



# IMPACT REPORT

# GIVING BACK

# CAMPAIGN

## 2024



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# Introduction



**Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Ireland has seen unprecedented change in the past 10 years.**

ECEC is now widely accepted as a fundamental right for children in Ireland. However, policy shifts to support staff that operate in the sector have been slower to respond.

At Child Paths, we believe in celebrating the heroes who lay the foundation for our future – dedicated early childhood educators. In the current climate, these incredible individuals continue to inspire, nurture, and shape the minds of our youngest

learners, despite lower pay and conditions. They play a pivotal role in children's development and future success.

Through the Giving Back Campaign, we aim to shine a light on the unsung champions of early childhood education.

Our initiative is more than just a thank-you; it's a recognition of the hard work, creativity, and compassion that educators in high quality education and care settings bring to our children every day. It embodies our company mission and represents the early childhood education values we aspire to embed in the

relationships we develop with our customers.

High quality early childhood education interactions and environments enable babies, toddlers and young children to reach their potential.

The campaign prioritises the child and their families and extols the high-quality relationships that settings create with them. The awards laud internationally accepted principles of quality in early childhood education.

**Ciarán Flynn**  
CEO, Child Paths



# Vision

Our vision is to empower every child and student to achieve their full potential by fostering strengths, nurturing interests, and building self-belief through sustainable innovative technology.

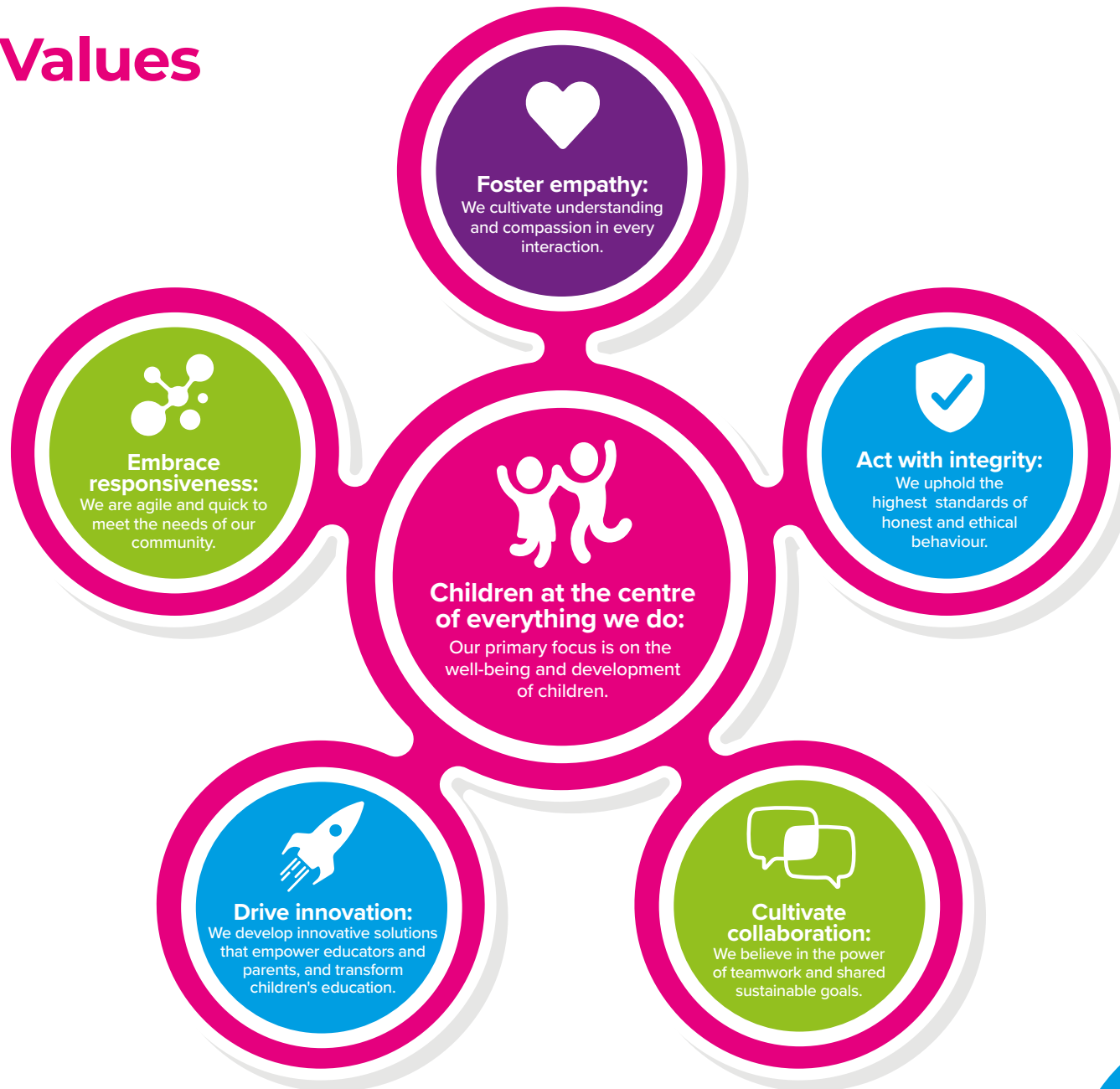
# Mission

At Child Paths, our mission is to enhance the educational journey by providing innovative and intuitive technology solutions that support children from early years to secondary school.

Our software is designed to engage parents, empower educators, and nurture each child and student's growth, supporting their agentic discovery of their desired potential.



# Company Values



# Strategic aims of Giving Back Campaign

**Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is currently in a state of flux. With the lip-service being paid to nationalising the sector, and continued chronic underfunding of the professionals, the morale in the sector is very low.**

Successive governments have made some provisions for developing the sector; however, these attempts have been very slow moving and threatening the predominantly private ECEC businesses' operating costs.

Those who work in the sector repeatedly report that they are underpaid and underrepresented. The evidence

of the impact of high-quality early childhood education and care on children's lives is compelling. However, the workers continue to occupy a position that is under the radar.

The *Giving Back Campaign* responds to this by providing a means to honour the staff in early childhood education. It does this by recognition of those staff who have gone above and beyond for the children in their care. It marries with our overall mission where we recognise the crucial roles that those around a child play in their development.

Our software aims to engage parents/guardians and to support

educators. Through the Giving Back Campaign, parents and families are encouraged to nominate the settings they think are deserving of an award. At the end of the campaign, all monthly award winners are then invited to attend an evening of celebration at the *Recognition Awards* in November.

A panel of esteemed judges (*Michelle Hart, CEO National Childhood Network; Marie Daly, CEO, Crann Support Group and Dr Gillian Lake, Child Paths*) was assembled to decide the winning services. Prizes were awarded to first (€5,000), second (€3,000) and third (€2,000) placed settings. The judges

gave qualified feedback on the grading criteria (Appendix A) and met in December '24 to critique and develop the criteria and judging processes for the 2025 campaign.

The campaign is strengthening the business by making a genuine contribution to the ECEC community upon which its customer base is built.

This *Giving Back Campaign* forms the third of the four dimensions of Child Paths' approach to corporate and social responsibility. Our four dimensions of corporate and social responsibility are adapted from those which are recommended by ISME.



# Our four dimensions of corporate and social responsibility

## THE WORKPLACE

how we support and engage our employees.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

how we reduce, reuse or recycle resources to minimise negative environmental impacts.

## THE COMMUNITY

How we interact with our local community partners and organisations.

## THE MARKETPLACE

How Child Paths makes responsible commercial decisions in dealing with suppliers and customers.



# The strategic aims and objectives of the Giving Back Campaign

## SOCIAL AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

- Giving back through philanthropic campaign

## ADVOCATE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

- Highlight the high quality of early childhood educators
- Provide a celebratory event to mark their achievements

## BRAND AWARENESS

- Brand on all merchandise and banners
- Brand on advertising for campaign
  - Digital exposure - website, email, social media
  - Media exposure
- Child Paths in name of event, associated with Child Paths
- Gateway to early childhood settings for potential custom



# Target Audience and Reach

**Our target audience for this campaign is early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings that currently use Child Paths.**

During the 2024 campaign, through the Child Paths app, there were 1.74 views per active user (Figure 1). Each monthly winner (n=9) then actively engaged with the campaign for the remainder of the year until the *Recognition Awards* night. Outside of the app, a full page on the Child Paths website was dedicated to the campaign.

Furthermore, on the landing page of the website, there was a pop-up which featured the most

recent monthly winner. All services were emailed with the announcement of the monthly winner, a notification was sent through the app to parents and short videos with the winner were shared on the website and social media.

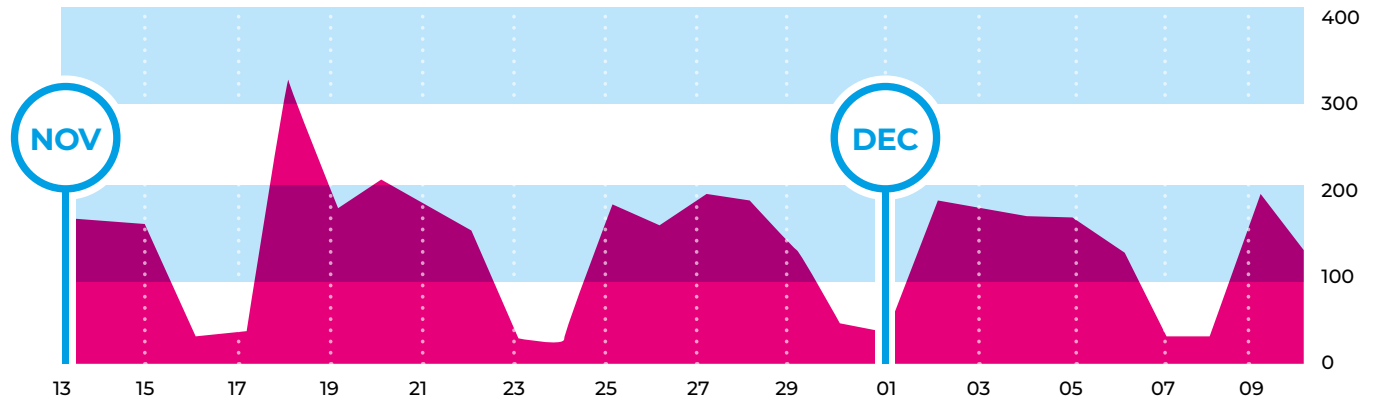
Across the social media platforms where Child Paths have accounts (Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn), the campaign was fully and thoroughly covered by our marketing consultant. A social media strategy was generated for the lead-up to the capstone event in November and the weeks subsequently.

This was realised and the impressions and analytics are represented below. We can reasonably assume then that from coverage outlined above that the wider early childhood education and care population, who are not currently Child Paths users were aware of the event and the campaign more generally.



# Figure 1.

Giving Back Campaign page views over time.



# Giving Back Campaign numbers

**75,000**  
USERS OF  
**CHILD  
PATHS**



**OVER  
€35,000**  
INVESTED IN  
THE EVENT

**700+**  
**ACTIVE**  
CUSTOMER  
SETTINGS

**OVERALL  
WINNERS  
SHARE  
€10,000**  
PRIZE MONEY

**9**  
**MONTHLY  
WINNERS**  
TAKE A SHARE OF  
**€9,000**



**117**  
APPLICATIONS FROM  
**63**  
BRANCHES

APPLIED TO THE  
**GIVING BACK  
CAMPAIGN**

**MAILING LIST**  
UNITED KINGDOM  
**18,908**  
IRELAND  
**8,676**



**SOCIAL FOLLOWERS  
IN IRELAND**

**f 9,400** Facebook  
**@ 4,200** Instagram  
**in 1,092** LinkedIn

**GIVING BACK CAMPAIGN  
SOCIAL MEDIA STATS**

**118**  
POSTS

118 posts on  
Facebook and  
Instagram  
between Jan.  
and Nov. 2024

A COMBINED  
REACH OF  
**363,224**

These posts  
had a  
combined  
reach of  
**363,224**

**589,211**  
POST VIEWS

This included  
combined views  
by 'non-followers'  
of Child Paths  
totalling **191,228**

**22,928**  
VIEWS ON  
POSTS

**2,216**  
INTERACTIONS  
ON POSTS

**3,112**  
LINK CLICKS  
FROM POSTS

# Giving Back Campaign numbers

In addition, Public Relations agency, Presence PR, was hired to publicise the event and the content achieved is summarised below

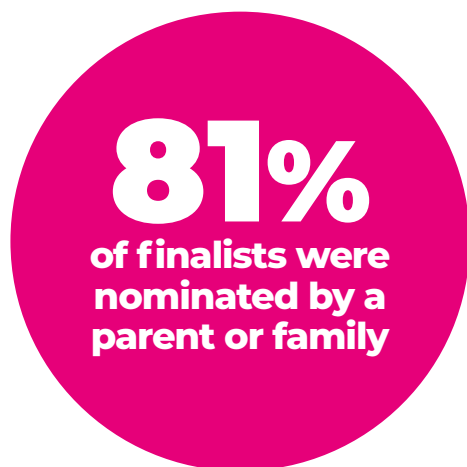
Publication	Advertising revenue equivalent - approx.	Reach
Cork Echo	€1647	8081
The Sun	€4,212	31,348
Daily Star	€30,495	23,059
Daily Mirror	€14,316	18,656
Tuam Herald	€6,393.60	5200
Tuam Herald (front page)	€2,913.75	5200
Connacht Tribune	€9,000	33,346
ThisisGalway.ie	€9,000	26,600
GalwayBayFM.ie	€9,000	118,500
Galway Bay FM 3pm & 5pm news bulletins	€2,484	139,000 x2

**TOTAL**  
**€89,461**  
**REACH**  
**547,990**  
**PEOPLE**



# Evaluation responses and event support

## Nominations

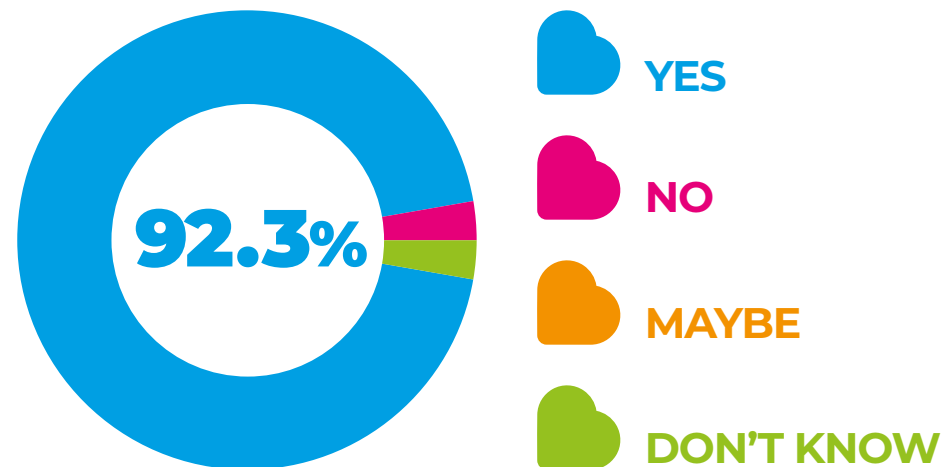


## Satisfaction level



## Should the Recognition Awards Night be an annual event?

26 responses



# Evaluation responses and event support

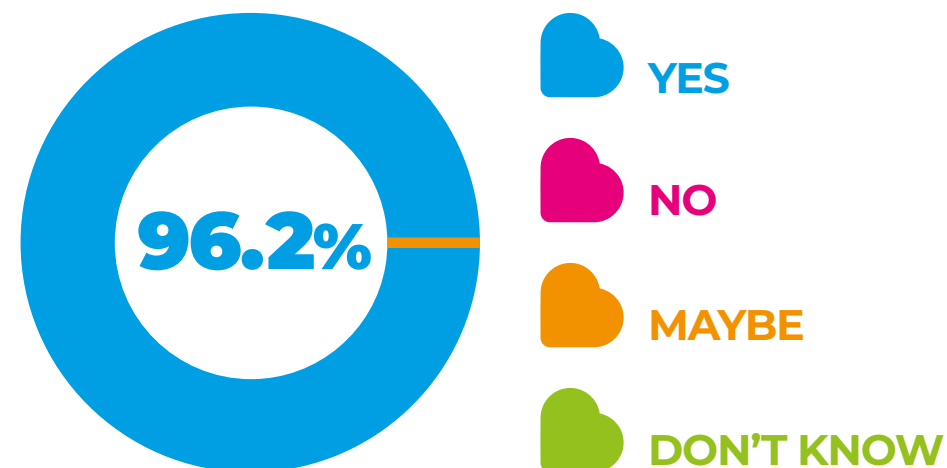
Main themes emerged after thematic analysis of responses around event:

- ♥ **Educators think there is currently a negative public perception of Early Years**
  - Giving Back campaign could help to change negative perception of Early Years sector and educate public around crucial period/impact Early Years has on children's lives
- ♥ **Sector reports they work very hard and are very dedicated to young children**
- ♥ **Recognition is very important to sector**
- ♥ **The Giving Back campaign served to:**
  - motivate and boost morale among staff involved
  - help services to network, create community and share experiences



How likely are you to attend next year's Recognition Awards Night if you get nominated

26 responses



# Strategic Aim 1 - Social and Corporate Responsibility

## Giving Back through Philanthropic Campaign

**Families or setting staff nominated an individual or service for their outstanding service to the children in their care.**

They submitted the nomination via a video describing why they are nominating. These were carefully scrutinised, and a monthly winner was decided. Each month a finalist was awarded €1,000 to recognise their nomination.

The overall winner received €5,000, 2nd place received €3,000 and 3rd place received €2,000.

In a sector where every cent counts, professionals are grateful. Our winners this year who took away €5,000 have indicated that they will invest in a headstone for the family they had helped.

Other settings have said they will reinvest the money in resources for the children in their care: *'Equipment can be expensive, sensory and otherwise, creating imaginative outdoor/indoor spaces for play and development could be good', 'Team building events' and 'This money can help out service by allowing us to buy new resources and*

*equipment for our children to benefit their development'.*

At the Recognition Awards night, we also had ten donated, spot prizes (p11).

Each monthly finalist secured a spot prize that was useful in some way to their service that evening.

These ranged from a Petitwagon™, to Water Wipes™ to prizes befitting children with sensory needs. In addition, the local library in Ballymun donated 10 book bags with books for each service.



# Strategic Aim 2 – Advocate for Early Childhood Education and Care

**Through our wider work but particularly during this campaign, we celebrate ECEC.**

We have given the sector a platform to put their message across to the public and attempt to influence the narrative about ECEC.

In the season of electioneering, the Recognition Awards was an opportune moment to communicate what a newly elected government could focus on regarding ECEC. One nominee remarked: *'at a time where there is such negativity*

*in the media about the sector it is so important to highlight excellent work being done, attract new, dedicated graduates to the sector and give them reason to stay in the sector'.*

The curation of several **blogs** and **short videos** relating to the event which were posted on our website and across social media created consistent messaging about the importance of the sector and the necessity for public expenditure thereon. The social media and press coverage of the night kept the sector in the spotlight.

We engaged a highly skilled and highly respected judging panel from within the sector. Great care and attention were taken in the creation of acceptable grading criteria upon which to decide the prize-winners. The support of our esteemed judging panel illustrates the backing of the campaign by the sector more widely and the recognition that such a campaign is valid.

## Highlight the high quality of early childhood educators

An important constituent part of advocating for ECEC is to highlight the high-quality workforce that operates within it. High-quality provision of early childhood education contributes significantly to children's later **life-chances**.

The interactions that the staff in ECEC have with the youngest members of society are life-shaping (Ulferts, Wolf & Anders, 2019).

We witness the care and attention these professionals give daily to young children and aim to highlight this for others outside the sector.

One nominee summarised this by saying: *'If the powers that be are listening, I would like them to...see the real people that work on the ground'.* This campaign has the potential

to shape public opinion. We shared all the nomination videos on social media and on our website.

The videos were also shown at the Recognition Awards. The professionals appreciate the campaign: *'The Giving Back Campaign is such a thoughtful campaign and very much appreciated by the employees of the childcare sector'.*

[READ THE BLOGS](#)

[WATCH THE VIDEOS](#)

[READ ABOUT CHILD LIFE-CHANCES](#)



All the nominees' hard work could be celebrated by finalists and staff at the event and resulted in raising this group of professionals' morale.

ECEC professionals highlighted this in their feedback to us: 'Feeling of being valued and appreciated boost our confidence and motivates us to keep going and invest even more in our work'.



## Provide a celebratory event to mark ECEC professionals' achievements

We provided a night of celebration in a Dublin hotel (Iveagh Gardens Hotel) on 9th November 2024. The attendees enjoyed live music, drinks reception, DJ, food, drinks vouchers and nightclub concessions.

The services were appreciative of the food and drink that was provided: *'Thank you for the drinks reception and drink vouchers, happily used!'*

Attendees travelled from all over Ireland to be at the event, from Cork to Galway and Kilkenny. All monthly finalists received a plaque to take away which can be displayed in the finalist's own service.

This is valued by the settings: *'We're extremely proud of our award and can't wait to get a copy to display in all our rooms and reception areas'.* The aim was to provide a night of fun and

entertainment with little expense needed from the attendees. This was achieved:

*'Well done to your team on organising which an amazing event'; 'It was brilliant from start to finish, the music, atmosphere, food and just about everything was great!'*



# Strategic Aim 3 – Brand Awareness

## Brand on all merchandise and banners

**We created a specific brand package for the campaign and capstone event.**

This featured on all communications on social media and email. Specially designed backdrop and lectern decorations were designed for the awards night.

Through the app, services and parents were reminded of the campaign and messages were sent with the winners and reminders to nominate.

Our interaction with the media and social media campaigns resulted in early childhood services who are not currently using Child Paths engaging with news of the event.

Services who were finalists were supportive in sharing the content on their own socials which had a knock-on effect, as they tagged Child Paths.

- Brand on advertising for campaign**
- Digital exposure (website, email, social media)**
- Media exposure**
- Child Paths in name of event, or in association with Child Paths**
- Gateway to Early childhood settings for potential custom**



# Our community of sponsors of spot prizes for the Giving Back Campaign





Figure 2  
Third Place  
**Highcare Childcare**



Figure 3  
Second Place  
**Tigers Childcare**

# Winners of 2024



Figure 4  
Overall Winner  
**Dún Beag Crèche**

## Follow us



@childpaths



@childpaths



@childpaths



Child Paths

[childpaths.ie](http://childpaths.ie)

[#GivingBackCampaign](https://www.instagram.com/childpaths)



# Appendix A

## Grading Criteria Giving Back Campaign 2024

### Children First (30 marks)

In keeping with our company value: *Children at the centre of everything we do, we prioritised Children First and Valuing Early Childhood Education* (principles 1 & 2). We believe that a child's learning and development starts early in life and continues throughout childhood and comes from the child.

We promote the importance of the holistic child and celebrating their strengths and interests. We have created many opportunities through our software for children to excel in a rounded way. We

affirm a child-led approach to early childhood education. There are 30 marks for this section.

#### **The indicators of this criterion are:**

- Setting recognises the potential impact of creating positive experiences in early childhood (10 marks)
- Setting supports children's strengths, needs and interests (10 marks)
- Setting values the voice of the child and is providing opportunities for the child to be heard (10 marks)

### Relationships/Process Quality (30 Marks)

Next, we recognise the importance of relationships and process quality in early childhood education. It marries with our company value: *Cultivate Collaboration*.

We recognise the crucial role that those around a child play in their development in our central mission. Our software aims to engage parents/guardians and to support educators and all those who are involved in the student's learning and development to help them reach their desired potential.

In particular, we know how important the parents are in a young child's journey through early childhood education, so evidence of the setting engaging meaningfully with parents is highly scored. In a multicultural society, awareness and acting out cultural responsiveness in daily practice is scored here.

#### **The indicators of this criterion are:**

- Setting fosters honest and respectful partnerships with parents (10 marks)
- Setting emphasises positive

interactions between children, and early childhood educators to help children reach their unique potential (10 marks)

- Setting communicates an understanding of cultural, linguistic and individual differences, promoting respect and inclusion to promote positive and secure relationships (10 marks)



# Appendix A - continued

## Grading Criteria Giving Back Campaign 2024

### Environments (20 marks)

At Child Paths we have integrity as a central value to our mission. We place children's safety and safeguarding as a high priority.

Along with the protection of children, the environment in which early childhood education takes place is central to enabling children to reach their full potential. Children deserve to be stretched physically, emotionally and cognitively. Play is the best context for learning and allows children to exercise their agency.



### *The indicators are:*

- Setting focuses on the protection of each child (6 marks)
- Setting provides a high quality environment that extends and enriches child's development and learning physically, emotionally and cognitively (8 marks)
- Play is the primary focus for promoting creativity, problem-solving and learning (6 marks)

### Teamwork (20 marks)

The named principle of Teamwork in the Síolta framework informed the next criterion.

We value a strong workforce and all those who are interacting with the child. We know how important collaboration with families and the community is in

supporting babies', toddlers' and young children's wellbeing. We believe that partnerships with parents and families should be created, with shared knowledge and understanding being clearly communicated both within the setting and with all those who are partnering in the child's early education.

We place a high importance on the competencies and qualifications of the staff. The strong workforce needs to be dynamic, critically reflective and flexible in their approach to the learning and development of young children to ensure they are providing quality experiences for each child.

- Setting's shared knowledge and understanding is communicated within and beyond the setting and reflects strong collaboration between staff, families and the community (10 marks)

- Setting values the competencies, qualifications, dispositions and experience of adults ensuring quality experiences for each child (5 marks)
- Pedagogy is flexible and dynamic and reflects best practices in early childhood education (5 marks)

