, toddlers and young children: The updating of Aistear
12:25-12:40	3	Dr. Margaret O Donoghue	Creating opportunities to empower students of early years education to be agentic in supporting social and cultural sustainability
12:40-12:55	Q+A Discussion Panel	Facilitator: Muireann Ranta	

Lunch 12:55- 1:40pm in the Sunroom in the Hotel Restaurant

Workshops

Workshops – 'Global Citizenship'

Main Conference Room – Seasons Room (Downstairs)

Time	Workshop Number	Where	Name	Title
1:40pm-2:20pm	1	Main Conference Room	Leesa Flannagan	Mindfulness for Educators
1:40pm – 2:20pm	2	Crescent Suite	Dr. Sharon Skehill & Anne Price (The Willows, Galway)	The Beginnings of Belonging: Using documentation to support children's transitions through the SDGs in the emergent curriculum
1:40pm – 2:20pm	3	Garryowen Suite	Dr. Marie Gibbons (Tusla)	The Sky is the Roof – Tusla's updated guidance on outdoor play

Session 2 - Pillars 2 & 3 – Ecological & Economical

Main Conference Room – Seasons Room (Downstairs)

Time	Presentation Number	Name	Title
2:20- 2:35	1	Marlene McCormack	Towards Sustainable, Healthy and Inclusive Communities: Play on the Edge and Voices from the Margins
2:35-2:50	2	Dr. Alison Moore	Nurture through nature: fostering early childhood students’ understanding of outdoor learning spaces.
2:50-3:05	3	Rebecca Tinney	Exploring the Attitudes of Early Years Educators and Parents of Pre- School Children towards Outdoor and Risky Play in Ireland.
3:05-3:20	Q+A Discussion Panel	Facilitator: Muireann Ranta	

Room 1 – Crescent Suite (Upstairs)

Time	Presentation Number	Name	Title
2:20- 2:35	1	Claire Butterly	The recruitment and profile of the Early Years Educator funded through the Access and Inclusion Model from the perspective of those working in the ECEC sector
2:35-2:50	2	Paula Walshe	Lacking the STEAM to Power Sustainability Practices in Early Childhood Education and Care?
2:50-3:05	3	Laura Firth	Appraising the Expectations of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)for Scrutinising Transitions from Early Years to Primary Education in Irish Early Childhood Education
3:05-3:20	Q+A Discussion Panel	Facilitator: Jennifer O Leary	

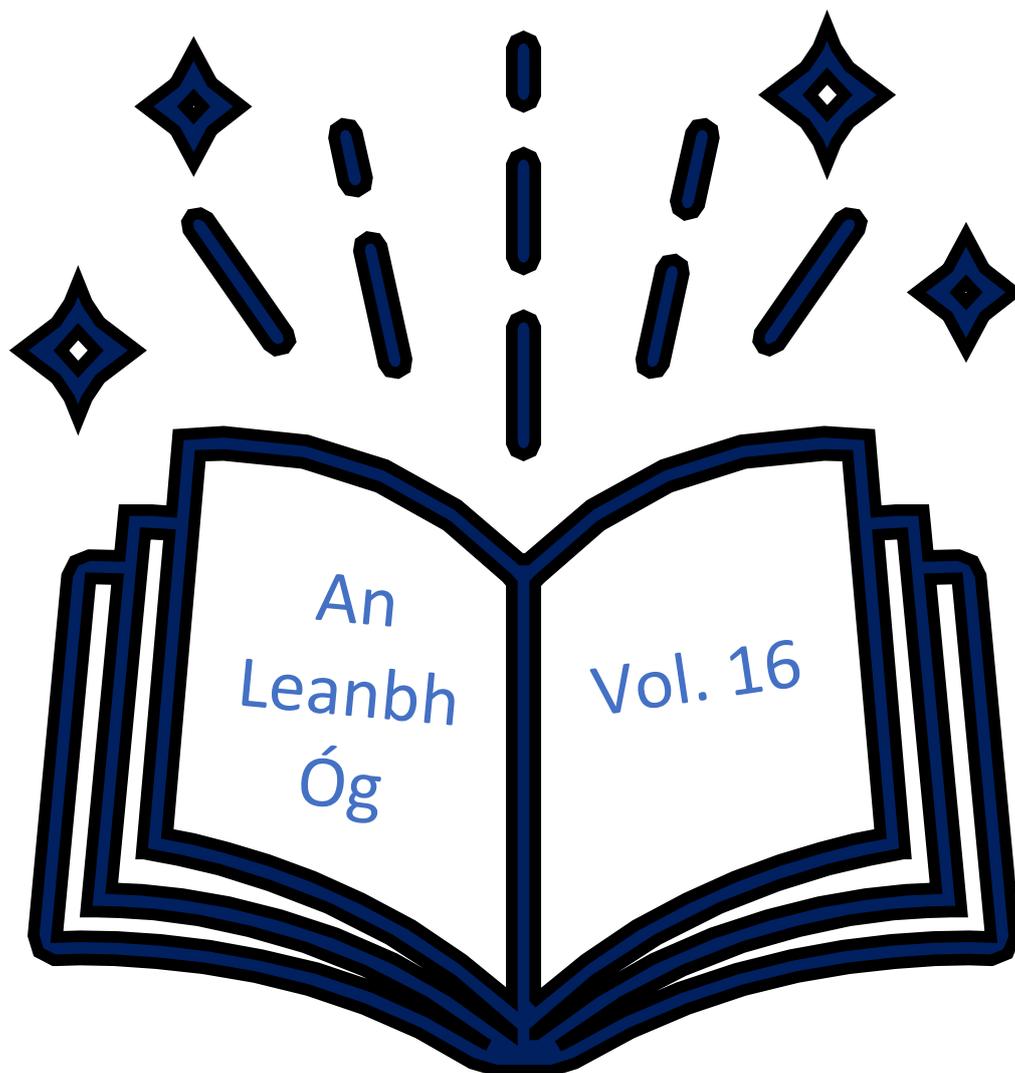
Room 2 – Garryowen Suite (Upstairs)

Time	Presentation Number	Name	Title
2:20-2:35	1	Dr. Jennifer Pope	Giving the Greenlight to Greenspaces: what the research is telling us about the importance of greenspaces for young children’s healthy development & wellbeing
2:35-2:50	2	Georga Dowling, Dr. Leah O’Toole, Tracy McElheron.	Towards building a visibility framework for ECEC.
2:50-3:05	3	Karolyn McDonnell	Sustainable Partnerships to Enhance STEM Provision for Early Childhood Education and Care
3:05-3:20	Q+A Discussion Panel	Facilitator: Dr. Leah O’Toole	

3:20-3:30pm - Close of Conference in Main Conference Room (Seasons Room)



Coming Soon...



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