



# Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education



## Annual Report 2004





**Published by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education**

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ISBN: 0-9551894-0-3

ISBN-13: 978-0-9551894-0-1

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Funded by the Irish Government and part financed by the  
European Union under the National Development Plan 2000-2006



**Nóirín Hayes**

**Chairperson's Foreword**

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report 2004 for the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education. I have enjoyed serving as a member of the CECDE management board over the last year and being so directly involved in the growth of such a critical asset to the early childhood sector in Ireland.

The establishment of the CECDE was unique in providing an opportunity to bring together the expertise of a range of different interests across the field of early childhood with the intention of improving the quality of early childhood services and supports for all young children under six years in Ireland. To this end a dynamic team came together to work on the development of a National Quality Framework which would be underpinned by research and evidence, both national and international.

During 2004 the team has progressed the objectives of the Centre through a combination of research and consultation. Taking guidance from the CECDE *Audit of Research* (2003), a number of research projects were identified and commissioned in 2004 for completion in 2005 and the CECDE team have worked directly on a number of other projects and publications.

In September, the Centre hosted an international conference, *Questions of Quality*. At a time of unprecedented attention to early childhood education in Ireland, this

conference brought together a rich audience of practitioners, academics and policymakers to consider the complexity of quality and what it means in the lives of young children. Like all those who attended this vibrant conference, I look forward to reading the proceedings which will be published in 2005.

Throughout the year, the team at the CECDE has been tireless in its work and has consulted widely across the early childhood sector. Through their work, a set of national Principles for Quality have been developed and agreed. These principles will form the basis from which the final Framework will emerge.

The CECDE continues to develop and expand its communication base through its accessible and content rich website [[www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)]. I recommend it to you as a wonderful source of up-to-date, high quality information and research.

On behalf of the management board of the CECDE, I would like to take this opportunity to extend sincere thanks to the Director and team of the Centre for their continued commitment and interest in the work and to congratulate them on the quality of that work.

It is a rewarding challenge to be a part of the activity of the CECDE and I would like to thank the Department of Education and Science and the Minister for supporting the Centre in its important role.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the management board for their work and engagement over the year as we look forward to another activity-rich year ahead.

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**Heino Schonfeld**

### **Director's Introduction**

I am very pleased to present the 2004 Annual Report of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education. The past year has seen a further consolidation of our work and marks considerable progress in the delivery of our objectives.

The work on the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* has continued. In addition, we have completed a number of important research projects and intensive consultation across the early childhood care and education sector. In this context, I would like to acknowledge the commitment of our many partners, particularly the Consultative Committee<sup>1</sup> who assisted us with so much enthusiasm throughout the year.

Five *research projects* targeted at children with special educational needs and children who experience educational disadvantage have been commissioned and are progressing well. These projects are scheduled to deliver final reports by the autumn of 2005 and will support the development of early childhood care and education for children who benefit most from high-quality services and early intervention.

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education has continued to develop its organisational structures and has established a strong role as contributor to

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<sup>1</sup> For a full list of Consultative Committee members please see our website at [www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)

policy development in Ireland. Equally, the Centre has strengthened its international presence through numerous presentations at conferences abroad, the organisation of a major international conference in Dublin and other important activities.

In summary, it has been a privilege and a pleasure to direct the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education through its second full year of operation.

## **The National Quality Framework**

The development of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (NQF) is the core activity of the CECDE. The role of the Framework is to support the provision of quality experiences for young children between the ages of birth and six years in all settings, including family day care, infant classes, sessional preschool services and full and part-time day care.

Throughout 2004 the CECDE has undertaken intensive research and development activity towards establishing the foundations of the National Quality Framework. This activity has been undertaken by both the staff of the CECDE and also through research projects commissioned to the Centre for Social and Educational Research in the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Special Education Department of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Our commitment to ensuring that this important national policy initiative is grounded in a solid evidence base prompted the preparation of a number of reports throughout the year. Two of these, *On Target? An Audit of Provision of Services Targeting Disadvantage and Special Needs Among Children from Birth to Six Years in Ireland* and *Talking About Quality - Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education* were published and launched by the Department of Education and Science. Another three reports are completed and await publication early in 2005. These are:

- *Insights on Quality - A National Review of Policy, Practice and Research Relating to Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland 1990-2004*
- *Making Connections - A Review of International Policies, Practices and Research Relating to Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education*
- *Early Childhood in Ireland - Evidence and Perspectives*

The completion of this research marked the end of the first phase of the development of the National Quality Framework. Phase two, which commenced in the autumn of 2004, will focus on using this collected knowledge to develop the various elements of the Framework itself. By the end of 2004, the first of these elements, a set of national

Principles for Quality in ECCE has been devised and circulated for consultation to the fifty different stakeholder organisations that comprise our Consultative Committee. Achieving the development of the Principles, which present an agreed vision for the future of quality ECCE service provision in Ireland is a fitting end to this busy year. 2004 began with retrospective examinations of the achievements of the past and culminated with the achievement of the first steps in creating the new national framework, which will support all our activities and aspirations towards quality in practice in ECCE in the future.

All published materials related to the National Quality Framework and related research activities can be accessed through our website [www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie).

## **Targeted Projects**

One of the key objectives of the CECDE is to develop targeted interventions on a pilot basis for children who are educationally disadvantaged and children with special needs. A number of targeted projects were developed to address this objective. While the projects address this need, they will also assist the delivery of the other two objectives, the development of a quality framework for early childhood education and the preparation for the establishment of the Early Childhood Education Agency.

### **Project 1: In Search of Quality: Multiple Perspectives**

#### **Research Team: Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology**

Inspired by international findings that quality is dynamic and context dependent, this project team, headed by Dr Nóirín Hayes, CSER, is conducting a comprehensive nationwide study on quality in the Irish context. To date, the team have compiled an extensive literature review on quality in ECCE settings to guide their research. Over 20 settings have been selected to take part in the study, each nominating one staff member and two families. Currently the researchers are measuring observable quality in each setting. This will be followed up by interviews and consultation with the participants, including children.

### **Project 2: Early Intervention for Children with Special Needs in Diverse Settings**

#### **Research Team: North Tipperary Early Intervention Centre/Mid Western Health Board**

International literature clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of intensive early intervention for children with disabilities. This project, carried out by the Mid Western Health Board, takes a deeper look into early intervention to identify specific programme features, which provide optimum outcomes for children and their families. The outcomes will identify aspects of best practice of each setting relating to capacity, pedagogy used and support of transitions.

**Project 3: An In-Career Development Programme for Teachers and Management in Pre-school for Travellers**

**Research Team: Barnardos/INTO**

The National Evaluation Report on Pre-schools for Travellers found a significant need for in-service training among both the teachers and members of the management committees of Traveller pre-schools. In response, a training programme has been developed and delivered by a Barnardos/INTO partnership. Thirty-two preschool staff took part in an extensive training needs analysis to determine the topics of the course modules. The areas identified were curriculum development and lesson planning, involving parents in their children's education, the importance of play in learning, diversity, behaviour management and special needs.

**Commissioned Project 1: Early Years Provision for Children with Special Needs in Ireland**

**Research Team: Special Education Dept., St Patrick's College**

This project will provide a much-needed overview and analysis of the current provision in Ireland for children with special needs in Ireland. The project team is currently examining the relationship between types of intervention and factors for early intervention. The outcomes will produce recommendations in relation to practice and to future policy and research.

**Commissioned Project 2: Early Assessment and Intervention in Educational Disadvantage**

**Research Team: Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology**

Both national and international research has revealed that the early identification and assessment of children at risk of educational disadvantage is necessary to implement effective interventions. This is particularly challenging in dispersed rural areas. The research will develop guidelines for using the framework and recommendations relating to the design of best practice interventions for families and children of 0-3 years of age in rural Ireland.

### **Preparing for the Early Childhood Education Agency and Providing Policy Advice**

It is a core objective of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education to prepare the groundwork for the establishment of the Early Childhood Education Agency as envisaged in the White Paper *Ready to Learn* (1999).

The Government White Paper "Ready to Learn" stated in 1999: *"it is proposed to establish and allocate executive functions concerning early childhood education to an independent Early Childhood Education Agency (ECEA) "* (DES, 1999, p132).

The functions and activities of the Agency were described as follows:

*"The ECEA will function as the primary support for parents and providers and will be responsible for executive and administrative tasks, including inspection and evaluation. Its principal activities will concern implementation of the White Paper proposals including:*

- *Management of the Department of Education and Science early childhood education provision*
- *Development of the QE mark and associated minimum standards of quality*
- *Production of materials and curriculum development*
- *Research, development and dissemination of best practice*
- *Inspection of provision*
- *Advice to providers on how to raise quality and address deficiencies in provision*
- *Development of strategies and structures to involve parents and to assist them in helping their children to learn."* (DES, 1999, p133-134)

The CECDE has continued to develop organisational structures in preparation of the Early Childhood Education Agency, notably human resource and financial reporting policies and structures.

*CECDE Annual Report 2004 - The Early Childhood Education Agency*

The CECDE has also continued to work closely with a number of government departments, in particular the Departments of Education and Science, Health and Children and Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Centre contributed to policy development at senior level, provided advice to the Department of Education and Science on policy issues related to early childhood education and development and made submissions to a number of committees and initiatives relevant to early childhood education.

Throughout the year, the CECDE maintained very effective consultative structures, mainly through our Consultative Committee, and also greatly developed its international and cross-border relationships.

Centre staff presented our work at numerous international conferences. Indeed, in September 2004, the CECDE successfully organised its own major International Conference, *Questions of Quality*, in Dublin Castle.

**Information, Communication and Dissemination**

Information is more than simply disseminating material as widely as possible. It involves an exchange between ourselves and the public – not only to reach an appropriate audience with our work but also to facilitate dialogue which can both inform our efforts and support those who seek our assistance.

We have continued to explore and develop the relationships between information, communication and dissemination as we seek to complete our ambitious programme of work.

Our website, [www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie), continues to showcase all aspects of our work and this has expanded throughout 2004. It now contains the accompanying database to our 2003 publication “*An Audit of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education 1990-2003*” and has facilitated several on-line consultations with the sector.

Plans for 2005 include the hosting of our online library catalogue to share access to our resources with interested parties. This catalogue will complement our library and information service which has been slowly growing in size and usage since it was first established in 2003. There are now over 1,000 resources housed in our offices in Drumcondra.

## St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

### EXTRACTS FROM THE ACCOUNTING BOOKS AND RECORDS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 DECEMBER 2004

| INCOME                               | Y.E. 31.12.2004 | Y.E. 31.12.2003 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                      | €               | €               |
| Grants                               | 948,838         | 807,590         |
| <b>Total Income</b>                  | <b>948,838</b>  | <b>807,590</b>  |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b>                   |                 |                 |
| CECDE Staff                          | 416,709         | 441,757         |
| Studentships                         | 42,746          | 12,500          |
| Scholarships                         | 27,517          | -               |
| Dissemination                        | 58,186          | -               |
| Translation                          | 22,629          | -               |
| Professional fees                    | 82,513          | 15,442          |
| Advertising                          | 31,702          | 41,883          |
| Materials                            | -               | 58              |
| Books                                | 1,706           | 665             |
| Stationery                           | 8,140           | 27,002          |
| Photocopying                         | 36              | 114             |
| Telephone                            | 4,533           | 5,273           |
| Subscriptions                        | 431             | 838             |
| Postage                              | 8,226           | 1,896           |
| Attendance at conferences            | 6,164           | 11,629          |
| Travel                               | 14,023          | 14,314          |
| Entertainment                        | 524             | 2,004           |
| Interviewing expenses                | 27              | 4,598           |
| Meetings and hospitalities           | 2,219           | 689             |
| Consumables                          | 1,502           | 3,967           |
| Computer Consultancy                 | 1,175           | 20,335          |
| Computer equipment                   | 862             | 6,157           |
| Light and heat                       | 1,167           | 1,231           |
| Rent                                 | 21,560          | 40,568          |
| Security                             | 6,801           | 5,220           |
| Contract cleaning                    | 4,338           | 3,984           |
| Insurance                            | 2,504           | 2,504           |
| Management services – DIT and SPD    | 50,172          | 131,471         |
| Miscellaneous expenditure            | 636             | 11,491          |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>             | <b>818,748</b>  | <b>807,590</b>  |
| <b>Surplus for the year (note 1)</b> | <b>130,090</b>  | <b>-</b>        |

#### Note 1

Funding of €130,090 was received during 2004 and is committed to expenditure for the forthcoming period January to December 2005

\* The above Statement of Income and Expenditure has been extracted from the books and records maintained by St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

**PricewaterhouseCoopers**

[Date]