

# This Week in Childcare Weekly Bulletin



**Issue 13:2026** Week: 30<sup>th</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

Dear Colleagues

These are the announcements for the 30<sup>th</sup> March - 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

## DEADLINES / IMPORTANT DATES



APRIL 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Notes
			1	2	3	4	<p>The last date for booking the NeuroKind seminar is the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026.</p> <p>The National Conversation on Education: the First Five Years and School-Age Childcare Consultation is now fully booked.</p> <p>Happy Easter from all the Kerry County Childcare Committee team. Enjoy your well deserved break.</p>
5 Happy Easter	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15 CMDG Applications Close 15/4/2026	16	17	18 Kerry CCC NeuroKind Seminar The Rose Hotel, Tralee	
19	20 The National Conversation on Education: the First Five Years and School-Age Childcare Consultation Fully Booked	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	NS Leaner Fund Applications Close 01/05/2026		



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Nurturing Skills Learner Fund 2026/27



Applications for the Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF) for the

academic year 2026/2027 is open. Applications should be submitted via the NSLF student portal.

Send a request to [NSLF@poba.ie](mailto:NSLF@poba.ie) to register on the NSLF student portal. The portal will close for applications on 1 May 2026 at 5 pm.

A recording of the recent webinar is [here](#).

### National Conversation on Education – Children’s Creative Spaces

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality Norma Foley is inviting children from Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare services across the

country to take part in Children’s Creative Spaces celebrating the theme “Where I learn and



play” The aim is to give children the opportunity to express creativity, belonging, and their own experiences of their setting (*Early Years or School Age Childcare/Afterschool*) adding their voice as part of the [National Conversation on Education: the First Five Years and School-Age Childcare](#).

### Timeline

**31 March – 30 April:** Educators/settings engage in art activities with the children in their service using guidance provided by DCDE.

**7 May:** Submit digital version of artwork to CCCs via [info@corkchildcare.ie](mailto:info@corkchildcare.ie)

**15 May – 31 May:** Keep an eye out for local galleries on your CCC website and social media accounts.

Please note that artwork submitted to the Children’s Creative Spaces may be published on gov.ie, on CCC websites, in future government documents, in follow-up reports, and on social media accounts. By submitting artwork, it will be taken that consent has been obtained by services from children and parents for the Department of Children, Disability and Equality and the City and County Childcare Committees.

### **An Comhrá Náisiúnta ar an Oideachas – Spásanna Cruthaitheacha do Leanaí**

Tá cuireadh á thabhairt ag an Aire Leanaí, Míchumais agus Comhionannais Norma Foley do leanaí ó sheirbhísí Fhoghlaim agus Chúram na Luath-oige agus Cúraim Leanaí in Aois Scoile fud fad na tíre páirt a ghlacadh i Spásanna Cruthaitheacha do Leanaí ina gceiliúrfar an téama “An ait a bhfoghlaimím agus a súgraím” Is é an cuspóir an deis a thabhairt do leanaí an chruthaitheacht, a muintearas, agus a dtaithe féin ar a suíomh (*Cúram Leanaí/larscoile Luathbhlianta nó in Aois Scoile*) a léiriú agus a nglór a chur san áireamh mar chuid

de [An Comhrá Náisiúnta ar an Oideachas – na Chéad 5 Bliana agus Cúram Leanaí in Aois Scoile](#)  
Amlíne

**31 Márta- 30 Aibreán:** Tugann oideachasóirí / suíomhanna faoi ghníomhaíochtaí ealaíon leis na leanaí ina seirbhís tríd an treoir a thug an DCDE a úsáid.

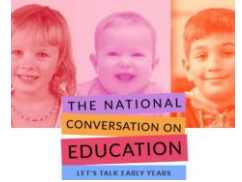
**7 Bealtaine:** Leagan digiteach den saothar ealaíne a sheoladh chuig Coiste Contae agus Cathrach I gCúram Leanaí [info@corkchildcare.ie](mailto:info@corkchildcare.ie)

**15 Bealtaine-31 Bealtaine:** Bí ag faire amach do dhánlanna áitiúla ar shuíomh gréasáin agus I gcuntais mheán sóisialta do CCC.

Tabhair faoi deara gur féidir saothair ealaíne a sheoltar chuig Spásanna Cruthaitheacha do Leanaí afhoilsíú ar gov.ie, ar shuíomhanna gréasáin CCC, i ndoiciméid rialtais amach anseo, i dtuairiscí le antacha, agus i gcuntais mheán sóisialta. Glacfar leis, má sheoltar saothar ealaíne, go bhfuair seirbhísí toiliú ó leanaí agus tuismitheoirí don Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais agus Comhionannais agus na Coistí Contae agus Cathrach i gCúram Leanaí.

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## The National Conversation on Education: The First Five Years and School-Age Childcare – Consultations with City and County Childcare Committees



*Have Your Say in the Future of Early Learning and School-Age Childcare.*

As part of the National Conversation on Education: the First Five Years and School-Age Childcare the Department is holding a series of local consultation events taking place nationwide from 20<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026. These consultations are being organised and delivered by the 30 City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs).

***Please note the Kerry consultation on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 is fully booked – if you would like to be added to a waiting list please email: [elish@kerrycountychildcare.com](mailto:elish@kerrycountychildcare.com).***

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## Annual Early Years Sector Profile Survey



The 2025/26 survey is expected to be launched on the Early Years Hive at the beginning of May, and services will have three weeks to complete the survey. Guidance documentation and training videos will be available on the Early Years Hive. In addition, Kerry County Childcare Committees is available to assist. While it is anticipated that all services will complete the survey, the completion of this year's survey is mandatory for all existing Core Funding Partner Services.

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## NeuroKind: Supporting Every Child



Kerry County Childcare Committee are delighted to announce that we are facilitating the following seminar: **NeuroKind: Supporting Every Child**

This seminar will take place on Saturday, 18th April 2026 in The Rose Hotel, Tralee.

We invite early years and school aged educators and Childminders to join us for this engaging and informative session focused on fostering neuro-inclusive, supportive environments for all children.

### Event Summary

Ciara Watson and Stef McSherry will be delivering three exciting and impactful workshops:

- Supporting Neurodivergent Children in Your Setting - Ciara Watson
- Building Positive Partnerships with Parents: Approaching Concerns – Ciara Watson
- Mindfulness, Emotions & Regulation Interactive Workshop - Stef McSherry

These sessions are designed to inspire, support, and empower early years and school-age practitioners with practical, real-world tools they can use immediately in their settings.

To ensure fair access, each service may book up to 3 participants.

However, you will have the option to request additional staff to be placed on a waiting list, and we will allocate extra spaces if they become available.

Booking link below:

[Kerry County Childcare Committee: NeuroKind: Supporting Every Child. 18th April 2026 – Fill in form](#)



**Childcare Committee**  
County Kerry  
Coiste Cúram Leanaí Chiarraí

## NEUROKIND: SUPPORTING EVERY CHILD

Kerry County Childcare Committee invites early years and school aged educators to join us for this engaging and informative session focused on fostering neuro-inclusive, supportive environments for all children.

**April 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026**  
**9.30am – 5.00pm**  
**The Rose Hotel, Tralee**  
Lunch and Refreshments provided

**Our Workshops:**

- Supporting Neurodivergent Children in Your Setting
- Building Positive Partnerships with Parents: Approaching Concerns
- Mindfulness, Emotions & Regulation Interactive Workshop

**Our Speakers:**

**Ciara Watson**  
Autism Supports

**Stef McSherry**  
KinderRain  
IFish Fairy Tails

Places are limited so early booking is advised

## Update Aistear Webinar

This webinar in the five part series *Exploring and Understanding the Updated Aistear* focuses on *Aistear's* view of the early years educator as agentic, competent, confident, and reflective. It supports early years educators to explore how this image informs their everyday practice through relationships, interactions, routines and curriculum decision-making.



Using real life experiences and reflective prompts from the *Aistear Síolta* Practice Guide, the webinar invites participants to reflect on their own view of themselves as educators and consider how *Aistear's* image is actively brought to life in daily practice.

Registration link below:

[Exploring and Understanding the Updated Aistear in practice: A National Webinar Series - Better Start](#)

## Communicating with Confidence as a Professional Childminder - Webinar



**Childcare Committee**  
County Kerry  
Coiste Cúram Leanaí Chiarraí

## COMMUNICATING WITH CONFIDENCE AS A PROFESSIONAL CHILDMINDER

**Maureen McCowen**  
Presentation Skills Specialist,  
Soft Skill Success  
Limited Spaces

9th of April - Thursday  
19:30PM TO 20:30PM  
Online - ZOOM

TO BOOK YOUR SPACE

0877885114  
amy@kerrycountychildcare.com

Supporting Childminders in communicating clearly and confidently with Parents



For further information and to book a place contact [amy@kerrycountychildcare.com](mailto:amy@kerrycountychildcare.com) / 087 7885114

# Childminding Development Grant 2026

The Childminding Development Grant is open for applications until Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026.



National Action Plan  
for Childminding  
2021-2028

For further information about the Childminding Development Grant 2026, including the application form, contact Amy: 087 7885114 / [amy@kerrycountychildcare.com](mailto:amy@kerrycountychildcare.com)

## Happy Talk Calendar

Please see below and attached Happy Talk Calendar for April 2026. This month's focus is on pretend play.

**Happy Talk**

**Language Activity - Let's Pretend**

Pretending and pretend play are very important skills. It prepares us for life in lots of ways. When we pretend we use our imagination, tell stories, solve problems, predict what might happen, and learn to live beyond the present moment, all great skills for life.

In Pretend Play children use objects (props), actions or ideas to build stories and act out roles. For example, using a brush to play 'horsey', or using an empty cardboard box as a 'pirate ship', or just pretending there is a flock of birds in the room. It doesn't matter if we use objects or not; using your imagination is key!

When young children use their imaginations in play, they are more creative, perform better at school, and develop a strong 'problem solving' approach to learning. Pretend play has benefits for a child's social development, language development, emotional development, physical development, and thinking skills! Wow! In that case... let's get pretending!

**Here are some examples of Pretend Play:**

- Dressing up (doctor, princess, superheroes)
- Playing shop (shop keeper, customer, building a shop)
- Parent play (baby dolls, puppies and kitten in bath, nappies & bottles)
- Food play (in the kitchen, tea parties, baking a cake, restaurant)
- Taking on a Role: Builder (tools, workbench), Baker, Shop keeper, Pirate, Witch, Puppy, Giraffe, Tiger, Monkey!
- Other Worlds (working on a farm, going to space, building a computer)
- New Experiences (going to the dentist, going to big school, a day out)
- Solving Problems (I feel sick, I'm hungry, I lost my doll, the car broke)

**IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE!**  
- Albert Einstein

**April 2026**

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

For further information visit [www.hae.ie/happytalk](http://www.hae.ie/happytalk)

**Happy Talk April 2026**

**Heart to Heart Talk Mindful Moment**

Let's talk about feelings. Sit down and make sure you are comfortable. Take 3 deep breaths together, and then we're going to talk about our feelings. Use the questions to get talking, take 1 deep breath in between each story/ memory / answer:

- Can you name the feelings that you feel?
- How do you know when you are feeling those feelings?
- Where do you feel these feelings in their bodies?
- Tell me a time when you were happy / disappointed / excited / sad / cross / delighted?
- How do you feel right now?

Take some deep breaths to think about how you feel after talking about feelings!

**Rhyme**  
This Little Piggy & Twinkle Twinkle

**Rhyme Time Voices & Games**

Let's Pretend using This Little Piggy and Twinkle Twinkle. Take on a role: Pretend you're a pig going for a walk to market, eating some dinner, and running away! Pretend you're tired, start getting ready to fall asleep! We can pretend play this way with most rhymes;

**Sept:** Pretend to be frogs, jumping into the pool!

**Oct:** We all know how to pretend to be a teapot, with a handle and a spout! But do you know how to pretend to be a spider?

**Nov:** Choose who you will pretend to be: the cat, the fiddle, the cow, the moon, the dog, the dish or the spoon!

**Dec:** Can you pretend to be a Christmas tree? Stretch your arms to hold some decorations, or some tinsel!

**Jan:** Pretend to be your favourite farm animal.

**Feb:** Pretend to be Jack as you try to jump over a candle! Don't get your pants on fire! (We might need a firewoman here!)

**Mar:** We need a baker and 5 customers! Pretend to gobble up the buns!

## Kerry County Childcare Committee

We invite you to visit our website [here](#) and like and mind follow our [Facebook](#) page for updates and relevant content.

Kind regards

Kerry County Childcare Committee