



SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: £100,000 IT Investment From Early Years, Shared Education Project (May 2021)

THEME:

Shared Education

FUNDING (ERDF + Match):

€4,256,007.31

MATCH FUNDERS:

The Department of Education and the Department of Education and Skills, Ireland

LEAD PARTNER:

Early Years

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Fermanagh Trust
National Childhood Network

Start Date: 01/07/2016

End Date: 31/03/2022



www.sharingfromthestart.org



[@earlyyearsorg](https://twitter.com/earlyyearsorg)

The Sharing From The Start project recently made an investment of €98,988 in technology in preschools and nurseries involved in the project.

As well as receiving equipment including laptops, projectors, webcams and broadband infrastructure, the preschool staff also benefited from online training on virtual delivery methods, providing them with Continuing Professional Development opportunities.

The programme, which is now in its fourth year, is bringing positive attitudinal and behavioural change towards difference amongst children, parents, teachers and the wider community.

To date, over 7,000 preschool children have benefitted from participation in Shared Education classes and over 150 preschool practitioners have built their capacity to confidently facilitate.

In the Ballymena area, First Steps Playgroup, Ballymena Nursery and Castle Tower Nursery are three of the settings who received equipment. These preschools have been partnered together for a number of years and with their new TV, webcams and laptops, can carry out their shared lessons virtually.

Another partnership in the programme is Bligh's Lane Nursery School in Derry-Londonderry, Stepping Stones Playgroup in St Johnston and Cockhill Community Pre-School in Buncrana. IT equipment received as a result of this investment included wide angle cameras, providing full room coverage so all children are visible during the online shared classes.

"With ongoing restrictions in place, which do not currently support peer face to face contact, we have been working closely with preschools to develop innovative and creative methods for facilitating virtual engagement across communities. This significant IT investment enables settings to adapt and remain focussed on continuing to deliver high quality outcomes for children."

Pauline Walmsley, Chief Executive Officer of Early Years – the organisation for young children