

A white puzzle piece is centered on a solid orange background. The puzzle piece has several interlocking tabs and sockets. The text 'Introduction' and 'Réamhrá' is printed on the piece in an orange color, matching the background. The text is slightly rotated to follow the angle of the puzzle piece.

Introduction  
Réamhrá

# Introduction

It is with great pleasure that the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) presents the Second Edition of the *Audit of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland*, which spans the entire period 1990 to 2006. This update is warranted owing to the efflorescence of research within early childhood care and education (ECCE) in Ireland in recent years, displaying the vibrancy of the developing and evolving early years sector.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Second Edition of the Audit is timely in order to inform research priorities into the future, both for the CECDE and the wider ECCE sector, to ensure that policy and practice in the Irish context is informed by current indigenous research.

The Second Edition of the Audit of Research is divided into three substantive sections. First of all, the Introduction provides a background and rationale for the Audit and is presented in the following three divisions:

- Context for the development of the Second Edition of the Audit of Research;
- A description of the initial Audit of Research produced in 2003 (CECDE, 2003a);
- An overview of the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, including the methodology employed in its compilation, an outline of the twenty-four themes and their associated sub-themes, findings of interest, research gaps identified and details of the online searchable research database.

Secondly, the publications within the Second Edition of the Audit of Research are organised into twenty-four themes of research. Sixteen relate to the Standards within *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006a), while there are an additional eight more general themes. Furthermore, the majority of these are further broken down into a number of sub-themes in order to make the Audit more accessible and navigable. In general terms, themes that contain in excess of forty references have been further sub-divided. Each theme and sub-theme is preceded by a short narrative, outlining the main focus of the research contained therein and analysing the key trends. The twenty-four themes are presented in alphabetical order in order to facilitate ease of use. Within each of the themes and sub-themes, all publications are also listed in alphabetical order.

<sup>1</sup> The ECCE sector in Ireland is comprised of all care and education services provided to children aged birth to six years of age. This includes the non-school sector and the infant classes of primary schools, where approximately half of all four-year-olds and nearly all five-year-olds are enrolled.

# Réamhrá

Tá an-lúcháir ar an Lárionad um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE) an Dara hEagrán den *Iniúchadh ar Thaighde in Éirinn maidir le Cúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige* a chur i láthair, a chlúdaíonn an tréimhse iomlán idir 1990 agus 2006. Is fiú an nuashonrú seo a dhéanamh mar thoradh ar an mborradh ollmhór atá tagtha ar thaighde ar chúram agus oideachas na luath-óige (COLO) in Éirinn le blianta beaga anuas, rud a léiríonn bríomhaireacht earnáil na mblianta luatha<sup>1</sup> atá ag fás agus ag forbairt. Ina theannta sin, tá an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh in am is i dtráth chun faisnéis a chur ar fáil do thosaíochtaí taighde na todhchaí, don CECDE agus don earnáil COLO níos leithne, chun a chinntiú go mbunófar beartas agus cleachtas i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann ar thaighde reatha dúchasach.

Tá an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde deighilte i dtrí chuid substainteacha. Ar dtús, tugann an Réamhrá cúlra agus réasúnaíocht an Iniúchta agus cuirtear i láthair sna trí chuid seo a leanas é:

- An comhthéacs d'fhorbairt an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde;
- Cur síos ar an gcéad Iniúchadh Taighde a táirgeadh i 2003 (CECDE, 2003a);
- Forbhreathnú ar an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, lena n-áirítear an mhodheolaíocht a úsáideadh chun é a thiomnú, cur síos ar na ceithre théama is fiche agus na fo-théamaí lena mbaineann, torthaí suimiúla, bearnaí taighde a aithníodh agus sonraí an bhunachair shonraí taighde inchuardaithe ar líne.

Anuas air sin, tá na foilseacháin laistigh den Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde eagraithe i gceithre théama taighde is fiche. Baineann sé cinn déag acu sin le Caighdeáin *Síolta*, an Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d'Oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE, 2006a), agus tá ocht dtéama ghinearálta sa bhreis ann freisin. Chomh maith leis sin, tá formhór na dtéamaí sin roinnte i bhfo-théamaí chun go mbeadh an tIniúchadh níos inrochtana agus go mbeadh sé níos éasca teacht ar nithe ann. I dtéarmaí ginearálta, fo-roinneadh téamaí a chuimsíonn níos mó ná daichead tagairt. Tá míniú gearr roimh gach téama agus fo-théama a dhéanann cur síos ar phríomhfhócas an taighde dá dtagraítear ann agus a dhéanann anailís ar na príomhthreochtaí. Cuirtear na ceithre théama is fiche i láthair in ord aibíte chun go mbeadh sé éasca an t-

<sup>1</sup> Cuimsíonn an earnáil COLO in Éirinn na seirbhísí cúraim agus oideachais uile a chuirtear ar fáil do leanaí ó bhreith go haois sé bliana. Áirítear air sin an earnáil neamhscoile agus ranganna naíonán bunscóileanna, ina bhfuil beagnach leath na leanaí ceithre bliana d'aois agus beagnach na leanaí uile chúig bliana d'aois cláraithe.

Finally, the third section is comprised of an A-Z author bibliography of the entire contents of the Second Edition. This is preceded by an Author Index to assist the location of specific authors throughout the Audit.

### Context for the Second Edition of the Audit of Research

The update of the Research Audit is timely in the Irish context. The initial Audit of Research (CECDE, 2003a) has been widely welcomed by the sector. However, since its publication in 2003, the policy, practice and research context for ECCE in Ireland has evolved and developed significantly. This section focuses on the nature of these changes in recent years and analyses their impact on the development of research within the sector.

A number of landmark policy documents and decisions in recent years have been informed by, and indeed catalysed, Irish society's view of children. The recent CECDE publication, *Insights on Quality* (CECDE, 2005a), is testimony to the wealth of documentation that has been generated in the Irish context since 1990. This vibrancy is particularly evident in the years since the millennium, reflecting the sector's endeavours to provide high quality services. Some of the key markers on the landscape of evolving attitudes and increasing provisions for ECCE in Ireland in recent years include:

#### 1990 – 2000

- Ireland's ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1992 (United Nations, 1989).
- The *Child Care Act (1991)* (Department of Health, 1991) and the associated *Child Care (Preschool) Regulations* that apply to all preschool settings (with the exception of childminders caring for three or less children, excluding their own in their own home and Early Start) (Department of Health and Children [DHC], 1997a).
- Appointment of a Minister of State for Children in 1994.
- Introduction of the Early Start pilot project in primary schools in 1994.
- The establishment of the Children's Rights Alliance in 1995.
- The Report of the Commission on the Family, *Strengthening Families for Life* (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 1998).
- The *Report of the National Forum for Early Childhood Education* (Coolahan, 1998).

iniúchadh a úsáid. Laistigh de na téamaí agus na fo-théamaí uile, liostaítear na foilseacháin uile in ord aibítire freisin.

Ar deireadh, is éard atá sa tríú cuid ná leabharliosta A-Z de réir údair de na hábhair uile sa Dara hEagrán. Tá Innéacs Údar roimh an gcuid sin chun cabhrú le teacht ar údair shonracha tríd an Iniúchadh uile.

### Comhthéacs an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde

Tá sé i dtráth an Iniúchta Taighde a nuashonrú i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Chuir an earnáil fáilte fhorleathan roimh an gcéad Iniúchadh Taighde (CECDE, 2003a). Mar sin féin, ó foilsíodh é i 2003, tá fás agus forbairt shuntasach tagtha ar chomhthéacs beartais, cleachtais agus taighde COLO in Éirinn. Díríonn an chuid seo ar chineál na n-athruithe sin le blianta beaga anuas agus déanann sé anailís ar a dtionchar ar fhorbairt an taighde laistigh den earnáil.

Bunaíodh roinnt cáipéisí agus cinntí beartais tábhachtacha a rinneadh le blianta beaga anuas ar dhearcadh shocháí na hÉireann faoi leanaí, agus d'fheidhmigh siad mar chatalaíoch don dearcadh sin freisin. Léiríonn foilseachán a rinne an CECDE le deireanas, *Spléachadh ar an Ardchaighdeán* (CECDE, 2005a) an raidhse cháipéisí a táirgeadh i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann ó 1990. Tá an bhríomhaireacht sin soiléir go háirithe sna blianta ón mílaois, ag léiriú na n-iarraichtaí déanta ag an earnáil seirbhísí ar chaighdeán ard a sholáthar. Is iad seo a leanas roinnt de na príomh-tháscairí de na dearcaí faoi COLO atá ag forbairt agus de na soláthair COLO atá ag dul i méid le blianta beaga anuas:

#### 1990 – 2000

- Daingniú Éireann de *Coinbhinsiún na Náisiún Aontaithe ar Chearta an Linbh* i 1992 (na Náisiúin Aontaithe, 1989).
- *An tAcht um Chúram Leanáí* (1991) (An Roinn Sláinte, 1991) agus na *Rialacháin (Réamhscoile) um Chúram Leanáí* bainteacha a bhaineann leis na suímh réamhscoile uile (seachas cúramóirí leanáí ag tabhairt cúraim do thriúir leanbh nó níos lú, nach a leanáí féin iad ina mbailte féin agus Tús Luath) (An Roinn Sláinte agus Leanáí [DHC], 1997a).
- Ceapadh Aire Stáit do Leanáí i 1994.
- Tabhairt isteach an tionscadail phiólóta Tús Luath i mbunscoileanna i 1994.
- Bunú an Children's Rights Alliance i 1995.
- Tuarascáil an Choimisiúin ar an Teaghlach, *Strengthening Families for Life* (An Roinn

- The enshrining in legislation of the *Education Act* (Department of Education and Science [DES], 1998b) and the *Education (Welfare) Act* (DES, 2000a), which underpins all aspects of practice in primary schools.
- The White Paper on Early Childhood Education, *Ready to Learn* (DES, 1999a).
- The introduction of the *Revised Primary School Curriculum* in infant classes (DES, 1999b).
- The *National Childcare Strategy* (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform [DJELR], 1999c).
- The formulation of guidelines for the protection and welfare of children in the form of *Children First* (DHC, 1999a) and *Our Duty to Care* (DHC, 2002e).

## 2000

- The publication of the National Children's Strategy, *Our Children, Their Lives* (DHC, 2000a).
- The establishment of the National Children's Office in 2000.
- The inception of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) (2000).

## 2001

- The enshrining in legislation of the Children Act, 2001 (DJELR, 2001c).
- The creation of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and its associated awarding bodies, the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council.
- The inception of the National Children's Advisory Council.
- The establishment of the National Coordinating Childcare Committee and a network of thirty-three City/ County Childcare Committees (CCCs) in 2001-2002.

## 2002

- The publication of *Quality Childcare and Life Long Learning: Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector* (DJELR, 2002b).
- The establishment of the CECDE.

## 2003

- The appointment of an Ombudsman for Children.
- The foundation of the Family Support Agency.

Gnóthaí Sóisialta, Pobail agus Teaghlaigh, 1998).

- *Report of the National Forum for Early Childhood Education* (Coolahan, 1998)
- Glacadh leis an *Acht Oideachais* (An Roinn Oideachas agus Eolaíochta [DES], 1998b) agus an *tAcht Oideachais (Leas)* (DES, 2000a) sa reachtaíocht, a thugann tacaíocht do ghnéithe uile an chleachtais i mbunscoileanna.
- An Páipéar Bán ar Oideachas na Luath-Óige *Ready to Learn* (DES, 1999).
- Tabhairt isteach *Curaclam Athbhreithnithe na Bunscoile* i ranganna naíonán (DES, 1999b).
- An *Straitéis Náisiúnta um Chúram Leanaí* (An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí (DJELR), 1999c).
- Dearadh treoirlínte um chosaint agus leas leanaí i *Children First* (DHC, 1999a) agus *Our Duty to Care* (DHC, 2002e).

## 2000

- Foilsíú na Straitéise Náisiúnta Leanaí, *Our Children, Their Lives* (DHC, 2000a).
- Bunú na hOifige Náisiúnta Leanaí in 2000.
- Tús curtha leis an gClár Comhdheiseanna do Chúram Leanaí (EOCP) (2000).

## 2001

- Glacadh le hAcht na Leanaí, 2001 (DJELR, 2001c) sa reachtaíocht.
- Cruthú Údarás Náisiúnta Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann agus na comhlachtaí dámhachtana lena mbaineann, Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna agus Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna.
- Cruthú Chomhairle Chomhairleach Náisiúnta na Leanaí.
- Bunú an Choiste Chomhordaithe Náisiúnta um Chúram Leanaí agus líonra de thrí is tríocha Coiste Cúraim Leanaí Cathrach/Contae (CCCanna) i 2001-2002.

## 2002

- Foilsíú *Quality Childcare and Life Long Learning: Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector* (DJELR, 2002b).
- Bunú an CECDE.

## 2003

- Ceapadh Ombudsman do Leanaí.

## 2004

- The publication by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) of *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* (NCCA, 2004a).
- The inception of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (DES, 2004).
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) production of the *Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Ireland* (OECD, 2004a).
- The launch of the National Play Policy for Ireland, *Ready, Steady, Play* (National Children's Office, 2004a).

## 2005

- The establishment of the National Council for Special Education.
- Launch of the Irish Childcare Policy Network.
- Publication by the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) of the *Early Childhood Care and Education Report* (NESF, 2005).
- Submission of Ireland's second report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (National Children's Office, 2005b).
- Establishment of the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC), which fulfils a coordinating role for the ECCE sector.
- Introduction of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) strategy, with a specific strand relating to ECCE provision (DES, 2005e).

## 2006

- Establishment of the Early Years Education Policy Unit, co-located in the DES and the OMC.
- Publication and dissemination of *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006a).
- Introduction of the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) (2006-2010) as a successor to the EOCP, providing €575 million over the lifetime of the programme.
- Inception and commencement of a longitudinal study on children, *Growing up in Ireland*.
- Publication of the revised regulations for pre-school services (DHC, 2006).

## 2007 (until April 2007)

- Establishment of the National Childcare Training Strategy by the DES.

- Bunú na Gníomhaireachta um Thacaíocht Teaghlaigh.

## 2004

- Foilsiú *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* (NCCA, 2004a) ag an gComhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta (NCCA).
- Tús curtha leis an Acht um Oideachas do Dhaoine a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais Acu (DES, 2004).
- Táirgeadh *Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Ireland* (OECD, 2004a) ag an Eagraíocht um Chomhar agus Forbairt Eacnamaíochta (OECD).
- Seoladh an Bheartais Náisiúnta Súgartha d'Éirinn, *Ready, Steady, Play* (an Oifig Náisiúnta Leanaí, 2004a).

## 2005

- Bunú na Comhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta.
- Seoladh Línra na hÉireann um Beartas Cúraim Leanaí.
- Foilsiú an *Early Childhood Care and Education Report* (NESF, 2005) ag an bhFóram Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Sóisialta (NESF).
- Seoladh isteach an dara tuarascáil de chuid Éireann faoi chur i bhfeidhm Choinbhinsiún na Náisiún Aontaithe um Chearta an Linbh (an Oifig Náisiúnta Leanaí, 2005b).
- Bunú Oifig an Aire Leanaí (OMC) a bhfuil ról comhordaithe aici san earnáil COLO.
- Tabhairt isteach na straitéise um Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) le snáithe ar leith a bhaineann le soláthar COLO (DES, 2005e).

## 2006

- Bunú an Aonaid Bheartais um Oideachas na mBlianta Luatha, comhlonnaithe sa DES agus OMC.
- Foilsiú agus scaipeadh *Síolta, an Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d'Oideachas na Luath-Óige* (CECDE, 2006a).
- Tabhairt isteach an Chláir Náisiúnta um Infheistíocht i gCúram Leanaí (NCIP) (2006-2010) le teacht in ionad an EOCP, a chuirfidh €575 milliún ar fáil thar thréimhse an chláir.
- Dearadh agus tosú staidéar fadaimseartha ar leanaí, *Growing up in Ireland*.
- Foilsiú na rialachán athbhreithnithe do sheirbhísí réamhscoile (DHC, 2006).

- Planning undertaken for a Constitutional Referendum on the Rights of the Child in Ireland.

As is evident, these publications and initiatives have grown exponentially in recent years. These wider policy developments and activities have had a positive impact on the range and nature of research undertaken within the sector by providing increased funding for research and developing a cohort of researchers with specific expertise in the field of ECCE. Furthermore, the revival of the OMEP Ireland conference since 2002 and the expansion of similar fora for the sharing and dissemination of information have enhanced the utility and accessibility of such information. Ireland's hosting of the European Early Childhood Educational Research Association (EECERA) Conference in September 2005 is further evidence of the growing prominence of the research context. The CECDE hosted its first international conference on ECCE in 2004 (CECDE, 2005d), followed by a second international conference in February 2007. This has coincided with increased opportunities for postgraduate training and education in ECCE in a number of third level colleges and universities, increasing the pool of research expertise available in Ireland. These developments have undoubtedly impacted positively on the array and quality of the research produced in recent years.

### Initial Audit of Research, 1990-2003

Since the launch of the CECDE in October 2002, a significant programme of research, consultation and development has been undertaken in close collaboration with the DES and a broad range of stakeholders within the ECCE sector. In 2003, the CECDE conducted the initial Audit, i.e., the collection and collation of all research relating to ECCE in the Republic of Ireland between 1990 and mid-2003 (CECDE, 2003a), to guide and inform its work in relation to research priorities. This initial Audit not only identified research priorities into the future but also collected and organised, for the CECDE and other stakeholders, a significant array of research material. Since its publication, an online database of research has been maintained and updated on the CECDE website ([www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)) and has proven a valuable resource to those with an interest in ECCE research.

As with the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, a liberal interpretation of the term 'research' was utilised in 2003. The initial Audit

### 2007 (go dtí mí Aibreáin 2007)

- Bunú na Straitéise Náisiúnta um Oiliúint faoi Chúram Leanáí ag an DES.
- Pleanáil déanta le haghaidh Reifrinn Bhunreachtúil faoi Chearta an Linbh in Éirinn.

Is léir go bhfuil fás easpóntantúil tagtha ar na foilseacháin agus tionscnaimh seo le blianta beaga anuas. Bhí tionchar dearfach ag na forbairtí agus gníomhaíochtaí beartais níos leithne seo ar raon agus cineál an taighde a rinneadh san earnáil mar chuir siad maoiniú méadaithe ar fáil don taighde, agus d'fhorbair siad grúpa taighdeoirí le saineolas ar leith faoi COLO. Chomh maith leis sin, chuir athbheochan chomhdháil OMEP na hÉireann ó 2002 agus leathnú na bhforam comhchosúil chun faisnéis a roinnt agus a scaipeadh feabhas ar úsáideacht agus inrochtaineacht faisnéise dá leithéid. Fianaise bhreise de thábhacht mhéadaitheach an chomhthéacs taighde ná go raibh Éire ina hóstach ar EECERA i mí Mheán Fómhair 2005. Bhí an CECDE mar óstach a céad chomhdháil idirnáisiúnta faoi COLO i 2004 (CECDE, 2005d), agus ansin ar chomhdháil idirnáisiúnta eile i mí Feabhra 2007. Tharla sé sin an tráth céanna a raibh deiseanna méadaithe ann d'oiliúint agus oideachas iarchéime i COLO i roinnt coláistí agus ollscoileanna tríú leibhéal, ag méadú ar líon an tsaineolais taighde atá ar fáil in Éirinn. Gan amhras bhí tionchar dearfach ag na forbairtí sin ar líon agus ar chaighdeán an taighde a táirgeadh le blianta beaga anuas.

### An tIniúchadh Taighde tosaigh, 1990-2003

Ó seoladh an CECDE i 2002, rinneadh clár suntasach taighde, comhairliúcháin agus forbartha i gcomhar leis an DES agus raon leathan páirtithe leasmhara laistigh den earnáil COLO. I 2003, rinne an CECDE an tIniúchadh tosaigh, i.e., bailiú agus tiomsú an taighde uile a bhain le COLO i bPoblacht na hÉireann idir 1990 agus lár 2003 (CECDE, 2003a) chun treoir agus faisnéis a sholáthar i ndáil lena chuid oibre ar thosaíochtaí taighde. Ní amháin gur aithin an tIniúchadh tosaigh tosaíochtaí taighde don todhchá, ach bhailigh agus d'eagraigh sé go leor ábhar taighde don CECDE agus do pháirtithe leasmhara eile. Ó foilsíodh é, coinníodh agus nuashonraíodh bunachar sonraí taighde ar láithreán gréasáin an CECDE ([www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)) a bhí mar acmhainn luachmhar dóibh siúd le spéis i dtaighde COLO.

Mar aon leis an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, bhí tuiscint leathan ar an téarma 'taighde' i 2003. Chuimsigh an tIniúchadh

included research on ECCE relating to the Republic of Ireland, including books, chapters in books, journal articles, conference presentations and papers, unpublished reports, international comparative reports that included Ireland, submissions and postgraduate theses. As the remit of the CECDE spans both formal and informal ECCE provision, the initial Audit focused on research relating to both preschool provision as well as the infant classes of primary schools. In total, this initial Audit, covering the period 1990 to mid-2003, collected 1,082 individual pieces of research and categorised them into twelve sections, as outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Themes and Number of References in the Initial Audit of Research, 1990-2003**

Theme	Number of References
Childhood and Society	84
Children's Rights	59
Cultural Diversity	119
Curriculum and Methodology	89
Early Childhood Services	345
Educational Disadvantage	128
Irish Language Education	132
Parents and Families	112
Quality	59
Special Needs	123
Staffing, Training and Qualifications	77
The Developing Child	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,444*</b>

Source: CECDE (2003a:10)

\* The total number of publications is greater than the number of individual pieces of research collected as a number of publications related to two or more of the themes identified.

Each of these themes was further divided into a number of sub-themes to assist the easy identification of research materials. While this range of research was impressive for a sector in its embryonic stages of development, a number of research gaps were identified, including research that involved consulting children, research on quality in the Irish context, research on the inclusion of children with special needs within mainstream settings and longitudinal research on all aspects of ECCE.

### Second Edition of the Audit of Research, 1990-2006

Owing to the rapid increase in the production and dissemination of research since 2003, the CECDE updated its online database of research on an ongoing basis. In mid-2006, a formal review and update of the initial Audit of Research was initiated in order to collect

tosaigh taighde ar COLO a bhain le Poblacht na hÉirinn cosúil le leabhair, caibidlí i leabhair, ailt in irisí, láithreoireachtaí agus páipéir chomhdhála, tuarascálacha neamhfhoilsithe, tuarascálacha comparáideacha idirnáisiúnta a raibh Éire san áireamh iontu agus tráchtas iarchéime. Toisc go gclúdaíonn sainchúram an CECDE soláthar COLO foirmiúil agus neamhfhoirmiúil, bhí an tIníúchadh tosaigh dírithe ar thaighde a bhain le soláthar réamhscoile agus le ranganna naíonán bun scoileanna araon. San iomlán, bhailigh an tIníúchadh tosaigh sin, a bhain leis an tréimhse ó 1990 go lár 2003, 1,082 píosa taighde indibhídiúla agus chuir sé in dhá chatagóir déag iad, mar a léirítear i dTábla 1 thíos.

**Tábla 1 – Téamaí agus Líon na dTagairtí san Iníúchadh Taighde Tosaigh, 1990-2003**

Téama	Líon na dTagairtí
An Óige agus an tSochaí	84
Ceartha Leanaí	59
Éagsúlacht Chultúir	119
Curaclam agus Modheolaíocht	89
Seirbhísí Luath-Óige	345
Míbhuntáiste Oideachasúil	128
Oideachas Gaeilge	132
Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh	112
Cáilíocht	59
Riachtanais Speisialta	123
Foireann, Oiliúint agus Cáilíochtaí	77
An Leanbh Atá ag Forbairt	117
<b>Iomlán</b>	<b>1,444*</b>

Foinse: CECDE (2003a:10)

\* Tá líon iomlán na bhfoilseachán níos mó ná líon iomlán na bpiosaí taighde a bailíodh mar bhain roinnt foilseachán le dhá théama nó níos mó.

Roinneadh gach téama i bhfo-théamaí chun go mbeadh sé níos éasca ábhar taighde a aithint. Cé gur iontach an raon taighde seo d'earnáil a bhí ag céim thosaigh a forbartha, aithníodh roinnt bearnaí taighde, lena n-áirítear taighde a raibh comhchomhairle le leanaí mar chuid de, taighde ar cháilíocht i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann, taighde ar chuimsiú leanaí le riachtanais speisialta i suímh phríomhshrutha agus taighde fadaimseartha ar ghnéithe uile COLO.

### An Dara hEagrán den Iníúchadh Taighde, 1990-2006

Mar thoradh ar an méadú gasta ar tháirgeadh agus scaipeadh an taighde ó 2003, thug an CECDE a bhunachar sonraí taighde ar líne suas chun dáta ar bhonn leanúnach. I lár 2006, cuireadh tús le hathbhreithniú agus nuashonrú foirmiúil na chéad Iníúchadh Taighde chun taighde a táirgeadh idir lár 2003 agus mí na

research produced between mid-2003 and December 2006, and to re-categorise all research completed between 1990 and 2006.

### **Methodology**

At the outset, the initial Audit of Research (1990-2003) acted as a foundation document to inform the development of the Second Edition. To this was added any research that had come to our attention in the interim relating to the period 1990 to mid-2003. A diverse range of strategies was then employed to elicit relevant research publications and reports for inclusion in the Second Edition to ensure it was as representative as possible of the range of research conducted in Ireland since mid-2003. First of all, the extensive databases of contacts developed by the CECDE since 2002 were used to alert the ECCE research community to the production of the Second Edition of the Audit of Research. Individuals and organisations were requested to submit any research they had undertaken, or were aware of, between mid-2003 and 2006 relating to the care and education of young children aged birth to six years. The scope of this request within the sector was wide and included relevant government departments, most notably the DES, the DHC, the DJELR and the newly formed OMC.

In addition, a large number of non-governmental organisations, voluntary childcare organisations, CCCs, Area-based Partnerships, and academics and researchers within third level institutions were also contacted and requested to submit titles or references for pertinent research they had conducted. As copies of research reports and publications submitted were incorporated into the CECDE resource library, bibliographies within these were reviewed to identify further relevant research for the Second Edition. National and international journals with a remit for ECCE were examined and relevant articles were recorded for inclusion. Online databases of research such as the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) Register of Theses were also examined, as were the library catalogues of third level colleges for relevant postgraduate theses. General Internet searches were also conducted using salient keywords and search parameters, which also resulted in the unearthing of a large volume of research material and sources. The participation of CECDE staff at a number of national and international seminars and conferences also proved valuable in the identification of conference papers presented by individuals and organisations.

### **Research Findings**

Although there was a level of awareness that the capacity and productivity of the ECCE research sector had developed significantly in

Nollag 2006 a bhailiú, agus chun an taighde uile a rinneadh idir 1990 agus 2006 a athrangú.

### **Modheolaíocht**

Ag an tús, bhí an tlniúchadh Taighde tosaigh (1990-2003) mar cháipéis bhunúsach a úsáideadh chun treoir a thabhairt d'fhorbairt an Dara hEagrán. Cuireadh leis sin aon taighde a thugamar faoi deara idir an dá linn a bhain leis an tréimhse 1990 go dtí lár 2003. Baineadh úsáid ansin as raon straitéisí éagsúla chun foilseacháin agus tuarascálacha taighde ábhartha a fháil ar fiú iad a chuimsiú sa Dara hEagrán chun a chinntiú go ndéanadh sé an ionadaíocht is fearr is féidir ar raon an taighde déanta in Éirinn ó lár 2003. Ar dtús, baineadh úsáid as na bunachair shonraí mhóra de phointí teagmhála forbartha ag an CECDE ó 2002 chun a insint don phobal taighde COLO go raibh Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde á tháirgeadh. Iarradh ar dhaoine agus ar eagraíochtaí aon taighde a rinne siad, nó a raibh siad ar an eolas faoi, a bhain le cúram agus oideachas leanaí óga ó bhreith go haois sé bliana agus leis an tréimhse idir lár 2003 agus 2006, a sheoladh chugainn. Bhí scóip leathan ag an iarratas seo laistigh den earnáil agus bhí ranna rialtais ábhartha san áireamh air, go háirithe an DES, an DHC, an DJELR agus an OMC nuabhunaithe.

Le cois sin, rinneadh teagmháil le líon mór eagraíochtaí neamhrialtais, eagraíochtaí cúraim leanaí deonacha, CCCanna, Comhpháirtíochtaí Ceantar-Bhunaithe, agus acadóirí agus taighdeoirí in institiúidí tríú leibhéal, agus iarradh orthu teidil nó tagairtí de thaighde ábhartha a bhí déanta acu a sheoladh isteach. Toisc go raibh cóipeanna na dtuarascálacha agus na bhfoilseachán taighde a seoladh isteach cuimsithe i leabharlann acmhainne an CECDE, rinneadh athbhreithniú ar leabharliostaí na gcáipéisí sin chun taighde ábhartha breise a aithint don Dara hEagrán. Scrúdaíodh irisí náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta le sainchúram COLO agus taifeadadh ailt ábhartha le bheith cuimsithe san eagrán. Scrúdaíodh bunachair shonraí taighde ar líne cosúil le Clár Tráchtas Chumann um Staidéar Oideachais na hÉireann (ESAI) agus catalóga leabharlainne na goláistí tríú leibhéal freisin mar iarracht tráchtas iarchéime ábhartha a fháil. Úsáideadh cuardaigh Idirlín ghinearálta le heochairfhocail agus paraiméadair chuardaigh bhainteacha freisin, agus mar sin fuarthas líon mór ábhar agus foinsí taighde. Bhí rannpháirtíocht fhoireann an CECDE i roinnt seimineár agus comhdhálacha náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta luachmhar freisin mar chabhraigh sé le páipéir chomhdhála curtha i láthair ag daoine agus ag eagraíochtaí a aithint.

### **Torthaí an Taighde**

Cé go raibh feacht ann go raibh forbairt

recent years, the CECDE was gratified at the range and extent of research publications and materials collected. The Second Edition of the Audit of Research contains 1,820 individual pieces of research that have been identified for the period 1990 to 2006. This represents an additional 738<sup>2</sup> pieces of research relating to the period mid-2003 to 2006, in addition to the 1,082 publications identified in the initial Audit for the period 1990 to mid-2003.

The categorisation process for the Second Edition of the Audit of Research has been informed by the development of *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006a). This is the national quality assurance programme containing sixteen national Standards relating to the achievement of quality practice in ECCE settings. In order to support and inform the development and implementation of *Síolta*, the research collected has been categorised under these sixteen Standards, as well as eight additional general themes. The scope of this research is displayed in Table 2 below, listing first of all in alphabetical order the *Síolta* themes, followed by the eight general themes.

**Table 2 - Themes and Number of References in the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, 1990-2006**

Theme	Number of References
<b><i>Síolta</i> Themes</b>	
Communication	1
Community Involvement	23
Consultation	50
Curriculum	207
Environments	21
Health and Welfare	87
Identity and Belonging	165
Interactions	7
Legislation and Regulation	63
Organisation	51
Parents and Families	170
Planning and Evaluation	32
Play	43
Professional Practice	144
Rights of the Child	59
Transitions	5
<b>General Themes</b>	
Childhood and Society	114
Child Development	105
Disadvantage	178
Early Childhood Services	401
Irish Language Education	150
Quality	113
Research	47
Special Needs	191
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,427*</b>

\* The total number of pieces of research is greater than the number of individual pieces collected, as a number of publications necessitated inclusion in two or more themes.

<sup>2</sup> A small number of these relate to pieces of research from the period 1990 to mid-2003 that were inadvertently omitted from the initial Audit.

shuntasach tagtha ar chumas agus táirgiúlacht na hearnála taighde COLO le blianta beaga anuas, bhí an CECDE an-sásta le raon agus líon na bhfoilseachán agus na n-ábhar taighde a bailíodh. Cuimsíonn an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde 1,820 píosa taighde aonair a aithníodh don tréimhse 1990 go 2006. Is ionann é sin agus 783<sup>2</sup> píosa taighde sa bhreis a bhaineann leis an tréimhse ó lár 2003 go dtí 2006, le cois an 1,082 foilseachán aitheanta sa chéad Iniúchadh don tréimhse 1990 go lár 2003.

Bhí próiseas catagóirithe an Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde bunaithe ar fhorbairt *Síolta*, an Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d'Oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE, 2006a). Is é sin an clár deimhnithe cáilíochta náisiúnta a chuimsíonn sé Chaighdeán náisiúnta déag a bhaineann le cleachtas ar ardchaighdeán a chur i bhfeidhm i suímh COLO. Chun tacú le forbairt agus feidhmiú *Síolta* agus chun treoir a thabhairt dó, rangáíodh an taighde a bailíodh i gcatagóirí a bhaineann leis na sé Chaighdeán déag sin, agus faoi ocht dtéama ghinearálta eile. Léirítear scóip an taighde seo i dTábla 2 thíos, ag liostú ar dtús téamaí *Síolta* in ord aibítre agus ansin na hocht dtéama ghinearálta.

**Tábla 2 – Téamaí agus Líon na dTagairtí sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, 1990-2006**

Téama	Líon na dTagairtí
<b>Téamaí <i>Síolta</i></b>	
Cumarsáid	1
Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail	23
Comhairliúchán	50
Curaclam	207
Timpeallachtaí	21
Sláinte agus Leas	87
Féiniúlacht agus Muintearas	165
Idirghníomhartha	7
Reachtaíocht agus Rialú	63
Eagrú	51
Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh	170
Pleanáil agus Meastóireacht	32
Súgradh	43
Cleachtas Gairmiúil	144
Ceartha an Pháiste	59
Aistrithe	5
<b>Téamaí Ginearálta</b>	
Leanbaíocht agus an tSochaí	114
Forbairt an Linbh	105
Míbhuntáiste	178
Seirbhísí Luath-Óige	401
Oideachas trí Ghaeilge	150
Cáilíocht	113
Taighde	47
Riachtanais Speisialta	191
<b>Iomlán</b>	<b>2,427*</b>

\* Tá líon iomlán na bpíosaí taighde níos mó ná líon iomlán na bpíosaí aonair a bailíodh, mar ba ghá roinnt foilseachán a chuimsiú faoi dhá théama nó níos mó.

<sup>2</sup> Baineann líon beag dóibh sin le píosaí taighde ón tréimhse 1990 go dtí lár 2003 nár cuireadh san áireamh sa chéad iniúchadh iad i ngan fhios.

Table 3 provides a more detailed breakdown of the various sub-themes, detailing the number of references contained in each theme as a whole and within the individual sub-themes. Seven of the themes contained an insufficient number of references to warrant assigning sub-themes to them.

**Table 3 – Themes, Sub-themes and Number of References in the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, 1990-2006**

Theme	No. of References	Sub-theme	No. of References
Childhood and Society	114	Historical Perspectives	22
		Government Policy and Reports	25
		Sociological Perspectives	59
		Economic Perspectives	5
		International Perspectives	3
Child Development	105	Learning and Development	41
		Cognitive Development	21
		Linguistic Development	17
		Social and Emotional Development	26
Communication* 1			1
Community Involvement*	23		23
Consultation*	50	Consultation with the ECCE sector	11
		Consultation with Children	39
Curriculum*	207	Curriculum Philosophy	22
		Curriculum Development	27
		Curriculum Implementation	142
		Curriculum Evaluation	16
Disadvantage	178	Developing Public Policy	42
		Addressing Disadvantage in the Early Years	26
		Local and Community Initiatives	17
		School-based Programmes	62
		Child Poverty	31
Early Childhood Services	401	Censuses and Evaluations of Services	102
		Guidance for Parents and ECCE Providers	24
		National Policy and Provision	90
		Local and Regional Policy and Provision	46
		City/ County Childcare Committee Strategic Plans	33
		School-based Provision and School-age ECCE	33
		Childminding Provision	26
		Men in ECCE	11
		International Perspectives	36
		Environments*	21
Health and Welfare*	87	Child Health and Well-being	36
		Child Protection and Welfare	51
Identity and Belonging*	165	Intercultural Care and Education	31
		Legislation and Practice Guidelines	19
		Language Acquisition	9

Tugann Tábla 3 miondealú níos mionchruinne de na fo-théamaí éagsúla, ag déanamh cur síos ar líon na dtagairtí cuimsithe i ngach téama iomlán agus laistigh de gach fo-théama éagsúil. Ní raibh a dhóthain tagairtí ag seacht dtéama le gur fiú iad a roinnt i bhfo-théamaí.

**Tábla 3 – Téamaí, Fo-Théamaí agus Líon na dTagairtí sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, 1990-2006**

Téama	Líon na dTagairtí	Fo-Théama	Líon na dTagairtí
Leanbaíocht agus an tSochaí	114	Peirspictíochtaí Stairiúla	22
		Beartas agus Tuarascálacha Rialtais	25
		Peirspictíochtaí Socheolaíoch	59
		Peirspictíochtaí Eacnamaíoch	5
		Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta	3
Forbairt an Linbh	105	Foghlaim agus Forbairt	41
		Forbairt Chognaíoch	21
		Forbairt Theangeolaíoch	17
		Forbairt Shóisialta agus Mhothúchánach	26
Cumarsáid*	1		1
Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail*	23		23
Comhairliúchán*	50	Comhairliúchán leis an earnáil COLO	11
		Comhairliúchán le Leanaí	39
Curaclam*	207	Fealsúnacht Curaclaim	22
		Forbairt Curaclaim	27
		Cur-i-nGníomh Curaclaim	142
		Meastóireacht ar Churaclam	16
Míbhuntáiste	178	Beartas Poiblí a Fhorbairt	42
		Aghaidh a Thabhairt ar Míbhuntáiste le linn na mBlianta Luatha	26
		Tionscnaimh Áitiúla agus Phobail	17
		Cláir Scoilbhunaithe	62
		Bochtaineacht Leanaí	31
Seirbhísí Luath-Óige	401	Móráirimh agus Meastóireachtaí ar Sheirbhísí	102
		Treoir do Thuismitheoirí agus Soláthraithe COLO	24
		Beartas agus Soláthar Náisiúnta	90
		Beartas agus Soláthar Áitiúil agus Réigiúnach	46
		Pleananna Straitéiseacha Coistí Cúraim Leanaí Cathrach/Contae	33
		Soláthar Scoilbhunaithe agus COLO ag Aois Scoile	33
		Soláthar Feighlíochta Leanaí	26
		Fir i COLO	11
		Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta	36
		Timpeallachtaí*	21
Sláinte agus Leas*	87	Sláinte agus Dea-Bhraistint Leanaí	36
		Cosaint agus Leas Leanaí	51
Féiniúlacht agus Muintearas*	165	Cúram agus Oideachas Idirchultúrtha	31
		Treoirínte Reachtaíochta agus Cleachtais	19
		Insealbhú Teanga	9

Theme	No. of References	Sub-theme	No. of References
		Training and Qualifications	7
		Travellers	59
		Refugee and Asylum Seekers	22
		Racism and Anti-racism	12
		Gender Issues	6
Interactions*	7		7
Irish Language Education	150	Status of Irish Language Education	22
		Legislation and Practice Guidelines	39
		Language and Literacy Acquisition	42
		Immersion Education	15
		Parents and Families	9
		Curriculum and Assessment	9
		Infant Classes of Primary Schools	14
Legislation and Regulation*	63	ECCE Legislation and Regulation	35
		Related Legislation and Regulation	28
Organisation*	51	Establishing and Managing an ECCE Setting	27
		Recruitment and Staff Support	12
		Policies and Procedures	12
Parents and Families*	170	Partnership and Participation	37
		Parental and Family Supports	80
		Parental Guidance and Training	39
		Work-life Balance	14
Planning and Evaluation*	32		32
Play*	43		43
Professional Practice*	144	Training and Education	44
		Qualifications and Practice	47
		Continuing Professional Development	20
		Guidelines and Supports for Practitioners	23
		International Perspectives	10
Quality	113	Quality – Developing Policy	37
		Quality – Developing Practice	16
		Quality Assurance/Improvement Programmes	30
		Defining Quality	6
		Assessing Quality	15
		Supporting Quality	9
Research	47	Research Methodologies	15
		Researching with Children	17
		Research Resources	15
Rights of the Child*	59	Children's Rights – Policy and Practice	48
		Children's Voices and Participation	11
Special Needs	191	Policy Development and Legislation	32
		Inclusion and Integration	17
		Educational Intervention	47
		School-based Initiatives	42
		Physical and Sensory Disability	20
		Intellectual Disability	33
Transitions*	5		5
<b>Total**</b>	<b>2,427</b>		<b>2,427</b>

\* Themes marked with an asterisk are the sixteen national Standards of *Síolta*.

\*\*Once again, the total number of pieces of research is greater than the number of individual pieces collected, as a number of publications necessitated inclusion in two or more themes.

Téama	Líon na dTagairtí	Fo-Théama	Líon na dTagairtí
		Oiliúint agus Cáilíochtaí	7
		An Lucht Siúil	59
		Teifigh agus an Lucht Iarrtha Tearmainn	22
		Ciníochas agus Frith-Chiníochas	12
		Saincheisteanna Inscne	6
Idirghníomhartha*	7		7
Oideachas trí Ghaeilge	150	Stádas an Oideachais trí Ghaeilge	22
		Treoirlínte Reachtaíochta agus Cleachtais	39
		Insealbhu Teanga agus Litearthachta	42
		Tumoideachas	15
		Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh	9
		Curaclam agus Measúnacht	9
		Ranganna Naíonán i mBunscoileanna	14
Reachtaíocht agus Rialú*	63	Reachtaíocht agus Rialú COLO	35
		Reachtaíocht agus Rialú Bainteach	28
Eagrú*	51	Bunú agus Bainistiú Suímh COLO	27
		Earcaíocht agus Tacaíocht Foirne	12
		Beartais agus Nósanna Imeachta	12
Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh*	170	Comhpháirtíocht agus Rannpháirteachas	37
		Tacaí Tuismitheora agus Teaghlaigh	80
		Treoir agus Oiliúint do Thuismitheoirí	39
		Cobhsaíocht Saoil-Oibre	14
Pleanáil agus Meastóireacht*	32		32
Súgradh*	43		43
Cleachtas Gairmiúil*	144	Oiliúint agus Oideachas Cáilíochtaí agus Cleachtas	44
		Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach	47
		Treoirlínte agus Tacaí do Chleachtóirí	20
		Peirspictíochtaí Idimáisiúnta	23
Cáilíocht	113	Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Beartais	10
		Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Cleachtais	37
		Clár Deimhniú/Feabhsaithe Cáilíochta	16
		Cáilíocht a Shainmhíniú	30
		Cáilíocht a Mheas	6
		Ag Tacú le Cáilíocht	15
Taighde	47	Modheolaíochtaí Taighde	9
		Taighde a Dhéanamh le Leanaí	15
		Acmhainní Taighde	15
Ceartha an Pháiste*	59	Ceartha Leanaí – Beartas agus Cleachtas	48
		Glóir agus Rannpháirteachas Leanaí	11
Riachtanais Speisialta	191	Forbairt Beartais agus Reachtaíocht	32
		Cuimsitheacht agus Comhtháthú	17
		Idirghabháil Oideachais	47

Table 4 provides a detailed break-down of the year of publication of the 1,820 references contained within this Second Edition of the Audit of Research. As is evident from the table, there has been a continuing increase in the quantity of research conducted in Ireland relating to ECCE in the last sixteen years. It is immediately apparent that there was a significant lack of publications until the late 1990s, with only 354 references relating to the eight year period 1990 to 1997, or an average of 44 publications annually. The most recent eight year period 1999-2006 has witnessed a huge increase, represented by 1,358 publications or an annual average of 170.

**Table 4 – Year of Publication of the References contained within the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, 1990-2006**

Year of Publication	Number of References
1989 <sup>3</sup>	1
1990	28
1991	20
1992	31
1993	31
1994	44
1995	59
1996	63
1997	78
1998	105
1999	116
2000	179
2001	126
2002	191
2003	175
2004	186
2005	180
2006	205
N.d.	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,820</b>

Table 5 documents the nature of the research conducted in Ireland over the past sixteen years. All of these categories increased significantly in recent years with the growth in research activity in general. The largest category relates to reports by non-government agencies, many of which are funded by a range of government departments. Increased activity in postgraduate studies is evidenced by the large number of theses produced, while the number of conference presentations is increasing in tandem with the number of fora for the presentation and discussion of research material. The miscellaneous category incorporates a number of annual reports, resource packs, videos and unpublished research material.

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was published in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1992. It is included here considering it was a seminal policy document and impacted greatly on subsequent policy and practice in Ireland.

Téama	Líon na dTagairtí	Fo-Théama	Líon na dTagairtí
		Tionscnaimh Scoilbhunaithe	42
		Míchumas Fisiciúil agus Céadfach	20
		Míchumas Intleachtúil	33
Aistrithe*	5		5
<b>Iomlán**</b>	<b>2,427</b>		<b>2,427</b>

\* Is sé Chaihdeán déag Síolta iad na téamaí a bhfuil réiltín in aice leo.

\*\* Arís, tá líon iomlán na bpíosaí taighde níos mó ná líon iomlán na bpíosaí aonair a bailíodh, mar ba ghá roinnt foilseachán a chuimsiú faoi dhá théama nó níos mó.

Tugann Tábla 4 miondealú mionchruinn de bhlianta foilsithe an 1,820 tagairt a chuimsítear sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde. Mar is léir ón tábla, tá méadú leanúnach tagtha ar mhéid an taighde maidir le COLO déanta in Éirinn le sé bliana déag anuas. Is léir láithreach go raibh easpa suntasach foilseachán ann go dtí deireadh na 1990í, le 354 tagairt san iomlán ag baint leis an tréimhse ocht mbliana ó 1990 go 1997, nó 44 foilseachán in aghaidh na bliana ar an meán. Tharla méadú ollmhór le linn na tréimhse ocht mbliana is déanaí ó 1999-2006, mar a léiríonn an 1,358 foilseachán nó 170 foilseachán in aghaidh na bliana ar an meán.

**Tábla 4 – Bliain Foilsithe na dTagairtí cuimsithe sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, 1990-2006**

Bliain Foilsithe	Líon na dTagairtí
1989 <sup>3</sup>	1
1990	28
1991	20
1992	31
1993	31
1994	44
1995	59
1996	63
1997	78
1998	105
1999	116
2000	179
2001	126
2002	191
2003	175
2004	186
2005	180
2006	205
N.d.	2
<b>Iomlán</b>	<b>1,820</b>

Déanann Tábla 5 cur síos ar chineál an taighde a rinneadh in Éirinn le sé bliana déag anuas. Tháinig méadú suntasach sna catagóirí uile sin le blianta beaga anuas leis an mborradh tagtha ar ghníomhaíocht taighde ghinearálta. Baineann an chatagóir is mó le tuarascálacha déanta ag

<sup>3</sup> Foilsíodh Coinbhinsiún na Náisiún Aontaithe ar Chearta an Linbh i 1989 agus dhaingnigh Éire é i 1992. Cuimsíodh anseo é toisc gur cháipéis bheartais rithábhachtach é a raibh tionchar mór aige ar bheartas agus cleachtas in Éirinn.

**Table 5 – Nature of the Research Undertaken, 1990-2006**

Nature of the Research	Number of References
Books	92
Chapters in Books	124
Conference Presentations	191
Government Publications	159
Non-government Agency Reports	743
Papers in Conference Proceedings	139
Periodical Articles	147
Postgraduate Theses	144
Submissions	30
Miscellaneous	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,820</b>

**Gaps Within the Existing Research and Recommendations for the Future**

Undoubtedly, the identification of research gaps in the initial Audit in 2003 focused researchers on previously under-researched themes and it is envisaged that recommendations from this Second Edition will have a similarly positive effect. Based on an analysis of the findings of the Second Edition, a number of trends are evident:

- There has been a huge upsurge in the undertaking and publication of research pertaining to ECCE between mid-2003 and 2006. This is proven by the fact that while the thirteen-and-a-half-year period from 1990 to mid-2003 yielded 1,082 pieces of research, the three-and-a-half-year period from mid-2003 to 2006 witnessed the production of 738. This corresponds to an average of 80 research publications per annum between 1990 and mid-2003 compared with 211 per annum between 2003 and 2006.
- One of the main gaps in the research identified in 2003 related to the theme of quality in the Irish context. Great strides to address this deficiency have been made in the interim with 113 publications relating specifically to this theme. Moreover, *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education has been developed and published (CECDE, 2006a) and is informing policy and practice relating to quality at a national level.
- Many of the themes that are immediately comparable between the initial Audit (1990-2003) and the Second Edition (1990-2006) show a huge upsurge in the number of publications in the past three years, as illustrated in Table 6. It is also important to keep in mind that many individual publications in the initial Audit may have

gníomhaireachtaí neamhrialtais, go leor acu maoinithe ag raon rann rialtais. Tá an ghníomhaíocht mhéadaithe i staidéar iarchéime soiléir ón líon mór tráchtas a táirgeadh, agus tá líon na láithreoireachtaí comhdhála ag dul i méid ar aon dul leis na fóraim ar fáil chun ábhar taighde a chur i láthair agus a phlé. Cuimsíonn an chatagóir ilghnéitheach roinnt tuarascálacha bliantúla, pacáistí acmhainne, fistéipeanna agus ábhair thaighde neamhfhoilsithe.

**Tábla 5 – Cineál an Taighde a Rinneadh, 1990-2006**

Cineál an Taighde	Líon na dTagairtí
Leabhair	92
Caibidlí i Leabhair	124
Láithreoireachtaí Comhdhála	191
Foilseacháin Rialtais	159
Tuarascálacha Gníomhaireachtaí Neamhrialtais	743
Páipéir in Imeachtaí Comhdhála	139
Ailt ó Thréimhseacháin	147
Tráchtas Iarchéime	144
Aighnis	30
Ilghnéitheach	51
<b>Iomlán</b>	<b>1,820</b>

**Bearnaí sa Taighde Reatha agus Moltaí don Todhchaí**

Gan amhras, trí mheán bearnaí taighde a aithint san Iniúchadh tosaigh i 2003, cuidíodh le taighdeoirí díriú ar théamaí nach raibh a ndóthain taighde déanta orthu, agus táthar ag súil go mbeidh tionchar chomh dearfach céanna ag moltaí an Dara hEagrán seo. Bunaithe ar anailís ar thorthaí an Dara hEagrán, tá roinnt treochtaí le feiceáil:

- Tháinig borradh ollmhór ar líon an taighde a bhain le COLO a rinneadh agus a foilsíodh idir lár 2003 agus 2006. Is léir sin mar cé nach raibh ach 1,082 píosa taighde déanta le linn na tréimhse trí bliana déag go leith ó 1990 go dtí lár 2003, táirgeadh 738 píosa taighde le linn na tréimhse trí bliana go leith ó lár 2003 go dtí 2006. Is ionann é sin agus 80 foilseachán taighde in aghaidh na bliana ar an meán idir 1990 agus lár 2003, i gcomparáid le 211 in aghaidh na bliana idir 2003 agus 2006.
- Bhain ceann de na bearnaí is mó sa taighde a aithníodh i 2003 le téama na cáilíochta i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Tá dul chun cinn mór déanta idir an dá linn chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar an easpa sin, le 113 foilseachán anois a bhaineann go sonrach leis an téama sin. Chomh maith leis sin, forbraíodh agus foilsíodh *Síolta*, an Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d'Oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE, 2006a) agus tá sé ag tabhairt

been assigned new, more appropriate themes, in the extended range of themes used for classification in 2006.

**Table 6 – Comparison of Themes from the Initial Audit of Research (CECDE, 2003a) and the Second Edition of the Audit of Research**

Theme	1990-2003	1990-2006	2003-2006
Cultural Diversity*	119	165	46
Curriculum	89	207	118
Disadvantage	128	178	50
Early Childhood Services	345	401	56
Parents and Families	112	170	58
Quality	59	113	54
Special Needs	123	191	68
Staffing, Training and Qualifications**	77	144	67

\* This has been renamed Identity and Belonging

\*\* This has now been renamed Professional Practice.

- The theme of Communication, one of the national Standards in *Síolta*, is particularly underrepresented with only one specific reference. This is surprising considering the essential nature of communication as a two-way process in multiple contexts, including between the home and the ECCE setting, between staff and management and between staff and children. While a number of other publications contain some information relating to communication, further focused research on the way in which information on children is gathered, stored and shared within settings and in the wider context would be of great benefit to the ECCE sector.
- A number of other themes within this Second Edition contain a surprisingly low number of publications, including Community Involvement (23), Environments (21), Interactions (7), Planning and Evaluation (32) and Transitions (5). These themes relate to a number of Standards within *Síolta* and indigenous research is necessary to inform the implementation of these Standards in practice in Ireland. It is important to remember that many other research publications relate to these themes in some way, without being the principal focus of their work. However, it is necessary to prioritise such themes in future research strategies and plans within the sector considering their critical importance in the achievement of quality practice in ECCE settings. The CECDE has recently published *Síolta Workshop Materials*<sup>4</sup>, including detailed Digests of Research on each of the sixteen national Standards. In the main, these draw on international literature.

treorach do bheartas agus do chleachtas a bhaineann le cáilíocht ar leibhéal náisiúnta.

- I gcás go leor téamaí ar féidir comparáid éasca a dhéanamh ina leith idir an chéad Iniúchadh (1990-2003) agus an Dara hEagrán (1990-2006), tá borradh mór tagtha ar líon na bhfoilseachán lena mbaineann le trí bliana anuas, mar a léirítear i dTábla 6. B'fhiú a chuimhneamh freisin gur sannadh téamaí nua, níos cuí, do go leor foilseachán san Iniúchadh tosaigh faoin raon leathnaithe téamaí a úsáideadh do rangú i 2006.

**Tábla 6 – Comparáid idir Téamaí san Iniúchadh Taighde Tosaigh (CECDE, 2003a) agus sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde**

Téama	1990-2003	1990-2006	2003-2006
Éagsúlacht Chultúir*	119	165	46
Curaclam	89	207	118
Míbhuntáiste	128	178	50
Seirbhísí Luath-Óige	345	401	56
Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlach	112	170	58
Cáilíocht	59	113	54
Riachtanais Speisialta	123	191	68
Foireann, Oiliúint agus Cáilíochtaí**	77	144	67

\* Anois tugtar Féiniúlacht agus Muintearas air seo.

\*\* Anois tugtar Cleachtas Gairmiúil air seo.

- Níl a dhóthain ionadaíochta déanta ar théama na Cumarsáide, ceann de Chaighdeán Náisiúnta *Síolta* mar níl ach tagairt shonrach amháin dó. Is cúis iontais é sin toisc nádúr riachtanach na cumarsáide mar phróiseas débhealaigh in iomaí comhthéacsanna, lena n-áirítear idir an baile agus an suíomh COLO, idir an fhoireann agus an bhainistíocht agus idir an fhoireann agus na leanaí. Cé go bhfuil roinnt faisnéise faoin gcumarsáid san áireamh i roinnt foilseachán eile, bhainfeadh an earnáil COLO tairbhe mhór as taighde breise dírithe ar an mbealach ina mbailítear, stóráiltear agus roinntear faisnéis faoi leanaí laistigh de shuíomh agus sa chomhthéacs níos leithne.
- Is cúis iontais freisin an líon íseal foilseachán i roinnt téamaí eile sa Dara hEagrán, lena n-áirítear Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail (23), Timpeallachtaí (21), Idirghníomhartha (7), Pleanáil agus Meastóireacht (32) agus Aistrithe (5). Baineann na téamaí sin le roinnt Caighdeán laistigh de *Síolta* agus ní mór taighde dúchasach a dhéanamh chun treoir a thabhairt do chur i ngníomh na gCaighdeán sin i gcleachtas in Éirinn. Tá sé tábhachtach cuimhneamh go mbaineann go leor foilseachán taighde eile leis na téamaí sin ar bhealach éigin, gan na téamaí sin a bheith mar phríomhfhócas a gcuid saothair.

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2007). *Síolta Workshop Materials*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

However, they do offer valuable insights for the Irish research community considering research under these themes.

- As identified in 2003, there is a distinct absence of a critical mass of longitudinal research relating to ECCE in Ireland. The commencement of the national longitudinal study on children, *Growing Up in Ireland*, is a welcome development in this regard and this must be complemented by additional longitudinal research focusing on specific aspects of ECCE provision in Ireland.
- Children's rights, whilst attracting much attention heretofore, has focused on making the case for recognition and respecting these rights. With national and international legislation beginning to influence practice, research into the nature of the impact would be useful.
- The issue of Professional Practice in ECCE is one which is beginning to attract national policy attention and again would benefit from research in the Irish context. In particular, the issue of leadership is of importance for the future development of the sector in all its dimensions.
- Additional areas that merit specific attention can be identified from the thematic analysis contained in the Second Edition of the Audit of Research. These include researching:
  - Children's experiences and perceptions of growing up in Ireland, especially children of newcomer families and children with disabilities;
  - International comparative studies which reflect on current policy and practice in Ireland and in other jurisdictions would be useful to update existing studies which in the main pre-date 2000;
  - Exploring the compatibility of policy and practice in Northern Ireland, given the new political developments, would also be worthy of attention.

Despite the demonstrated and dramatic increase in research activity in the ECCE sector in Ireland in the period 2003 – 2006, it is important that this dynamism is sustained and expanded in order to support continued development of ECE provision and practice in Ireland into the future. We must continue to be committed to developing an indigenous evidence base that is embedded in the realities of Irish culture, economy and society. We must encourage the involvement of practitioners in research activity and inspire funding agencies and policy developers to invest substantially in research

Mar sin féin, tá sé riachtanach tosaíocht a thabhairt do théamaí dá leithéid i straitéisí agus pleananna taighde laistigh den earnáil don toadhcháir mar gheall ar an tábhacht ollmhór a bhaineann leo chun sár-chleachtas a bhaint amach i suímh COLO. Le deireanas, d'fhoilsigh an CECDE *Ábhair do Cheardlanna Síolta*<sup>4</sup>, a raibh Achoimrí Taighde mionchruinne faoi gach ceann de na sé Chaighdeán náisiúnta déag san áireamh ann. Den chuid is mó, baineann siad úsáid as ábhar idirnáisiúnta. Mar sin féin, is léargais luachmhara iad do bhail phobal taighde na hÉireann atá ag machnamh faoi taighde a dhéanamh ar na téamaí sin.

- Mar a aithníodh i 2003, tá easpa soiléir maidir le mais chriticiúil taighde fadaimseartha faoi COLO in Éirinn. Cuirtear fáilte, mar sin, leis an tús a cuireadh leis an staidéar náisiúnta fadaimseartha ar leanaí, *Growing Up in Ireland*, agus ní mór tacú leis trí thaighde fadaimseartha eile a dhéanamh ar ghnéithe sonracha an tsoláthair COLO in Éirinn.
- Cé gur tugadh aghaidh ar chearta leanaí go dtí seo, bhain an obair le fianaise a thabhairt chun a mhíniú gur chóir na cearta sin a aithint agus meas a thabhairt dóibh. Agus reachtaíocht náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta ag dul i gcion ar an gcleachtas anois, bheadh taighde ar chineál an tionchair sin úsáideach.
- Tá an beartas náisiúnta ag tabhairt aghaidhe anois ar shaincheist an Chleachtais Ghairmiúil i COLO, agus bhainfeadh tairbhe le taighde déanta air i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Go háirithe, tá saincheist na ceannaireachta tábhachtach d'fhorbairt ghnéithe uile na hearnála sa toadhcháir.
- Féadtar réimsí eile ar fiú aird ar leith a thabhairt orthu a aithint ón anailís théamach a chuimsítear sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde. Áirítear orthu sin taighde a dhéanamh ar na nithe seo a leanas:
  - Taithí agus peirspictíochtaí leanaí ag fás suas in Éirinn, go háirithe leanaí teaghlach nua-thagtha agus leanaí faoi mhíchumas;
  - Bheadh staidéir chomparáideacha idirnáisiúnta a léiríonn beartas agus cleachtas reatha in Éirinn agus i ndlínsí eile úsáideach chun staidéir reatha, a bhaineann leis an tréimhse roimh 2000 den chuid is mó de, a nuashonrú;
  - B'fhiú staidéar a dhéanamh freisin ar chomhoiriúnacht an bheartais agus an chleachtais i dTuaisceart Éireann, i bhfianaise na bhforbairtí polaitiúla nua.

In ainneoin an mhéadaithe dhrámata léirithe ar ghníomhaíocht taighde san earnáil COLO in

<sup>4</sup> An Lárionad um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige (2007). *Ábhair do Cheardlanna Síolta*. Baile Átha Cliath: An Lárionad um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige.

activity in the ECCE sector. The creation of a vibrant, active research community is a necessary prerequisite for the achievement of a strong early childhood care and education sector that can respond effectively to the demands of children and families into the future.

#### **Online Searchable Research Database**

The online searchable research database on the CECDE website, [www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie), has proven to be very popular in recent years, most notably among researchers, policymakers and students. Each of the 1,820 publications is included in this database and publications can be located based on a number of search criteria, including author, title or research theme. In this way, it will be accessible to as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. Many of the publications listed in the Second Edition of the Audit of Research are available within the CECDE Resource library (an online catalogue of library holdings can also be viewed on the CECDE website) and can be consulted on request.

#### **Conclusion**

It is evident from the analysis of research conducted in Ireland between 1990 and 2006 that the ECCE research community has much to feel proud about, considering the context of a fledgling sector that has been traditionally under-funded and under-resourced. The impact of increased investment in ECCE services in Ireland is mirrored in the quality and quantity of research that has been produced in recent years, most notably since 2003. However, there is no room for complacency as many research gaps still exist in the Irish context and there is a continuous need for ongoing current research to inform policy and practice. Furthermore, the dissemination and sharing of research is of critical importance so that by impacting positively on practice, it can ultimately benefit our youngest children.

Éirinn le linn na tréimhse 2003 – 2006, tá sé tábhachtach an dinimiceas sin a choinneáil agus a leathnú chun tacú le forbairt leanúnach an tsoláthair agus an chleachtais COLO in Éirinn sa todhchaí. Ní mór dúinn a bheith tiomanta do bhonn fianaise baile a fhorbairt atá bunaithe ar réaltachtaí chultúr, gheilleagar agus shochaí na hÉireann. Ní mór dúinn rannpháirteachas cleachtóirí i ngníomhaíocht taighde a spreagadh agus gníomhaireachtaí maoinithe agus forbróirí beartais a mholadh le hinfheistíocht shubstainteach a dhéanamh i dtaighde san earnáil COLO. Ní mór pobal taighde bríomhar gníomhach a chruthú sular féidir earnáil láidir um chúram agus oideachas na luath-óige a chur ar fáil ar féidir léi freagairt go héifeachtúil d'éilimh leanaí agus teaghlach sa todhchaí.

#### **Bunachar Sonraí Taighde Inchuardaithe ar Líne**

Bhí an-tóir ar an bunachar sonraí taighde inchuadaithe ar líne ar láithreán gréasáin an CECDE, [www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie), le blianta beaga anuas, go háirithe ó thaighdeoirí, déantóirí beartais agus mic léinn. Tá gach ceann den 1,820 foilseachán san áireamh sa bhunachar sonraí, agus féadtar teacht ar fhoilseacháin le cabhair roinnt critéar cuardaithe, lena n-áirítear an t-údar, an teideal nó téama an taighde. Mar sin, beidh an líon is mó páirtithe leasmhara is féidir in ann leas a bhaint as. Tá a lán de na foilseacháin a liostaítear sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde ar fáil laistigh de Leabharlann Acmhainne an CECDE (féadtar catalóg ar líne den stoc leabharlainne a fheiceáil ar láithreán gréasáin an CECDE freisin) agus féadtar dul i gcomhairle leo ar iarratas.

#### **Conclúid**

Is léir ón anailís ar thaighde a rinneadh in Éirinn idir 1990 agus 2006 gur féidir leis an bpobal taighde COLO a bheith an-bhródúil as féin, go háirithe i gcomhthéacs earnála nua nár tugadh go leor maoinithe ná acmhainní di go traidisiúnta. Léiríonn cáilíocht agus cainníocht an taighde a táirgeadh le blianta beaga anuas, go háirithe ó 2003, tionchar na hinfheistíochta méadaithe i seirbhísí COLO in Éirinn. Mar sin féin, ní féidir a bheith bogásach mar tá go leor bearnaí taighde i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann fós agus tá gá leanúnach le taighde reatha chun treoir a thabhairt do bheartas agus cleachtas. Le cois sin, tá sé ríthábhachtach taighde a scaipeadh agus a roinnt ionas go mbainfidh ár leanaí is óige tairbhe as an tionchar dearfach a bheidh aige ar an gcleachtas.