

ACP, SIPTU and PLÉ move to establish professional body for Early Childhood Education and Care

The Association of Childhood Professionals (ACP), SIPTU, and PLÉ, the Irish Association of Academics in Early Childhood Education and Care in Higher Education, have formed a working group to explore the establishment of a professional body for Early Childhood Education and Care.

ACP chairperson Marion Quinn said: “We are delighted to be a partner in this important initiative. This collaboration will harness expertise from all elements of the Early Childhood Education and Care profession, to inform and influence policy and practice, from inception to implementation.”

She added: “One of the main roles of our professional body is to be the collective, articulate and dedicated voice of ‘a profession, thinking and speaking for itself’ as Professor Urban from DCU Early Childhood Research Centre has called it”.

PLÉ chairperson Dr Mary Moloney said: “The formation of this professional body is a timely move. Early Childhood Education and Care as a profession requires recognition and self-governance like any other established profession.”

She added: “Each of our three organisations represents a significant part of the workforce. Coming together to form a professional body will support having a collective voice and shared professional identity among all those working in Early Childhood Education and Care. It will facilitate our involvement in the development of policy, and of standards and a code of ethics for professional practice.”

SIPTU organiser Darragh O’Connor noted: “Employee turnover within the sector is currently over 25%, because many of the women and men who are qualified to degree level are working for minimum wage with no stability in their employment conditions. These professionals are concerned about the continuing failure to properly implement necessary changes.

He also stated: “Educating and caring for young children is a profession and needs to be valued and rewarded. As such, SIPTU is delighted to be a founding partner in the development of the professional body for the Early Childhood Education and Care sector.”

Those working in the Early Childhood Education and Care system support children’s holistic development, partner with parents, address social inclusion and educational disadvantage. They need to be supported. ACP, SIPTU and PLÉ contend that forming this working group to establish the professional body and bring in the voices of the sector is a necessary and timely move.

Speaking with one voice we can better engage with partners in government to address urgent questions of oversight, funding and staffing.

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