

# CHAPTER 3 - EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

## CAIBIDIL 3 - SEIRBHÍSÍ LUATH-ÓIGE

The importance of early childhood care and education has come to the fore in Ireland in the last decade. There are many reports and initiatives dating from the 1980's but the greatest developments occurred in the 1990s. This may be largely attributed to:

1. The changing demographic, economic and social context of Ireland, including the increased demands for early childhood care and education services as female participation in the workforce grew at an unprecedented rate (DJELR, 1999c). This led to difficulties in the provision of quality, affordable early childhood care and education places and the reconciliation of work and family life (Humphries, Fleming and O'Donnell, 2000).
2. The growing recognition and acceptance of the benefits of quality education and care in the formative years with a view to primarily improving the life of the child and also for the social cohesion and economic prosperity of the nation (Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a; DHC, 2000a). Increased research had enhanced our understanding of child development and the needs and rights of children to quality care and education.
3. The pivotal role of early childhood care and education in addressing socio-economic disadvantage and assisting children with special needs. Intervention at this early age has proven to be much more effective and cost-efficient than later attempts to mediate (Hayes, 1995; Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a).

The Report of the Commission on the Family (DSFCA, 1998) emphasises the fact that the demand for childcare places will grow by up to 50% between 1998 and 2011 and early indicators are proving this prediction true. The early childhood care and education sector is characterised by diversity, with voluntary, community and private involvement (Coolahan, 1998; DJELR, 1999c; 2002b). Childcare provisions incorporate sessional services (preschools, playgroups, naíonraí, Montessori), full day-care services (crèches, nurseries) and a range of childminding, after-school care and drop-in centres.

Government intervention has very much been reactive as opposed to proactive in this area, largely confined to funding for specialised groups and the inspection of the system by virtue of the Child Care Act 1991 (DJELR, 1999c). This neglect over a protracted period culminated in an early childhood care and education crisis in the 1990s, with the unavailability of affordable quality early childhood care and education places. A number of factors caused constrictions in services in certain areas during this period, including;

Tá an tábacht a bhaineann le cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige tagtha chun cinn in Éirinn le deich mbliana anuas. Tá cuid mhór tuairiscí ann ó na 1980idí ach tharla na forbairtí is mó sna 1990idí. Is mar gheall ar na rudaí seo a leanas den chuid is mó a tharla sé sin:

1. An t-athrú ar chomhthéacs déimeagrafach, eacnamaíoch agus sóisialach na hÉireann, lena n-áirítear an méadú ar éilimh do sheirbhísí chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige de réir mar a tháinig méadú gan réamhshampla ar rannpháirtíocht na mban sa líon lucht oibre (DJELR, 1999c). Ag éirí as sin bhí deacrachtaí ann maidir le soláthar áiteanna chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige de cháilíocht a raibh sé ar acmhainn ag daoine íoc astu, agus an réiteach idir an saol oibre agus an saol teaghlaigh (Humphries, Fleming agus O'Donnell, 2000).
2. An méadú a tháinig ar an aitheantas a tugadh do agus mar ar glacadh leis an leas a bhaineann le hoideachas agus cúram cáilíochta sna blianta múnlaítheacha, chun críche saol na leanaí a fheabhsú go príomha, agus chun críche comhtháthú sóisialta agus rathúnas eacnamaíoch an náisiúin freisin (Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a; DHC, 2000a). Chuir an méadú ar thaighde lenár dtuiscint ar chúrsaí fhorbairt leanaí agus ar na riachtanais agus na cearta atá ag leanaí i leith chúraim agus oideachais de cháilíocht.
3. An ról lárnach atá ag cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige maidir le haghaidh a thabhairt ar mhíbhuntáiste socheolaíoch agus cuidiú le leanaí a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta acu. Cruthaíodh go mbíonn i bhfad níos mó éifeachta le hidirghabháil ag an aois óg seo agus go mbíonn costais níos saoire ann i gcomparáid le hiarrachtaí ar fheabhsú níos déanaí (Hayes, 1995; Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a).

Cuireann Tuairisc an Choimisiúin Teaghlaigh (DSFCA, 1998) béim ar an méadú 50% a thiocfaidh ar éileamh d'áiteanna chúram leanaí idir 1998 agus 2011 agus cruthaíonn táscairí luatha go bhfuil fírinne leis an tuar sin. Tá éagsúlacht agus páirtíocht dheonach, phobail agus phríobháideach mar ghnéithe den earnáil chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige (Coolahan, 1998; DJELR, 1999c; 2002b). Áirítear le soláthairtí seirbhísí seisiúin (réamhscoileanna, grúpaí súgartha, naíonraí, Montessori), seirbhísí cúraim lae iomláin (crèches, naiscoileanna) agus réimse d'ionaid fheighlíochta leanaí, cúram iarscoile agus buail-isteach.

Bhí idirghabháil an Rialtais ar bhonn freagartha seachas ar bhonn gníomhach sa réimse seo, agus í cloíte den chuid is mó le maoiniú do ghrúpaí speisialtóireachta agus cigireachta ar an gcóras mar gheall ar an Acht um Chúram Leanaí 1991 (DJELR,

1. Childminders opting for employment in the buoyant formal economy.
2. The impact of the Child Care (Preschool Services) Regulations 1996 (DoH, 1996a) and the Review of Child Care (Preschool Services) Regulations 1997 (DHC, 1997a)
3. The difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood care and education personnel in a competitive labour market.

Many important steps have since been undertaken to progress the delivery and improve the quality of early childhood care and education services. These include;

- The convening of the National Forum on Early Childhood Education by the Department of Education and Science in 1998 (Coolahan, 1998). The Forum brought together for the first time a diverse range of professionals, providers and practitioners and aided mutual understanding and the sharing of common goals.
- The Report of the Commission on the Family (DSCFA, 1998) made many recommendations for the state's role in assisting early childhood care and education as part of the support to family services.
- The Expert Working Group on Childcare published the National Childcare Strategy (DJELR, 1999c). This report analysed the problem of early childhood care and education supply, affordability, regulations and standards and the challenge of urban and rural disadvantage. It also advocated the indivisible nature of education and care and laid the foundations for the National Children's Strategy.
- The White Paper on Early Childhood Education, Ready to Learn, (DES, 1999a) outlined government policy regarding early childhood development. It reiterated the seamless nature of the provision of early childhood care and education services and the vital role of early childhood care and education in the learning continuum of life.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has taken increased responsibility in the area by its administration of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP). The EOCP provides €437 million in the period 2000-2006 for the development of early childhood care and education services and the enhanced coordination of services to facilitate parental re-entry to the workforce.
- The National Children's Strategy (DHC, 2000a) provided a summary of current issues regarding early childhood care and education and issued proposals to develop the early childhood care and education sector.
- The Programme for Government (Department of An Taoiseach, 2002b), as well as past Programmes for Government, contains a number of commitments to early childhood care and education.
- The establishment of the CECDE in 2002 will play a crucial role in the co-ordination and development of services for children aged 0-6

1999c). Mar thoradh ar an bhfaillí sin thar thréimhse fhada bhí géarchéim chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige sna 1990idí, agus ganntanas áiteanna chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige cáilíochta a raibh sé ar acmhainn ag daoine íoc as. Chothaigh roinnt factóirí cúnguithe i seirbhísí i réimsí áirithe le linn na tréimhse sin, lena n-áirítear;

1. Feighlithe leanaí ag roghnú fostaíochta sa gheilleagar foirmiúil bríomhar.
2. Tionchar na Rialachán Chúram Leanaí (Seirbhísí Réamhscoile) 1996 (DoH, 1996a) agus an Athbhreithnithe ar Rialacháin Chúram Leanaí (Seirbhísí Réamhscoile) 1997 (DHC, 1997a)
3. An deacracht a bhaineann le pearsanra chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige cáilithe a earcú agus a choinneáil i margadh oibre iomaíoch.

Tá cuid mhór céimeanna tábhachtacha tógtha ó shin chun seachadadh seirbhísí chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige a chur chun cinn agus chun caighdeán na seirbhísí sin a fheabhsú. Áirítear leo;

- Tionól an Fhórait Náisiúnta um Oideachas Luath-Óige ag an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta sa bhliain 1998 (Coolahan, 1998). Thóg an Fóram le chéile don chéad uair réimse leathan daoine gairmiúla, soláthraithe agus cleachtóirí agus chuir sé le comhthuiscint agus le roinnt chomhspriocanna.
- Rinne Tuairisc an Choimisiúin Teaghlaiigh cuid mhaith moltaí (DSCFA, 1998) faoi ról an Stáit maidir le cúnaimh a thabhairt do chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige mar chuid den tacaíocht do sheirbhísí teaghlaiigh.
- D'fhoilsigh an Grúpa Oibre Sainiúil um Chúram Leanaí an Straitéis Náisiúnta Chúram Leanaí (DJELR, 1999c). Rinne an tuairisc sin anailís ar fhadhbanna maidir le soláthar chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige, é a bheith ar acmhainn daoine íoc as, rialacháin agus caighdeáin agus an dúshlán a bhaineann le míbhuntáiste uirbeach agus tuaithe. Mhol sé freisin nádúr doroinnte oideachais agus cúraim agus leag sé bunús síos don Straitéis Náisiúnta Leanaí.
- Rinne an Páipéar Bán faoi Oideachas Luath-Óige, Ullamh le Foghlaim, (DES, 1999a) cur síos ar bheartas an Rialtais maidir le forbairt Luath-Óige. Luaigh sé arís nádúr doroinnte sholáthar seirbhísí cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige agus an ról ríthábhachtach atá ag cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige i líne leanúnach fhoghlama an tsaoil.
- Tá freagracht níos mó glactha ag an Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí sa réimse tríd an riarachán a dhéanann sí ar an gClár um Chomhdheiseanna Chúram Leanaí (EOCP). Soláthroidh an EOCP €437 milliún sa tréimhse 2000-2006 le haghaidh forbairt sheirbhísí chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige agus le haghaidh chomhordú méadaithe na seirbhísí chun ath-iontraíl tuismitheoirí sa líon lucht oibre a éascú.
- Sholáthair an Straitéis Náisiúnta Leanaí (DHC, 2000a) achoimre ar shaincheisteanna reatha a bhaineann le cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige agus d'eisigh sí moltaí chun an earnáil um chúram

years of age. The remit of the Centre crosses many of the traditional divides in relation to the age cohort catered for and the view of the holistic development of the child, thus placing equal emphasis on education and care.

This increased state involvement and commitment to early childhood care and education since the late 1990s has led to advancements in the provision of services. The growing acknowledgment of the inseparability and complementary nature of education and care in the early years is leading to greater co-operation between government department and agencies;

*"Care and education are inextricably linked elements in a child's holistic development – this reality must be reflected in the ethos and programme of all services."* (DJELR, 1999c: 45)

There have been attempts at greater synchronisation among government departments in relation to policy and provision in recent years, for example the Interdepartmental Synergies Group. The National Development Plan Community Support Framework Evaluation Unit (2003) has called for the reconstitution of this group to ensure greater coordination within the sector. The involvement of multiple state departments in the role of early childhood care and education, 11 in total, cited by the National Childcare Strategy (DJELR, 1999b), often led to duplication or voids in services. This leads to inefficiency and wastage of resources and there is little co-ordination or dissemination of good practice (DES, 1999a). The CECDE will play a pivotal role in this regard as part of its brief to enhance coordination of services in the sector.

Other factors affecting provision and delivery include geographical remoteness, affordability, training and qualifications issues and demographical trends (DES, 1999a; DJELR, 1999c). The publication of the *Model Framework for Education Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector* (DJELR, 2002b) is an important step in recognising the importance and centrality of education and training within the sector and will be a valuable resource for the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland in its work. Advances in child development theory have led to enhanced cognisance of the importance of early childhood care and education services and allows the adaptation and evolution of services to meet the individual needs of children.

Within early childhood services, the following **categories** emerged following thematic analysis:

- 3.1 Centre-based Preschool Services
- 3.2 Family Supports
- 3.3 Government publications
- 3.4 International Perspectives
- 3.5 Non-Centre-based Services
- 3.6 School-based Services

agus oideachas Luath-Óige a fhorbairt.

- Tá roinnt gealltanais maidir le cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige sa Chlár Rialtais (Roinn an Taoisigh, 2002b), agus in iar-Chláir Rialtais freisin.
- Beidh ról de mhórhábacht ag bunú an Lárionaid um Chúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige sa bhliain 2002 maidir le comhordú agus forbairt seirbhísí do leanaí idir náid agus sé bliana d'aois. Trasnáinn sainchúram an Ionaid cuid mhaith de na scoilteanna traidisiúnta maidir leis an gcohort aoise a bhfuiltear ag freastal air, agus an dearcadh maidir le forbairt iomlánaíoch leanaí, agus mar sin cuirtear béim chothrom ar oideachas agus ar chúram araon.

Mar gheall ar an méadú seo ar pháirtíocht agus ar ghealltanais an Stáit i leith chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige ó na 1990idí déanacha, tá dul chun cinn déanta maidir le soláthar seirbhísí. Mar thoradh ar mhéadú ar an aitheantas atáthar á thabhairt do dhoroinnteacht agus nádúr comhlántach oideachais agus cúraim sna luathbhlianta, tá comhoibriú níos mó ann idir ranna agus gníomhaireacht Rialtais;

*"Care and education are inextricably linked elements in a child's holistic development – this reality must be reflected in the ethos and programme of all services."* (DJELR, 1999c: 45)

Tá iarrachtaí déanta le blianta beaga anuas chun sioncrónú níos mó a chothú idir ranna Rialtais maidir le beartais agus soláthar, mar shampla an Grúpa Idir-Ranna Sineirgíochta. Tá éileamh déanta ag Aonad Luachála Chreatlach Thacaíocht Phobail an Phlean Forbartha Náisiúnta (2003) d'athbhunú an ghrúpa sin chun comhordú níos fearr san earnáil a chinntiú. Mar thoradh ar an illiomad ranna Stáit a bheith páirteach i ról chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige, aon cheann déag san iomlán, mar atá luaite ag an Straitéis Náisiúnta Chúram Leanáí (DJELR, 1999b), go minic bhíodh dúbláil nó bearnaí i seirbhísí. Ag éirí as sin, bíonn neamhéifeachtacht agus cur amú acmhainní agus is beag comhordaithe nó scaipeadh deachleachtais a bhíonn ann (DES, 1999a). Beidh ról lárnach ag an Lárionad um Chúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige maidir leis sin mar chuid dá shainchúram cur le comhordú seirbhísí san earnáil.

I measc na bhfachtóirí eile a théann i bhfeidhm ar sholáthar agus seachadadh seirbhísí tá iargúltacht thíreolaíochta, acmhainn daoine íoc astu, saincheisteanna oiliúna agus cáilíochtaí agus treochnaí déimeagrafacha (DES, 1999a; DJELR, 1999c). Is céim thábhachtach í foilsíú an *Chreatlach Mhúnlaithreach d'Oideachas, Oiliúint agus Forbairt Phroifisiúnta san Earnáil Chúram agus Oideachas Luath-Óige* (DJELR, 2002b) maidir leis an tábhacht agus an lárnacht a bhaineann le hoideachas agus oiliúint san earnáil a aithint, agus beidh sé mar acmhainn luachmhar d'obair Údarás Náisiúnta Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann. Mar thoradh ar dhul chun cinn i dteoiricí fhorbairt leanaí tá méadú ar an bhfeasacht maidir leis an tábhacht a bhaineann le seirbhísí chúraim agus oideachais agus ceadaíonn sé sin leasú agus éabhlóid

Each of these categories is examined using the aforementioned **sub-categories** as before:

- Description/Analysis
- Evaluation
- Guidelines
- Policy

na seirbhísí chun freastal ar riachtanais indibhidiúla leanáí.

Taobh istigh de sheirbhísí Luath-Óige, d'eascair na **catagóirí** seo a leanas i ndiaidh anailíse téamacha:

- 3.1 Seirbhísí Réamhscoile Ionad-bhunaithe
- 3.2 Tacaíocht Teaghlaigh
- 3.3 Foilseacháin Rialtais
- 3.4 Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta
- 3.5 Seirbhísí nach bhfuil Ionad-bhunaithe
- 3.6 Seirbhísí Scoilbhunaithe

Tá scrúdú déanta ar na catagóirí seo ag baint úsáide as na **fochatagóirí** atá thuasluaite, mar a rinneadh cheana:

- Tuairisciúil/Anailísiúil
- Meastóireacht
- Treoirínte
- Beartas

### 3.1 CENTRE-BASED PRESCHOOL SERVICES

Much of the early childhood care and education service provision takes place in centres such as crèches, nurseries, grúpaí naíonra, Steiner and Montessori groups, involving both private and community operators. Hayes, O'Flaherty and Kernan (1997a) provide an insight into early childhood care and education services in Ireland as part of the IEA Pre-primary Project. A number of commentators investigate services in localised areas, including Healy (1995), Tallaght Partnership (1995), Craig, Ennis and Walsh (1998b), Craig and Hayes (1998), Dare and Fitzgerald (1999), Lenihan (2000) and McGlone (2003). ADM (2000a) conducted childcare census reports for each county and one for the Gaeltacht regions (ADM, 2001). This data has been compiled as a National Childcare Census Report (ADM, 2003). There are numerous sets of guidelines for the design and establishing of an early childhood care and education setting, including O'Sullivan and Gibbons (1997), BCCN (2002a) and the NCNA (2002a). There are also guidelines for the interpretation of the Child Care (Preschool Services) Regulations 1996 by the South Eastern Health Board (1997b), Dowd (2000b) and the East Coast Area Health Board, South Western Area Health Board and Northern Area Health Board (2001b). The vast majority of County Childcare Committees have now produced and published their strategic plans 2001-2006.

#### 3.1.1 Description/Analysis - Tuairisciúil/Anailísiúil:

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### 3.1 SEIRBHÍSÍ RÉAMHSOILE IONAD-BHUNAITHE

Tarlaíonn an-chuid de sholáthar sheirbhísí chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige in ionaid cosúil le crèches, naíscóileanna, grúpaí naíonraí, grúpaí Steiner agus Montessori, ina mbíonn idir oibreoirí príobháideacha agus pobail. Soláthraíonn Hayes, O'Flaherty agus Kernan (1997a) léargas ar sheirbhísí chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige in Éirinn mar chuid de Thionscadal Réamh-Bhunscolaíochta an Chumann Idirnáisiúnta um Meastóireacht Éachta Oideachasúil (IEA). Fiosraíonn roinnt tráchtairí seirbhísí i réimsí taobh istigh de cheantair, Healy (1995), Páirtíocht Tamhlachta (1995), Craig, Ennis agus Walsh (1998b), Craig agus Hayes (1998), Dare agus Fitzgerald (1999), Lenihan (2000) agus McGlone (2003) san áireamh. Rinne Bainistíocht Forbairt Limistéar (ADM) (2000a) tuairiscí daonáirimh chúram leanáí do gach contae agus ceann do na réigiúin Ghaeltachta (ADM, 2001). Tá an-chuid tacar treoirínte ann do dhearadh agus do bhunú suíomh chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige, lena n-áirítear O'Sullivan agus Gibbons (1997), Gréasán Chúram Leanáí na gContaetha ar an Teorainn (BCCN) (2002a) agus Cumann Náisiúnta Naíscóileanna Leanáí (2002a). Tá treoirínte ann freisin le haghaidh léirmhíneithe ar na Rialacháin Chúram Leanáí (Seirbhísí Réamhscoile) 1996 déanta ag Bord Sláinte an Oirdheiscirt (1997b), Dowd (2000b) agus Bord Sláinte Limistéar an Chósta Thoir, Bord Sláinte Limistéar an Iardheiscirt agus Bord Sláinte Limistéar Thuaidh (2001b). Tá a bpleananna straitéiseacha 2001-2006 táirgthe agus foilsithe anois ag formhór mór na gCoistí Contae um Chúram Leanáí.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that for the 34 Area Development Management Childcare Census Reports (ADM, 2000a) and the Report for the Gaeltacht Regions (ADM, 2001), there are also executive summaries available. Tabhair ar aird le do thoil go bhfuil achoimrí feidhmiúla ar fáil do na 34 Tuairiscí Daonáirimh Chúram Leanaí a rinne Bainistíocht Forbairt Limistéar (ADM, 2000a) agus an Tuairisc do na Réigiúin Ghaeltachta (ADM, 2001).

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## 3.2 FAMILY SUPPORTS

There are a number of publications in this theme that assist parents and families in their role. Lifestart Donegal (2002a; 2002b) have produced a funding proposal for their initiative to visit parents in their homes and provide advice and support in relation to child development. Many of the Health Boards have produced evaluations of their childcare and family support services. Holt, Manners and Gilligan (2002) have evaluated the Naas child and family project.

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## 3.2 TACAÍOCHT TEAGHLAIGH

Tá roinnt foilseachán sa téama seo a chuidíonn le tuismitheoirí agus le teaghlaigh ina ról. Tá moladh maoinithe táirgthe ag Tús Saoil Dhún na nGall (Lifestart Donegal) (2002a; 2002b) dá dtionscnamh maidir le cuairt a thabhairt ar thuismitheoirí sa bhaile agus comhairle agus tacaíocht a sholáthar maidir le forbairt leanaí. Tá luachálacha déanta ag cuid mhaith de na Boird Sláinte ar a seirbhísí chúram leanaí agus thacaíocht teaghlaigh. Tá meastóireacht déanta ag Holt, Manners agus Gilligan (2002) ar thionscadal leanaí agus teaghlaigh An Náis.

### 3.3 GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

There have been a great number of government publications relating to early childhood care and education services. We can see an increased abundance of such publications in the late 1990s owing to increased demands for early childhood services, as a result of our changing economic, cultural and demographic situation. The Child Care Regulations (DoH, 1991) and the Child Care (Preschool) Regulations (DoH, 1996a) impacted greatly on service provision. Coolahan (1998) provides an account of the proceedings of the National Forum on Early Childhood Education. Organisations such as the INTO (1998a), IPPA (1998) and the Combat Poverty Agency (1998a) forwarded submissions to the National Forum. A number of pivotal documents followed this forum, including the White Paper on Early Childhood Education (DES, 1999a), the National Childcare Strategy (DJELR, 1999c) and a report on childcare funding in Ireland (DJELR, 2000a). The forthcoming thematic review of early childhood education and care (DES, 2002f) provides a current snapshot of provisions in Ireland.

#### 3.3.1 Description/Analysis - Tuairisciúil/Anailísiúil:

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#### 3.3.3 Guidelines / Treoirlínte:

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### 3.3 FOILSEACHÁIN RIALTAIS

Tá líon mór foilseachán Rialtais a bhaineann le seirbhísí chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige. Thig linn flúirse mhéadaithe ar fhoilseacháin den chineál sin a fheiceáil sna 1990idí déanacha mar gheall ar éilimh mhéadaithe ar sheirbhísí Luath-Óige, mar thoradh ar ár suíomh eacnamaíoch, cultúrtha agus déimeagrafach, suíomh atá ag athrú. Bhí tionchar mór ag na Rialacháin Chúram Leanáí (DoH, 1991) agus ag na Rialacháin Chúram Leanáí (Réamhscoil) (DoH, 1996a) ar sholáthar seirbhísí. Soláthraíonn Coolahan (1998) tuairisc ar nósanna imeachta an Fhóiraim Náisiúnta um Oideachas Luath-Óige. Chuir eagraíochtaí cosúil le Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann (1998a), Cumann Réamhscoile agus Ghrúpaí Súgartha na hÉireann (1998) agus an Ghníomhaireacht do Chomhrac na Bochtaine (1998a) aighneachtaí ar aghaidh chuig an bhFóram Náisiúnta. D'éascair roinnt cáipéisí lánacha as an bhfóram sin, lena n-áirítear an Páipéar Bán faoi Oideachas na Luath-Óige (DES, 1999a), an Straitéis Náisiúnta Chúram Leanáí (DJELR, 1999c) agus tuairisc ar mhaoiniú chúram leanáí in Éirinn. (DJELR, 2000a). Soláthraíonn an t-athbhreithniú téamach seo a leanas ar oideachas agus cúram Luath-Óige léargas reatha ar sholáthairtí in Éirinn.

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### 3.4 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

This theme contains one of the largest volumes of publications in relation to international perspectives. Hayes and Hennessy (1995) situate preschool education in Ireland in the international context. A comparison of child development in Ireland and Finland is provided by Ojala (1997). Olmsted and Montie (2001) provide an overview of early childhood care and education settings in countries participating in the IEA Pre-primary Project. A study into childcare choice in Ireland and Japan is presented by Hennessy and Flaherty (2001). The European Commission Network on Childcare (1990; 1996b) provides a European perspective on childcare services and service providers.

### 3.4 PEIRSPICTÍOCHTAÍ IDIRNÁISIÚNTA

Tá an téama seo comhdhéanta de cheann de na himleabhair is mó d'fhoilseacháin maidir le peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta. Lonnaíonn Hayes agus Hennessy (1995) oideachas réamhscoile in Éirinn sa chomhthéacs idirnáisiúnta. Soláthraíonn Ojala (1997) comparáid idir forbairt leanaí in Éirinn agus san Fhionlainn. Cuireann Olmsted agus Montie (2001) ar fáil forbheathnú ar shuímh chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige i dtíortha atá rannpháirteach i dTionscadal Réamh-Bhunscolaíochta an Chumainn Idirnáisiúnta um Meastóireacht Éachta Oideachasúil. Cuireann Hennessy agus Flaherty (2001) staidéar i láthair ar roghanna chúram leanaí in Éirinn agus sa tSeapáin. Soláthraíonn Gréasán an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh um Chúram Leanaí (1990; 1996b) peirspictíocht ar sheirbhísí chúram leanaí agus ar sholáthraithe seirbhísí.

#### 3.4.1 Description/Analysis - Tuairisciúil/Anailisiúil:

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### 3.4.2 Evaluation / Meastóireacht:

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### 3.4.3 Policy / Beartas:

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## 3.5 NON-CENTRE-BASED SERVICES

A considerable amount of early childhood care and education services are carried out in non-centre-based settings, such as childminders and after-school care. This category also includes research in relation to outdoor play facilities (Webb, 1997; 1999). Pugh (1999), Hennessy (2000; 2001) and the NCNA (2000a) examine the provision of after-school care in Ireland. Guidelines for childminders have been produced by Childminding Ireland (2000a), Murray (2001a) and the Lagan Family Daycare Network (2003). An integral part of the Strategic Plan 2001-2006 of the County Childcare Committees pertains to childminding and non-centre-based services.

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## 3.5 SEIRBHÍSI NACH BHFUIL IONAD-BHUNAITHE

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### 3.5.2 Evaluation / Meastóireacht:

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A number of commentators focus on early childhood care and education services in the formal school system. Horgan (1995b) examines early childhood education in a junior infant classroom. An overview of early education in Ireland for children aged 7 years of age, based on the IEA Pre-primary Project (Hayes, O'Flaherty and Kernan, 1997a), is provided by Hayes and Kernan (2001). The INTO (2000a) have issued the proceedings of their early childhood conference, convened in conjunction with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, covering issues in relation to early education in the infant classes of the primary school. Butler (2002) examines the effects of integrated and segregated learning environments on social development.

### 3.6.1 Description/Analysis - Tuairisciúil/Anailísiúil:

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### 3.6.2 Policy / Beartas:

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