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Childhood and Society  
Leanbaíocht agus an  
tSochaí

# 1 Childhood and Society

The wider societal context in which policy is developed and services operate has a major impact on the development of ECCE policy in Ireland. This theme helps to locate the policy, practice and research contexts for ECCE in Ireland within the wider national and international arena.

The theme Childhood and Society contains 114 publications between the period 1990 and 2006. Following a process of thematic analysis, these publications have been further divided into five sub-themes, namely:

- Historical Perspectives [22]
- Government Policy and Reports [25]
- Sociological Perspectives [59]
- Economic Perspectives [5]
- International Perspectives [3]

## Historical Perspectives

Historical Perspectives provide an insight into the evolution and development of policy and practice in Ireland, allowing an understanding of the various traditions and philosophies that underpin ECCE in Ireland in contemporary times. The CECDE (2005c; 2006b) produced a thematic review of child development and learning in Ireland, from both a historical and contemporary perspective. The publications included reflect the traditional historical divides of care and education that have characterised the sector in Ireland, focusing on both formal (Coolahan, 2006; Harris *et al.*, 2006; Kelleher, 1991; Morgan, 2002; O'Connor, 2004; 2005; 2006; Sugrue, 1990; Walsh, 2005c; 2006a) and informal provision (Kiernan and Walsh, 2004). Other publications provide specific insights into the evolving nature of the conceptualisation of childhood in Ireland, which has had a definite impact on the way in which we care for and educate our youngest children (Dunne and Kelly, 2002; Walsh, 2004; 2005b). Kenny (2001) focused on the historical evolution of Traveller childhood in Ireland, while Matthews (1996) and McCormack (1997) documented the experiences of children with special needs.

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2005c). *Early Childhood in Ireland – Evidence and Perspectives*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

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# Leanbaíocht agus an tSochaí

Bíonn tionchar mór ag comhthéacs níos leithne na sochaí ina bhforbraítear beartas agus ina bhfeidhmíonn seirbhísí ar fhorbairt bheartas COLO in Éirinn. Le cabhair an téama seo, féadtar na comhthéacsanna beartais, cleachtais agus taighde do COLO in Éirinn a aithint laistigh den chomhthéacs níos leithne náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta.

Cuimsíonn an téama Leanbaíocht agus an tSochaí 114 foilseachán sa tréimhse ó 1990 go 2006. I ndiaidh anailíse téamaí, roinneadh na foilseacháin sin i gcúig fho-théama, mar seo a leanas:

- Peirspictíochtaí Stairiúla [22]
- Beartas agus Tuarascálacha Rialtais [25]
- Peirspictíochtaí Socheolaíochta [59]
- Peirspictíochtaí Eacnamaíochta [5]
- Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta [3]

## Peirspictíochtaí Stairiúla

Tugann Peirspictíochtaí Stairiúla léargas ar éabhlóid agus forbairt beartais agus cleachtais in Éirinn, rud a chabhraíonn le tuiscint a fháil ar na traidisiúin agus fealsúnachtaí a thacaíonn le COLO in Éirinn chomhaimseartha. Tháirg an CECDE (2005c; 2006b) athbhreithniú téamach ar fhorbairt agus foghlaim leanaí in Éirinn ó pheirspictíocht stairiúil agus chomhaimseartha araon. Léiríonn na foilseacháin a cuimsíodh na deighiltí traidisiúnta stairiúla idir cúram agus oideachas atá mar ghné na hearnála in Éirinn, le fócas ar sholáthar foirmiúil (Coolahan, 2006; Harris *et al.*, 2006; Kelleher, 1991; Morgan, 2002; O'Connor, 2004; 2005; 2006; Sugrue, 1990; Walsh, 2005c; 2006a) agus neamhfhoirmiúil (Kiernan agus Walsh, 2004) araon. Tugann foilseacháin eile léargais shonracha ar nádúr forbarthach choincheap na leanbaíochta in Éirinn, a raibh tionchar aige, gan amhras, ar an mbealach ar a dtugaimid cúram agus ar a gcuirimid oideachas ar ár leanaí is óige (Dunne agus Kelly, 2002; Walsh, 2004; 2005b). Dhírigh Kenny (2001) ar éabhlóid stairiúil leanbaíocht an Luchta Síúil in Éirinn, agus rinne Matthews (1996) agus McCormack (1997) cur síos ar thaithí leanaí le riachtanais speisialta.

- Dunne, J. and Kelly, J. (2002). Changing Perspectives on Childhood (in) Dunne, J. and Kelly, J. (Eds.) (2002). *Childhood and its Discontents – The First Seamus Heaney Lectures*. Dublin: The Liffey Press, pp. 1-30.
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- O’Connor, M. (2004). The Theories on Infant Pedagogy of Dr. Timothy Corcoran, Professor of Education, University College, Dublin. *Irish Educational Studies*, Volume 23, No. 1, Spring/ Summer 2004, pp. 35-47.
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- O’Connor, M. (2006). An Interpretation of Froebelian Theory and Practice in Ireland in the Late Nineteenth Century. Presentation at the International Froebel Society Second Biennial Conference, *Froebel: From Play to Work – Taking Froebel Forward*, Froebel College of Education, Dublin, June 2006.
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- Walsh, T. (2004). Historical Overview of Conceptualisation of Childhood. Paper presented at *Voices and Images of Childhood and Adolescence: Rethinking Young People’s Identities* Conference, St. Patrick’s College, October 2004.
- Walsh, T. (2005b). Constructions of Childhood in Ireland in the Twentieth Century – A View from the Primary School Curriculum 1900-1999. *Child Care in Practice*, Volume 11, No. 2, pp. 253-269.
- Walsh, T. (2005c). *The Revised Programme of Instruction, 1900-1922*. Paper presented at the Educational Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference, University College Cork, April 2005.
- Walsh, T. (2006a). *A Critical Analysis of Curricular Policy in Irish Primary Schools, 1897-1990*. Ph.D Thesis. Kildare: National University of Ireland Maynooth.

## Government Policy and Reports

At a national level, a large number of Government Policy and Reports has been produced relating to ECCE in Ireland since 1990. The reports of two national conventions and fora on education (Coolahan, 1994; 1998) have been instrumental in informing policy development at a national level. The Department of Education publications (1990; 1992a; 1995) provide insights into policy and provision in the early 1990s and marked a new era of policy development in Irish education. A number of government publications relate directly to ECCE provision (DES, 1999a; DJELR, 1999c; OECD, 2004a; 2004b), while others provide an analysis of the wider societal context in which early years services operate (Central Statistics Office, 1999; 2002; Department of Finance, 2000). It is heartening to note that education, and specifically ECCE, has formed an integral part of all national partnership agreements (Department of An Taoiseach, 1996; 1997; 2002a; 2002b; Government of Ireland, 1993b; 1994; 1996; 1999) and this has remained a focus within the most recent, *Towards 2016* (Department of An Taoiseach, 2006). The recent publication, *State of the Nation's Children* (OMC and DHC, 2006), provides an overview of childhood in Ireland in contemporary times and will act as an important repository of knowledge into the future.

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Department of An Taoiseach (1997). *An Action Programme for the Millennium*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of An Taoiseach (1998). *Implementation of the Integrated Services Project*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of An Taoiseach (2002a). *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. Eight Year Progress Report*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of An Taoiseach (2002b). *An Agreed Programme for Government Between Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of An Taoiseach (2006). *Towards 2016 - Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

## Beartas agus Tuarascálacha Rialtais

Ag leibhéal náisiúnta, táirgeadh líon mór Beartais agus Tuarascálacha Rialtais a bhaineann le COLO in Éirinn ó 1990. Chabhraigh tuarascálacha ó dhá choinbhinsiún náisiúnta agus fóraim faoi oideachas (Coolahan, 1994; 1998) le treoir a thabhairt d'fhorbairt an bheartais ar leibhéal náisiúnta. Tugann foilseacháin na Roinne Oideachais (1990; 1992a; 1995) léargas ar bheartas agus soláthar sna 1990í luatha agus is comhartha iad de ré nua d'fhorbairt beartais in oideachas na hÉireann. Baineann roinnt foilseachán rialtais go sonrach le soláthar COLO (DES, 1999a; DJELR, 1999c; OECD, 2004a; 2004b) agus tugann roinnt eile anailís ar chomhthéacs níos leithne na sochaí ina bhfeidhmíonn seirbhísí na mblianta luatha (An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh, 1999; 2002; An Roinn Airgeadais, 2000). Is cúis áthais a fheiceáil go raibh an t-oideachas, agus COLO go sonrach, mar chuid lárnach de na comhaontuithe comhpháirtíochta náisiúnta uile (Roinn an Taoisigh, 1996; 1997; 2002a; 2002b; Rialtas na hÉireann, 1993b; 1994; 1996; 1999) agus bhí sé mar fhócas sa chomhaontú is déanaí, I dTreo 2016 (Roinn an Taoisigh, 2006) freisin. Tugann an foilseachán a rinneadh le deireanas, *State of the Nation's Children* (OMC agus DHC, 2006) forbheathnú ar leanbaíocht chomhaimseartha in Éirinn agus beidh sé mar stór tábhachtach eolais don todhcháil.

Department of Education (1990). *Report of the Primary Education Review Body*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education (1992a). *Green Paper on Education – Education for a Changing World*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education (1995). *White Paper on Education – Charting Our Educational Future*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1999a). *Ready to Learn - A White Paper on Early Childhood Education*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Finance (2000). *National Development Plan - Ireland 2000-2006*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999c). *National Childcare Strategy, Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

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Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1991). *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004a). *OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Ireland*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

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## Sociological Perspectives

The sub-theme of Sociological Perspectives contains a large number of publications relating to the wider sociological context for ECCE policy and provision in Ireland. Clancy (1995; 1996) focuses in particular on provision for education within the formal school system. Many of the publications in this sub-theme provide insights into the nature of childhood in contemporary Ireland (Cleary *et al.*, 2001a; 2001b; Dunne and Kelly, 2002; Greene, 1994; Greene and Moane, 2000; Hayes, 2001b; Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 1991; Richardson, 1999), while others focus on aspects such as children with special needs (Cleary, 2001) and family formation patterns (Colgan

## Peirspictíochtaí Socheolaíocha

Cuimsíonn an fo-théama Peirspictíochtaí Socheolaíocha líon mór foilseachán a bhaineann leis an gcomhthéacs socheolaíoch níos leithne do bheartas agus soláthar COLO in Éirinn. Díríonn Clancy (1995; 1996) ar an soláthar a dhéantar d'oidreachas laistigh den chóras foirmiúil scoile. Tugann go leor de na foilseacháin san fho-théama seo léargas ar nádúr na leanbaíochta in Éirinn chomhaimseartha (Cleary *et al.*, 2001a; 2001b; Dunne agus Kelly, 2002; Greene, 1994; Greene agus Moane, 2000; Hayes, 2001b; Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 1991; Richardson, 1999), agus baineann fócas foilseachán eile le gnéithe cosúil le leanáí le riachtanais speisialta (Cleary, 2001)

McCarthy, 1995; Fahey, 1995; Fahey and Russell, 2001; Flanagan, 1996; 2001; Kennedy, 2001; Whelan and Fahey, 1994). A number also delineate the evolving understanding of the spirituality of the young child (Douglas, 2004a; 2006d; Horgan and Douglas, 1998; O'Farrell, 2003). Government provision for children in a social policy context is examined by Hayes (1995; 1996a; 2001a; 2001b) and Richardson (1999), among others. Doran (2005; 2006) and O'Brien (2005; 2006) examine the role and impact of fairy tale literature and cinema on children in the early years. A textbook for students and researchers, covering a multiplicity of aspects relating to ECCE, was prepared and revised by Hayes (1993a; 1999a; 2005a). Hayes (2006a), Hayes and Kernan (2003a), Horgan and Douglas (2002; 2004a) have edited the proceedings from the annual OMEP conference, which provide a rich range of articles on all aspects of ECCE in Ireland.

agus patrúin um fhoirmiú teaghlaigh (Colgan McCarthy, 1995; Fahey, 1995; Fahey agus Russell, 2001; Flanagan, 1996; 2001; Kennedy, 2001; Whelan agus Fahey, 1994). Déileáilann roinnt eile leis an tuiscint atá ag teacht chun cinn ar spioradáltacht an linbh óig (Douglas, 2004a; 2006d; Horgan agus Douglas, 1998; O'Farrell, 2003). Déanann Hayes (1995; 1996a; 2001a; 2001b) agus Richardson (1999), i measc eile, staidéar ar sholáthar an Rialtais do leanaí i gcomhthéacs an bheartais shóisialta. Déanann Doran (2005; 2006) agus O'Brien (2005; 2006) scrúdú ar ról agus tionchar litríocht na síscéalta agus na pictiúrlainne ar leanaí sna blianta luatha. D'ullmhaigh agus d'athbhreithnigh Hayes (1993a; 1999a; 2005a) téacsleabhar do mhic léinn agus taighdeoirí a chlúdaigh go leor gnéithe de COLO. Rinne Hayes (2006a), Hayes agus Kernan (2003a), Horgan agus Douglas (2002; 2004a) na himeachtaí ó chomhdháil bhliantúil OMEP a eagrú, a chuir raon luachmhar alt ar fáil faoi gach gné de COLO in Éirinn.

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- Hayes, N. (1999a). *Early Childhood: An Introductory Text – Second Edition*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.
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O’Farrell, C. (2003). *An Investigation into the Nature of Early Childhood Spirituality and how it can be Nurtured within the Parish Setting*. M. Rel. Ed. Thesis. Dublin: St. Patrick’s College.

Prout, A. (2001). *The Future of Childhood. 1st Annual Lecture of the Children’s Research Centre*. Dublin: The Children’s Research Centre.

Richardson, V. (1999). Children and Social Policy (in) Quin, S., Kennedy, P. O’Donnell, A. and Kiely, G. (Eds.) (1999). *Contemporary Irish Social Policy*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, pp. 170-199.

Schonfeld, H. (2004a). Welcoming Address (in) Horgan, M. and Douglas, F. (Eds.) (2004a). *Children of the Global Village: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2004*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 5-13.

Whelan, C. and Fahey, T. (1994). Marriage and the Family (in) Whelan, C. (Ed.) (1994). *Values and Social Change in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, pp. 45-81.

Woodhead, M. (2003). *The Case for Childhood Studies – Annual Lecture Series*. Dublin: Children’s Research Centre.

## Economic Perspectives

A limited number of publications relate to Economic Perspectives on ECCE in Ireland. These concern, primarily, an analysis of government expenditure on children and early childhood services (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1999; National Economic and Social Council, 2005a; 2005b). Other publications focus more directly on the economics of individual families of having a child/ children (Carney *et al.*, 1994).

Carney, C., Fitzgerald, E., Kiely, G. and Quinn, P. (1994). *The Cost of a Child - A Report on the Financial Cost of Child-rearing in Ireland*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Fahey, T. (1998). Childcare Policy Options (in) Economic and Social Research Institute (Ed.). *Budget Perspectives*, Proceedings of a Conference held on 27th October, 1998. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

Fitzgerald, J., Kearney, L., Morgenroth, E. and Smyth, D. (1999). *National Investment Priorities for the Period 2000-2006*. Economic and Social Research Institute Policy Research Studies No. 33. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

## Peirspictíochtaí Eacnamaíocha

Baineann líon beag foilseachán le Peirspictíochtaí Eacnamaíocha ar COLO in Éirinn. Baineann siad go príomhúil le hanailís ar chaiteachas an rialtais ar leanaí agus seirbhísí na luath-óige (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1999; an Chomhairle Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Sóisialta, 2005a; 2005b) Tá fócas níos díri ag foilseacháin eile ar thionchar linbh/leanaí ar eacnamaíocht teaghlaigh (Carney *et al.*, 1994).

National Economic and Social Council (2005a). *The Developmental Welfare State* (Report No. 113). Dublin: National Economic and Social Council.

National Economic and Social Council (2005b). *NESC Strategy 2006: People, Productivity and Purpose* (Report No. 114). Dublin: National Economic and Social Council.

### International Perspectives

Three publications relate directly to International Perspectives on ECCE within this theme, but despite the small number, useful data can be gleaned therein regarding the ECCE situation in Ireland. These examine provision for early childhood in Ireland through the lens of international evidence of policy and practice in other jurisdictions (Bradshaw and Ditch, 1995; Hayes, 1996c; Hayes and Hennessy, 1995).

Bradshaw, J. and Ditch, J. (1995). Ireland's Support for Children in Comparative Context (in) Convery, F. and McCashin, A. (Eds.) (1995). *Reason and Reform – Studies in Social Policy*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, pp. 346-374.

Hayes, N. (1996c). Early Education in Ireland – Towards Collision or Collaboration (in) *Childhood Education: International Perspectives*. Oulu (Finland): Finland Association for Childhood Education International.

Hayes, N. and Hennessy, E. (1995). *Preschool Education: The International Perspective*. Paper presented to the Early Start Monitoring Committee, September, 1995.

### Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta

Baineann trí fhoilseachán laistigh den téama seo go sonrach le Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta ar COLO, ach in ainneoin an líon beag ábhair, cuireann siad sonraí úsáideacha ar fáil faoi staid COLO in Éirinn. Déanann siad scrúdú ar an soláthar don luath-óige in Éirinn i gcomhthéacs fianaise idirnáisiúnta de bheartas agus cleachtas i ndlínsí eile (Bradshaw agus Ditch, 1995; Hayes, 1996c; Hayes agus Hennessy, 1995).