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Parents and Families
Tuismitheoirí agus
Teaghlaigh

16 Parents and Families

The pivotal and primary role of parents in the lives of their children is well documented in both national and international research and is underpinned by Article 42 of the Irish Constitution. Recent social developments in Ireland, including economic, social and cultural change, have put increased demand on ECCE services outside the family home and it is probable that this trend will continue into the future. Much of the research in the Irish context focuses on promoting parental involvement in ECCE settings and supporting parents and families in their pivotal role as primary educators.

The theme of Parents and Families is one of the largest within the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, consisting of 170 publications between 1990 and 2006. A process of thematic analysis led to the creation of four sub-themes, namely:

- Partnership and Participation [37]
- Parental and Family Supports [80]
- Parental Guidance and Training [39]
- Work-life Balance [14]

Partnership and Participation

A large number of publications relate to supporting and promoting parental Partnership and Participation in ECCE settings. Carroll (2000), Martin (2006a; 2006b), Martin and Fitzpatrick (2002), Murphy (2001; 2002; 2004; 2006b; 2006c), Sligo CCC (2002b), Stíobhairt (2004c) and Uí Ghiollagáin (2005) assert the importance of involving parents in a meaningful and constructive way in preschool settings. The critical nature of parental partnership in areas of disadvantage (Byrne, 1999; Hanafin and Lynch, 2002; Moroney, 1995), for Traveller children (Boyle, 2006; Kelleher, 2005) and for children with special needs (Humphries, 2004; Meehan, 1992) forms the focus of a number of researchers. Parental involvement within primary schools has also been researched and documented by a number of commentators. General overviews and investigations into parental involvement in the school system have been provided by Bourke (1999), Cronin (1996), the INTO (1997c) and O'Carroll (1994). Crossan (2006), Murphy (1991), and the National Parents Council Primary (2000) have researched the operation of parent associations and parental

Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh

Taifeadtar ról rithábachtach príomhúil tuismitheoirí i saol a leanaí go fairsing i dtaighde náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta araon agus tacaíonn Airteagal 42 de Bhunreacht na hÉireann leis. Mar thoradh ar fhorbairtí sóisialta a tharla in Éirinn le déanaí, lena n-áirítear athrú eacnamaíoch, sóisialta agus cultúrtha, tá éileamh níos mó ar sheirbhísí COLO lasmuigh den bhaile, agus is dóchúil go leanfaidh an treocht sin ar aghaidh sa todhchaí. Baineann a lán den taighde i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann le rannpháirteachas tuismitheoirí i suímh COLO a spreagadh agus le tacaíocht a thabhairt do thuismitheoirí agus do theaghlaigh chun cabhrú leo ina ról d'oidreachasóirí príomhúla.

Tá an téama Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh ar cheann de na téamaí is mó sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, le 170 foilseachán i gceist idir 1990 agus 2006. I ndiaidh analíse téamaí, roinneadh i gceithre fho-théama iad, mar seo a leanas:

- Comhpháirtíocht agus Rannpháirteachas [37]
- Tacaí Tuismitheora agus Teaghlaigh [80]
- Treoir agus Oiliúint do Thuismitheoirí [39]
- Cobhsaíocht Saoil-Oibre [14]

Comhpháirtíocht agus Rannpháirteachas

Baineann líon mór foilseachán le tacaíocht a thabhairt do Chomhpháirtíocht agus Rannpháirteachas tuismitheoirí i suímh COLO agus lena gcur chun cinn. Deimhníonn Carroll (2000), Martin (2006a; 2006b), Martin agus Fitzpatrick (2002), Murphy (2001; 2002; 2004; 2006b; 2006c), CCC Shligigh (2002b), Stíobhairt (2004c) agus Uí Ghiollagáin (2005) an tábhacht a bhaineann le rannpháirteachas éifeachtach úsáideach tuismitheoirí i suímh réamhscoile a spreagadh. Díríonn roinnt taighdeoirí ar thábhacht ollmhór chomhpháirtíocht na dtuismitheoirí i limistéir faoi mhíbhuntáiste (Byrne, 1999; Hanafin agus Lynch, 2002; Moroney, 1995), do leanaí an Luchta Siúil (Boyle, 2006; Kelleher, 2005) agus do leanaí le riachtanais speisialta (Humphries, 2004; Meehan, 1992). Rinne roinnt tráchtairí taighde agus scríobh siad faoi rannpháirteachas tuismitheoirí i mbunscoileanna. Thug Bourke (1999), Cronin (1996), an INTO (1997c) agus O'Carroll (1994) forbhreathnú ginearálta agus iniúchtaí ar rannpháirteachas tuismitheoirí sa chóras scoile. Rinne Crossan (2006), Murphy (1991), agus an

involvement on Boards of Management of primary schools.

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It is reasonable to speculate that the large volume of research relating to Parental and Family Supports reflects the increasing stresses on parents and families in contemporary Ireland. Barnardos (2002f) and Home Start International (2003) document the difficulties some parents with young children experience. A number of researchers have provided feasibility studies for the establishment of family support services (Barnardos, 2001; BCCN *et al.*, 2000; Carrefour NUI Galway, 1998; Dublin Northside Partnership, 1999; Hanlon, 2006) or evaluations of existing services (East Coast Area Health Board, 2000; Eastern Health Board, 1994; 1997; Holt *et al.*, 2002; Jones, 1998; McNellis and Kelleher, 1998; Meitheal Mhaigh Eo, 1999; Midlands Health Board, 1999; Murphy-Lawless and Redmond, 1992; North Eastern Health Board, 2001a; 2002; Rourke, 2005; Scallan *et al.*, 1998; South Eastern Health Board, 1993; 1994; 1996a; 1997a; 1998; 2002a; 2002b). National policy in the area of parental and family supports has been informed by the seminal document, *Strengthening Families for Life* (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 1998), which has been supplemented in more recent years by a number of submissions to proposed additional policy development (CECDE, 2004d; 2004e). The BCCN (2000a), Duignan (2006b), Gallo (2004a; 2004b) and Riordan (2001) have documented consultation processes with parents in relation to their support needs in the early years. International perspectives of parental and family support services have been provided by Daly and Clavero (2002), Dumon (1990), McKeown *et al.* (1998) and Soriano (1998). Research into the development and operation of the Best Health for Children project (DHC, 1999b; 2002a) and Springboard initiatives (DHC, 2001c; McKeown, 1999; 2002b; McKeown and Galvin, 2001; McKeown *et al.*, 2000; 2001) has been published by a number of commentators. The delivery of the Community Mothers Programme in Ireland has been documented by a number of researchers, including Johnson and Molloy (1995), Johnson *et al.* (1993; 2000) and Molloy (2002). A specific focus on the role of fathers (McKeown, 1998; 2002a) and grandparents (Fahy, 2004; Lundstrom, 2001) in the Irish context has also been provided.

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The critical role of parents in their children's lives, and the impact of parenting practices on child outcomes, is acknowledged in the substantial body of publications in this section. Barnardos (1999), Cavan CCC and Monaghan CCC (2003), Childminding Ireland (2000a), Clarke and Hayes (1991), Dowd (2000a), Leitrim CCC (2003c), the NCNA (2003a), the Northern Area Health Board *et al.* (2002a) and the Western Health Board (2002) have produced direction for parents in choosing an ECCE setting for their child to attend. Guidance for parents on providing ECCE in the home has also been generated by the Community Mothers Programme (2000), Conway (2005a; 2005b), the Lifestart Foundation (1994), Murphy (1996a) and Sharry (1999). A number of researchers have produced interpretations and guidelines for parents of important legislation affecting the early years, including the Preschool Regulations (Dowd, 2000b) and the National Child Protection Guidelines (Fox, 2004; 2005). Parent training programmes and evaluations of their implementation has formed the focus of a number of pieces of research, including French (1998; 2000a), Mullin *et al.* (1990; 1994), the National Parents Council Primary (1998) and Rylands (1995). Specific guidance for parents of children with special needs (DHC, 2002f; Greene, 1992) and for parents raising their children through the medium of Irish (Na Naíonraí Gaelacha, 1994; Ní Chathail, 2003; Ní Chinnéide, 2001; Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 1999) has also been produced.

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Tugann an líon mór foilseachán sa chuid seo aitheantas do ról ríthábhachtach tuismitheoirí i saolta a leanaí, agus tionchar na gcleachtas tuistithe ar thorthaí do leanaí. Tháirg Barnardos (1999), CCC an Chabháin agus CCC Mhuineacháin(2003), Feighlíocht Leanaí Éireann (2000a), Clarke agus Hayes (1991), Dowd (2000a), CCC Liatroma (2003c), an NCNA (2003a), Bord Sláinte Cheantar an Tuaiscirt *et al.* (2002a) agus Bord Sláinte an Iarthair (2002) treoir do thuismitheoirí chun cabhrú leo suíomh COLO a roghnú dá leanaí. D'éisigh Community Mothers Programme (2000), Conway (2005a; 2005b), an Lifestart Foundation (1994), Murphy (1996a) agus Sharry (1999) treoir do thuismitheoirí faoi conas COLO a sholáthar sa bhaile. Chruthaigh roinnt taighdeoirí mínithe agus treoirlínte do thuismitheoirí maidir le reachtaíocht thábhachtach a théann i gcion ar na blianta luatha, lena n-áirítear na Rialacháin Réamhscoile (Dowd, 2000b) agus na Treoirlínte Náisiúnta um Chosaint Leanaí (Fox, 2004; 2005). Bhí clár oiliúna tuismitheoirí agus meastóireachtaí ar a gcur i bhfeidhm mar fhócas roinnt píosaí taighde, lena n-áirítear French (1998; 2000a), Mullin *et al.* (1990; 1994), an National Parents Council Primary (1998) agus Rylands (1995). Táirgeadh treoir ar leith freisin do thuismitheoirí leanaí le riachtanais speisialta (DHC, 2002f; Greene, 1992) agus do thuismitheoirí ag tógáil a leanaí trí mheán na Gaeilge (Na Naíonraí Gaelacha, 1994; Ní Chathail, 2003; Ní Chinnéide, 2001; Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 1999).

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Work-life Balance

The endeavour to achieve Work-life Balance in modern Irish society has become the focus of a growing number of research projects in recent years. The increasing need to provide family-friendly and flexible employment options has been documented by a number of researchers, including Coughlan (2000), Fine-Davis *et al.* (2002), Fisher (2000), Humphries *et al.* (2000), the National Framework Committee for Work/Life Balance Policies (2003) and Richardson (1995). A number of these publications originate at European Union level and include Ireland within cross-national comparisons (European Commission, 1999; European Commission Network on Childcare, 1994; 1996b; OECD, 2003).

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Cobhsaíocht Saoil-oibre

Tá an iarracht Cobhsaíocht Saoil-oibre a bhaint amach i sochaí nua-aimseartha na hÉireann mar fhócas líon mór tionscadal taighde le blianta beaga anuas. Rinne roinnt taighdeoirí, lena n-áirítear Coughlan (2000), Fine-Davis *et al.* (2002), Fisher (2000), Humphries *et al.* (2000), an National Framework Committee for Work/Life Balance Policies (2003) agus Richardson (1995) cur síos ar an ngá méadaitheach roghanna fostaíochta a chur ar fáil a ghlacann an teaghlach san áireamh agus atá solúbtha. Tionscnaíodh roinnt de na foilseacháin seo ag leibhéal an Aontais Eorpaigh agus déileáiltear le hÉirinn laistigh de chomparáidí trasnáisiúnta (an Coimisiún Eorpach, 1999; European Commission Network on Childcare, 1994; 1996b; OECD, 2003).

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