

9th May 2025



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

My Little Library 2025 Initiative Launches for 60,000 children starting primary school in the coming months

- All children who are due to start primary school this year are entitled to their free book bag, with books in English or ‘as Gaeilge.’
- An average of 20,000 children around Ireland join their local library every year thanks to the My Little Library initiative.

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley, together with Minister of State for Charities, Gaeltacht and the Islands & Rural Transport, Jerry Buttimer, today announced the launch of this year’s My Little Library free book bag for almost 60,000 children starting primary school.

Each year, every one of the almost 60,000 children leaving pre-school and starting primary school are invited to visit their local library to pick up a free book bag and take the opportunity to join the library.

The My Little Library initiative 2025 is expected to lead to tens of thousands of families picking up their book bags and joined their local library. Since its launch, an average of 20,000 4-5 year olds have joined their local libraries annually.

The books and resources in the book bag, which is available in both English and ‘as Gaeilge’, support parents and their children in the transition to primary school.

From 9th of May 2025, all children completing the free universal pre-school Early Childhood Care and Education Programme and starting primary school are invited to visit their local library and pick up a free book bag. The bags will be available throughout the summer. All families are welcomed to join the library if they are not already members.

Minister Foley said she was *pleased to announce the 2025 My Little Library initiative.*

“Reading is a magical gift and it is great to give children the opportunity to develop a love of reading from a young age. Many parents may not be aware that every child about to enter primary school is eligible for their free My Little Library book bag. That’s why I am urging every family with a child starting primary school this September to pick up their Little Library book bag from their local library.

The transition from pre-school to primary school is such an important moment for every child in Ireland. Books and stories support connection between parents and their children. They also promote

early language and literacy development which is crucial for children's success in early childhood and beyond.

Minister Buttimer said today:

"I warmly welcome the launch of the 2025 My Little Library Initiative. I know that the library staff across the country share my enthusiasm for connecting young families with our excellent national library service.

"Books and stories are a lovely way of helping parents support their children with their learning journey and becoming a library member gives lifelong access to the joy of books and reading."

My Little Library is run in association with the Local Government Management Agency and delivered by local authorities. It is a collaboration between the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, the Department of Rural and Community Development, and Local Government Ireland.

ENDS

Note to Editors:

- The free My Little Library book bag is now available in local libraries for all children starting primary school in September
- The initiative is available annually
- Books are available in Irish and English
- A glossary of the language in the Irish books is included
- A collection of resources and information are also provided in each bag, including a library social story card, *First 5 Guidance for Parents of Children Moving from Pre-School to Primary School*, *Dyslexia and the Younger Child* by Dyslexia Ireland and *Bookshare Ireland* by Vision Ireland. Ireland has 330 public libraries, which are managed by the local authority in the area in which they are located.

First 5 (published in 2018) is a ten-year Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families. This Strategy works to enhance early childhood and make a significant contribution to the lives of young children, their families and society over the short, medium and longer term. More information can be found on the First 5 website at: www.first5.gov.ie/

This initiative is an action of the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3f341-towards-a-new-literacy-numeracy-and-digital-literacy/>

And

The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration - National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027. <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/e6d8e-the-library-is-the-place-new-five-year-strategy-for-public-libraries-unveiled/>