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Consultation  
Comhairliúchán

As one of the core national Standards within *Síolta*, it is evident that Consultation is becoming an increasingly important facet of practice in ECCE settings, most notably in recent years. This relates to all aspects and levels of activity within settings, ensuring that all stakeholders, including children, have the ability to contribute to policies and processes that affect them, and that this voice is adequately represented within all decisions made. Furthermore, the social partnership model in operation at a national level in Ireland has ensured a high degree of consultation with the ECCE sector, the process of which has been documented by a number of researchers.

A total of 50 pieces of research on the theme of Consultation have been identified relating to the period 1990 to 2006. Following thematic analysis, these publications were further categorised into the following sub-themes:

- Consultation with the ECCE Sector [11]
- Consultation with Children [39]

### Consultation with the ECCE Sector

A number of publications that document Consultation with the ECCE Sector have been identified. The CECDE (2004a; 2004b) and Duignan (2004b; 2004c; 2005b) report on a series of nationwide seminars undertaken in 2003 relating to all aspects of defining, assessing and supporting quality in the Irish context. Fingleton (1998) consulted parents and families and the results of this process informed the development of the *National Childcare Strategy* (DJELR, 1999c). Extensive consultation has been undertaken by the NCCA in the development of the curricular framework, *Towards a Framework for Early Learning*, aspects of which were documented by De Paor (2004b) and Forster (2004c).

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2004a). *Talking About Quality – Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2004b). *Talking About Quality – Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education: Executive Summary*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

Childminding Ireland (2005). *Report on Survey of Registered Members*. Wicklow: Childminding Ireland.

De Paor, C. (2004b). Key Ideas 5-9: Outline of Findings from Consultation. Paper presented at the

Mar cheann de na príomh-Chaighdeáin náisiúnta i *Síolta*, is léir go bhfuil an Comhairliúchán ag éirí níos tábhachtaí i gcleachtas i suímh COLO, go háirithe le blianta beaga anuas. Baineann sé sin le gnéithe agus leibhéil ghníomhaíochta uile laistigh de shuímh, ag cinntiú go mbíonn sé ar chumas na bpáirtithe leasmhara uile, leanaí san áireamh, dul i gcion ar bheartais agus próisis a mbíonn tionchar acu orthu, agus go mbíonn a ndearcaí curtha san áireamh agus na cinntí uile á ndéanamh. Le cois sin, chinntigh samhail na comhpháirtíochta sóisialta atá ag feidhmiú ar leibhéal náisiúnta in Éirinn go ndearnadh go leor comhairliúcháin leis an earnáil COLO, agus thaifead roinnt taighdeoirí an próiseas sin.

Aithníodh 50 píosa taighde ar théama an Chomhairliúcháin a bhaineann leis an tréimhse ó 1990 go dtí 2006. I ndiaidh analíse téamaí, rangaíodh na foilseacháin sin sna fo-théamaí seo a leanas:

- Comhairliúchán leis an Earnáil COLO [11]
- Comhairliúchán le Leanaí [39]

### Comhairliúchán leis an Earnáil COLO

Aithníodh roinnt foilseachán a dhéanann cur síos ar Chomhairliúchán leis an Earnáil COLO. Tugann an CECDE (2004a; 2004b) agus Duignan (2004b; 2004c; 2005b) tuairisc faoi shraith seiminear a rinneadh ar fud na tíre i 2003 a bhain leis na gnéithe uile maidir le cáilíocht a shainmhíniú, a mheas agus tacú léi i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Chuaigh Fingleton (1998) i gcomhairle le tuismitheoirí agus teaghlaigh agus thug torthaí an phróisis sin treoir d'fhorbairt an *National Childcare Strategy* (DJELR, 1999c). Rinne an NCCA comhairliúchán leathan chun an chreatlach churaclaim *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* a fhorbairt, agus rinne De Paor (2004b) agus Forster (2004c) cur síos ar roinnt gnéithe den chomhairliúchán sin.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Conference, *Towards a Framework for Early Learning*, Dublin Castle, December 2004.

Duignan, M. (2004b). Talking About Quality: Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education (in) Horgan, M. and Douglas, F. (Eds.) (2004a). *Children of the Global Village: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2004*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 32-55.

Duignan, M. (2004c). A Report of a National Consultation towards the Development of a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education. Paper presented at EECERA Conference, *Quality Curricula: The Influence of Research, Policy and Praxis*, Malta, September 2004.

Duignan, M. (2005b). Talking About Quality: Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland. *Child Care in Practice*, Volume 11, No. 2, April 2005, pp. 211-230.

Duignan, M. (2006b). Parents' Perspective on Quality in EC Care and Education. Paper presented at the OMEP (Ireland) Annual Research Conference, *In Celebration of Difference in the Early Years*, University College Cork, April 2006.

Fingleton, M. (1998). *Consultation with Children and Parents: Results of a Consultation Project carried out with Children, Parents and Staff at Four Childcare Locations on behalf of the Expert Working Group on Childcare*. (Unpublished).

Forster, A. (2004c). Key Ideas 1-4: Findings from the Consultation. Paper presented at the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Conference, *Towards a Framework for Early Learning*, Dublin Castle, December 2004.

National Action Plan Against Racism Steering Group (2003). *Diverse Voices: A Summary of the Outcomes of the Consultative Process and a Proposed Framework for the National Action Plan Against Racism*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

## Consultation with Children

Recent years have been characterised by a focus on directly consulting children on matters that affect them, a direction supported by policies such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989) and the National Children's Strategy, *Our Children, Their Lives* (DHC, 2000a). Many publications in the sub-theme of Consultation with Children offer advice relating to ethical issues and propose a range of methodologies when engaged in consulting young children (Dunphy, 2005a; Green and Hogan, 2005; Hart, 2005; Hennessy and Heary, 2005; McAuley and Brattman, 2002; 2003; O'Doherty *et al.*, 2002). Much of the research provides accounts and feedback on consultative processes undertaken with young children in a diverse range of settings and contexts (Carty, 2006; Dunphy, 2003a; 2005b; Fingleton, 1998; Murray, 2004). The specific research undertaken with children as part of the consultative process underpinning the development of the NCCA curricular framework is reported on by Fitzpatrick and Forster (2005) and Forster *et al.* (2006).

## Comhairliúchán le Leanaí

Le blianta beaga anuas, tá fócas ar chomhairliúchán díreach a dhéanamh le leanaí faoi na cúrsaí a mbíonn tionchar acu orthu, cur chuige atá tacaithe ag beartais cosúil le *Coinbhinsiún na Náisiún Aontaithe ar Chearta an Linbh* (Na Náisiúin Aontaithe, 1989) agus an National Children's Strategy *Our Children, Their Lives* (DHC, 2000a). Tugann go leor foilseachán faoin bhfo-théama Comhairliúchán le Leanaí comhairle faoi shaincheistean eiteiciúla agus molann siad raon modheolaíochtaí le húsáid agus comhairliúchán á dhéanamh le leanaí óga (Dunphy, 2005a; Green agus Hogan, 2005; Hart, 2005; Hennessy agus Heary, 2005; McAuley agus Brattman, 2002; 2003; O'Doherty *et al.*, 2002). Tugann a lán taighde cuntais agus aiseolas faoi phróisis chomhairliúcháin a rinneadh le leanaí óga i raon leathan suíomh agus comhthéacsanna (Carty, 2006; Dunphy, 2003a; 2005b; Fingleton, 1998; Murray, 2004). Tugann Fitzpatrick agus Forster (2005) agus Forster *et al.* (2006) tuairisc faoin taighde sonracha a rinneadh le leanaí mar chuid den phróiseas comhairliúcháin a thacaigh le forbairt chreatlach curaclaim an NCCA.

Brady, B. (2004b). *Understanding and Developing Children's Participation - A Short Guide*. Dublin: Barnardos.

Butler Scally, D. (2004). *Report on the Selection Processes for the Appointment of the Irish Ombudsman for Children*. Dublin: Public Appointments Service.

Carty, L. (2006). *The Views of Young Children and their Teachers on Learning Spaces in Schools*. M. Ed. Thesis. Dublin: St. Patrick's College.

Department of Health and Children (2000a). *The National Children's Strategy. Our Children-Their Lives*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

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Dunphy, L. (2003a). Young Children's Perspectives on Number and on Learning About Number. Paper presented at 13th Annual EECERA Conference, *Possible Childhoods: Relationships and Choices*, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, September 2003.

Dunphy, L. (2004). Ethical and Effective Interviewing of Children about their Learning. Paper presented at EECERA, *Quality Curricula: The Influence of Research, Policy and Praxis*, Malta, September 2004.

Dunphy, L. (2005a). Effective and Ethical and Interviewing of Young Children in Pedagogical Context. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, Volume 13, No. 2, pp. 79-96.

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Dunphy, L. (2006). Gender Differences Conveyed by Children in Discussions about Participation in Activity Related to Number: A Sociological Perspective. Paper presented at the 16th Annual EECERA Conference, *Democracy and Culture in Early Childhood Education*, Iceland, August/ September 2006.

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