

## **IRELAND**

### **Association of AMI Teachers Ireland (AATI)**

#### **Events & Activities**

AMI diploma holders in Ireland continue to lobby for the state recognition necessary for running their schools to true Montessori principles. The Department of Youth and Children's Affairs included us in their published list of qualifications for higher capitation for the early childhood free preschool years, which is a positive development. This indicates that our quality early childhood environments are recognised and, in response to this, we acknowledge this as a valuable step in the right direction.

There are 4,200 early years settings in Ireland. Our estimates conclude that 90 of these are schools with AMI graduates. There are also many AMI Elementary graduates working in the area of Special Needs.

We have identified three major aspects high on the agenda for AMI in Ireland. The return of the AMI training college is essential for AMI schools to continue to exist. At the moment there are many interpretations of Montessori being given to students. Better adult child ratios in our environments need to be fought for, so the children can evolve without too much adult intervention. And more AMI elementary schools are essential if Montessori is to be considered a force in education.

Starting in September 2016, all schools in Ireland will be instructed to follow the same regulations as all other early childhood settings. Health and safety inspections made by nurses will be a new venture for us. Furthermore, our ratio of ages 1 to 15 will be reduced to 1 to 11. The department of Education will also start new inspections of all early years settings, which we consider a positive change and we are currently holding discussions on how we can facilitate these changes, and how they will evaluate settings with so many different pedagogical backgrounds.

#### **Highlights**

The highlight of AATI's event calendar was the refresher course delivered by Lynne Lawrence and Ann Dunne. They were very inspirational and we were extremely grateful and appreciative of their time and generosity. We hope to receive them again the following year, as it was overall a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

Maintaining our authentic AMI training is essential in a world where departments of research and development in education are advancing at so many different stages. Our government and media continue to promote these advances without always considering the repercussions that it may have on the children of today, and we know that what we teach in our classrooms is important in making a difference.

Alison Pigot  
President