

# INTRODUCTION

## RÉAMHRÁ

It is with great pleasure that we present this research audit to the early childhood care and education sector. This publication marks the culmination of close to a year's work for the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) but more importantly, recognises in excess of a decade's hard work by the sector. It highlights the wealth of research that has been conducted in Ireland, particularly in recent years. In so doing, it reflects, and indeed contributes to the sector's growing professional identity and the developing professional status of early years practitioners.

We are confident that this audit will provide a valuable resource for the early childhood care and education sector. Undoubtedly, it has benefits at practice level. Practice in early childhood care and education needs to be supported, strengthened and enhanced by research findings to ensure optimal experiences for young children in the here and now and positive outcomes for them later on. This audit provides early years practitioners with sources of research on a number of relevant themes, for example, educational disadvantage, children's rights, special needs and cultural diversity, and as such, it has the capacity to deepen understanding and stimulate reflection. The audit will also be beneficial for parents and families who have such a crucial impact on the development of their children. It will act as a reference point for accessing information and further reading on a number of themes. Students preparing for a career in the sector will be made aware of the existing amount of research available to date in the Irish context. This publication will assist them in focusing in a more in-depth manner on one or more of the themes presented to conduct further research.

This audit also has important implications for policy and research developments in the sector. Policies in relation to early childhood care and education need to be given shape and direction by research that provides reliable and valid information and that makes evidence based recommendations if we are to achieve the best for children. Researchers and academics can utilise the audit in order to review what already exists in certain areas of research and to monitor research trends over an extended period of time. It may also act as a catalyst for further research helping to identify gaps and areas for exploration. Policy-makers will benefit from having access to an empirical base of information that may facilitate them in effecting reliable and valid change. Ultimately, however, we hope that the most important beneficiary will be the child, as the research documented herein is used and translated into more apposite quality practice and policy.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN CONTEXT:

The early childhood care and education sector has developed greatly in the last decade. As Minister Michael McDowell described at the launch of the Model Framework on Education, Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector (DJELR, 2002b) in September 2002;

Cuireann sé áthas orainn an t-iniúchadh taighde seo a chur i láthair na hearnála chúram agus oideachas na Luath-Óige. Leis an bhfoilseachán seo tagann críoch le hobair bhliana, nach mór, ar son an Lárionaid um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE) ach níos tábhachtaí arís, tugtar aitheantas d'obair atá ar bun ag an earnáil le breis is deich mbliana anuas. Léiríonn sé an saibhreas taighde atá á dhéanamh in Éirinn, go háirithe le blianta beaga anuas. Mar gheall air sin, léiríonn sé, agus cuireann sé, leoga, le céannacht phroifisiúnta na hearnála atá ag dul i méid agus le stádas proifisiúnta chleachtóirí Luath-Óige, stádas atá ag forbairt.

Táimid muiníneach go soláthróidh an t-iniúchadh seo acmhainn luachmhar don earnáil chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige. Gan aon amhras, tá tairbhe ag baint leis ar leibhéal an chleachtais. Ní mór tacú le cleachtas i gcúram agus oideachas na Luath-Óige, é a neartú agus cur leis trí na torthaí a aimsíonn taighde, chun eispéiris bharrmhaitheasa a chinntiú do leanaí óga anseo agus san am i láthair, chomh maith le torthaí dearfacha dóibh amach anseo. Soláthraíonn an t-iniúchadh seo foinsí do thaighde ar roinnt téamaí ábhartha do chleachtóirí na Luath-Óige, mar shampla, míbhuntáiste oideachasúil, cearta leanaí, riachtanais speisialta agus éagsúlacht chultúrtha, agus mar sin is féidir go gcothófaí tuiscint ní ba dhoimhne agus go spreagfaí daoine chun machnaimh. Beidh an t-iniúchadh tairbheach do thuismitheoirí agus do theaghligh freisin a mbíonn tionchar den mhórhábacht acu ar fhorbhairt a gcuid leanaí. Beidh sé mar phointe tagartha chun teacht ar eolas agus ar ábhar léitheoireachta eile faoi roinnt téamaí. Cuirfear mic léinn atá ag ullmhú chun slí bheatha a bhaint amach san earnáil ar an eolas maidir leis an méid taighde atá ar fáil suas go dtí seo sa chomhthéacs Éireannach. Cuideoidh an foilseachán seo leo díriú ar bhealach níos doimhne ar níos mó taighde a dhéanamh ar théama amháin nó ar níos mó de na téamaí atá curtha i láthair.

Tá ciallachais thábhachtacha ag an iniúchadh seo maidir le forbairtí beartais agus taighde san earnáil. Ní mór beartais maidir le cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige a mhúnlú agus a threorú trí thaighde a sholáthraíonn eolas iontaofa agus bailí agus a dhéanann moltaí bunaithe ar fhianaise má táimid leis an leas is fearr a bhaint amach do leanaí. Is féidir le lucht taighde agus lucht acadúla úsáid a bhaint as an iniúchadh chun athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar a bhfuil ann cheana féin i réimsí áirithe taighde agus chun monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar threochtaí taighde thar thréimhse sínithe ama. Is féidir go mbeadh sé mar chatalaíoch freisin do níos mó taighde a chuideoidh chun bearnaí agus réimsí scrúdaithe a aithint. Bainfidh lucht déanta beartais tairbhe as fáil a bheith acu ar bhonn eolais turgnamhach a d'fhéadfadh a mbealach a éascú chun athrú iontaofa agus bailí a chur i bhfeidhm. Ar deireadh, áfach, tá súil againn gurb iad na leanaí is mó a bhainfidh leas as seo de réir mar a bhaintear úsáid as an taighde atá luaite anseo istigh agus go n-aistrítear é go cleachtas agus beartas cáilíochta atá níos oiriúnaí.

### Cúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige a chur i gComhthéacs:

Tá forbairt mhór tagtha ar an earnáil chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige le deich mbliana anuas. Mar a

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This development has been influenced and catalysed by profound social, economic, demographic and cultural changes in Ireland in the last decade. Increased employment, particularly among women, has led to growing demand for quality early childhood care and education services. There is also increased awareness of the importance and subsequent benefits of appropriate experiences in the formative years. These demands, allied with considerable government and European Union funding through the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000-2006, has led to increased provision. The voluntary, community and private sector have largely provided this.

The issue of early childhood care and education has been placed on the political agenda and a number of initiatives such as the National Forum on Early Childhood Education (Coolahan, 1998), the White Paper on Early Childhood Education (DES, 1999a) and the National Childcare Strategy (DJELR, 1999c) have raised awareness of the needs of the sector at policy level. International commitments, by virtue of Ireland's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992 and the insistence of child advocacy groups, led to the publication of the National Children's Strategy (DHC, 2000a) and the establishment of the National Children's Office in 2000. This audit evidences an abundance of research in the late 1990s coinciding with these developments at a national level. The CECDE has been established within this context and will harness this momentum to contribute to the continued development of the sector.

#### BACKGROUND TO THE CECDE:

In 2001 the Minister for Education and Science asked the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra to jointly establish the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education. The Centre was launched in October 2002 to develop and co-ordinate early childhood care and education in pursuance of the objectives of the White Paper 'Ready to Learn' (DES, 1999a). The Centre's brief covers children from 0 to 6 years of age in a wide variety of settings, including families, nurseries, crèches, playgroups, grúpa naíonraí, childminders, preschools and the infant classes of primary schools. This remit is comprehensive, focusing on all care and education settings for children 0 to 6 years of age, bridging many of the traditional divides between education and care and between the early years settings and the formal education system.

Within this context, the **functions** of the Centre (CECDE, 2001) include:

- The development of early childhood care and education quality standards in relation to all aspects of early childhood care and education including equipment and materials, staff qualifications, staff training, learning objectives,

chuir an tAire Mícheál Mac Dhubhghaill síos air ag seoladh an Chreat Mhúnlá Oideachais, Oiliúna agus Forbartha Phroifisiúnta san Earnáil Chúram agus Oideachas Luath-Óige (DJELR, 2002b) i mí Mheán Fómhair 2002;

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Tá an fhorbairt seo tagtha faoi thionchar athruithe doimhne sóisialacha, eacnamaíocha, déimeagrafacha agus cultúrtha in Éirinn le deich mbliana anuas, athruithe atá mar chatalaíoch ar fhorbairt freisin. Mar gheall ar mhéadú fostaíochta, go háirithe i measc na mban, tá ag méadú ar an éileamh do chúram Luath-Óige agus ar sheirbhísí oideachais cáilíochta. Tá feasacht níos mó ann freisin ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le agus ar an leas a thagann as eispéiris oiriúnacha sna blianta múnlaiteacha. Mar gheall ar na héilimh sin, chomh maith le maoiniú nach beag ón Rialtas agus ón Aontas Eorpach tríd an gClár um Chomhdheiseanna Chúram Leanaí (EOCP) 2000-2006, tá soláthar níos mó ann. Is iad na grúpaí deonacha, pobail agus príobháideacha is mó atá á sholáthar sin.

Tá saincheist chúram agus oideachas na Luath-Óige curtha ar an gclár oibre polaitiúil agus tá feasacht ar riachtanais na hearnála ag leibhéal na mbeartas méadaithe mar gheall ar thionscnaimh cosúil leis an bhFóram Náisiúnta um Oideachas Luath-Óige (Coolahan, 1998), an Páipéar Bán faoi Oideachas Luath-Óige (DES, 1999a) agus an Straitéis Náisiúnta Chúram Leanaí (DJELR, 1999c). Mar gheall ar cheangaltais idirnáisiúnta, de thairbhe gur dhaingnigh Éire Coinbhinsiún Chearta Leanaí na Náisiún Aontaithe sa bhliain 1992, agus mar gheall ar sheasmhacht ghrúpaí cosanta leanaí, foilsíodh an Straitéis Náisiúnta Leanaí (DHC, 2000a) agus bunaíodh an Oifig Náisiúnta Leanaí sa bhliain 2000. Tá an t-iniúchadh seo mar fhianaise go ndearnadh cuid mhór taighde go mall sna 1990idí a chomhtharla leis na forbairtí sin ar leibhéal náisiúnta. Ba sa chomhthéacs sin a bunaíodh an Lárionad um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige agus bainfidh sé leas as an móiminteam chun cur le forbairt leanúnach na hearnála.

#### CÚLRA AN LÁRIONAID UM FHOIBAIRT AGUS OIDEACHAS NA LUATH-ÓIGE:

Sa bhliain 2001 d'iarr an tAire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ar Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Átha Cliath agus ar Choláiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach an Lárionad um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige a chomhbhunú. Seoladh an Lárionad i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2002 chun cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige a fhorbairt agus a chomhordú chun cuspóirí an Pháipéir Bháin 'Ready to Learn' (DES, 1999a) a chur i bhfeidhm. Clúdaíonn dualgais an Lárionaid leanaí atá idir náid agus sé bliana d'aois i réimse leathan suíomh lena n-áirítear teaghligh, naíonraí, crèches, grúpaí súgartha, grúpaí naíonraí, feighlithe leanaí, réamhscoileanna agus ranganna na naíonán i mbunscoileanna. Tá an sainchúram seo cuimsitheach agus díronn sé ar gach suíomh cúraim agus oideachais do leanaí idir náid agus sé bliana d'aois, agus ceanglaíonn sé cuid mhaith de na scoilteanna a bhíonn ann go traidisiúnta idir oideachas agus cúram agus idir suíomh na luathbhlianta agus an córas oideachais foirmiúil.

Sa chomhthéacs sin, áirítear le **feidhmeanna** an Lárionaid

teaching methodologies, curriculum and related areas;

- The development of a support framework to encourage compliance with quality standards by early childhood care and education providers;
- The co-ordination and enhancement of early childhood care and education provision, including parental involvement, with a particular focus on disadvantaged and special needs groups;
- The conducting and/or commissioning of research and development through which best practice in curriculum, teaching methodology and parental involvement may be implemented and evaluated.
- Providing advice to the Minister for Education and Science on all issues relating to early childhood care and education
- The preparation of the groundwork for the establishment of an Early Childhood Education Agency as envisaged by the White Paper (DES, 1999a).

Quality early childhood care and education experiences provide not just a foundation for lifelong learning, but are valued as essential responses to children's needs and rights (DHC, 2000a). Childhood is a period of rapid physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and early experiences impact on future development and behaviour (Kellaghan and Greaney, 1993). Intervention, or the absence of an intervention, has a serious impact on the rate of development and this is especially true for children affected by educational disadvantage and those with special needs (Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a). Such interventions are of maximum benefit where they are of a high quality and designed especially for the needs of the individual child (DES, 1999a; INTO, 2000a).

#### RESEARCH AUDIT/ REVIEW OF NATIONAL RESEARCH:

In the context of our research and development function, one of the Centre's initial tasks was to undertake a review of national research in the area of early childhood care and education (CECDE, 2003). We prioritised this piece of research as it was felt that it would provide a valuable insight into current research in the field, as well as aiding the identification of existing voids. There had been no review of publications pertaining exclusively to the early childhood care and education sector. A number of audits such as the Disability Related Research in Ireland 1996-2001 (NDA, 2002a), the Innéasc Taighde conducted by An Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (O'Connor, 2002) and the collation of theses by the Early Years Research Centre (UCC, 1997) detailed certain aspects of research in the early years but this is the first comprehensive audit of early childhood care and education research. This audit represents a co-production with the sector and it is largely due to the overwhelming response from individuals and organisations that this publication has been realised.

#### SCOPE OF THE REVIEW:

This audit focuses on research carried out in the Republic of Ireland since 1990. As the remit of the CECDE covers children aged 0-6 years of age, research relating to the infant classes of primary schools is also included. Hayes (1998) notes that there has been a remarkable rise in relation to

(CECDE, 2001):

- Forbairt ar chaighdeán cháilíochta chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige maidir le gach gné de chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige, lena n-áirítear trealamh agus ábhair, cáilíochtaí foirne, oiliúint foirne, cuspóirí foghlama, modheolaíocht teagaisc, curaclam agus réimsí ábhartha;
- Creatlach thacaíochta a fhorbairt chun soláthraithe chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige a spreagadh chun caighdeán cháilíochta a chomhlíonadh;
- Soláthar chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige a chomhordú agus a mhéadú, lena n-áirítear páirtíocht tuismitheoirí, le fócas ar leith ar ghrúpaí atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste agus ar ghrúpaí a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta acu;
- Taighde agus forbairt a dhéanamh agus/nó a choimisiúnú trínar féidir an cleachtas is fearr maidir le curaclam, modheolaíocht teagaisc agus páirtíocht tuismitheoirí a chur i bhfeidhm agus a mheastóireacht.
- Comhairle a sholáthar don Aire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta maidir le gach saincheist a bhaineann le cúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige
- Bunobair a ullmhú do bhunú Ghníomhaireachta um Oideachas Luath-Óige mar a shamhlaítear sa Pháipéar Bán (DES, 1999a).

Ní amháin go soláthraíonn eispéiris cháilíochta ar chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige bunús d'fhoghlaim ar feadh an tsaoil, ach meastar iad a bheith mar fhreagraí riachtanacha ar riachtanais agus ar chearta leanaí (DHC, 2000a). Bíonn an óige mar thréimhse d'fhorbairt ghasa fhisiceach, chognaíoch, mhaoithneach agus shóisialach agus bíonn tionchar ag eispéiris luatha ar fhorbairt agus ar iompar sa todhchaí (Kellaghan agus Greaney, 1993). Bíonn tionchar tromchúiseach ag idirghabháil, nó easpa idirghabhála, ar an ráta forbartha agus tá sé seo fíor go háirithe i gcás leanaí atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste oideachasúil agus leanaí a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta acu (Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a). Baintear an t-uasmhéid leasa as idirghabháil den chineál sin nuair is d'ardcháilíocht í agus nuair a bhíonn sé deartha go speisialta do riachtanais an linbh aonair (DES, 1999a; INTO, 2000a).

#### INIÚCHADH TAIGHDE/ ATHBHREITHNIÚ AR THAIGHDE NÁISIÚNTA:

I gcomhthéacs ár bhfeidhme taighde agus forbartha, ba iad ceann de na tascanna ba thúisce a bhí ag an Lárionad ná dul i mbun athbhreithnithe ar thaighde náisiúnta i réimse chúram agus oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE, 2003). Bhí an píosa taighde sin mar phríomhchúram againn de thairbhe gur measadh go soláthródh sé léargas luachmhar ar thaighde reatha sa réimse, agus go gcuideodh sé na bearnaí atá ann faoi láthair a aithint. Ní raibh aon athbhreithniú go dtí sin ar fhoilseacháin a bhaineann go heisiach leis an earnáil chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige. Bhí mionsonraí maidir le gnéithe áirithe de thaighde sna blianta luatha i roinnt iniúchta cosúil leis an Taighde um Mhíchumas in Éirinn 1996-2001 (NDA, 2002a), an tInnéacs Taighde a rinne An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (O'Connor, 2002) agus tiomsú tráchtas a rinne Lárionad Taighde na Luathbhlianta ach tá sé seo ar an gcéad iniúchadh cuimsitheach ar thaighde ar chúram agus oideachas na Luath-Óige. Tá an t-iniúchadh mar léiriú ar chomhtháirgeadh leis an earnáil agus is mar gheall ar an bhfreagra treasrach ó dhaoine aonair agus ó eagraíochtaí a bhfuil an foilseachán seo curtha i gcrích.

early years research since 1990, both in relation to academic research and postgraduate research in third level institutions. The essence of research prior to 1990 has been distilled and brought forward into subsequent research.

We are surprised and delighted at the wealth of research available in the Irish context. Close to 1100 individual pieces of research were collected, collated and analysed, which is an impressive quantity for a country whose early childhood care and education sector has remained under-resourced and under-developed over the years. This research is presented under 12 themes with categories and sub-categories and is introduced in chronological order to facilitate the observation of evolution within the research 1990-2003.

The parameters of research material for the purposes of this project were broad, incorporating books, chapters, journal articles, conference papers, policy papers, submissions, position papers, postgraduate theses/research and international comparative studies. This inclusive interpretation of research was employed to ensure the diverse array of research, conducted in a variety of settings and contexts, was adequately reflected in the audit, thus improving its usefulness as a reference resource. Despite extensive research and care in the completion of the audit, it is inevitable that there may be research papers that were omitted or perhaps incorrectly categorised. In this instance, please contact the Centre and such publications will be entered into or corrected in any future editions of the research audit. New publications and corrections will be entered on an ongoing basis into a searchable online database available on the Centre's website ([www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)) and so will always be a current resource for the sector.

#### CHAPTER SUMMARIES:

The **Methodology** outlines the way in which this research audit was conducted. It profiles the numerous approaches and methods used in the collection of the data. It also explains the division of the publications into 12 themes, outlines the dynamic nature of the categories of analysis and defines the sub-categories of analysis.

Chapter 1 traces publications in relation to **Childhood and Society** in Ireland. It is prefaced with a commentary on the sociological, economic, cultural and historical influences on the development of early childhood care and education services. We present publications under the category headings of (a) childhood in Ireland, (b) economic perspectives, (c) government publications, (d) historical perspectives, (e) international perspectives and (f) sociological perspectives.

Chapter 2 relates to **The Developing Child** in the Irish context. In the introduction, we outline the holistic nature of children's development and learning and highlight the importance of experiences in the early years on children's subsequent growth and development. Publications are grouped in the following categories: (a) child development, (b) child welfare, (c) government publications and (d) international perspectives.

Díríonn an t-iniúchadh seo ar thaighde a rinneadh i bPoblacht na hÉireann ó 1990. De thairbhe go gclúdaíonn sainchúram an Lárionaid um Fhorbairt agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige leanaí atá idir náid agus sé bliana d'aois, áirítear taighde a bhaineann le ranganna na naíonán i mbunscoileanna chomh maith. Tugann Hayes (1998) faoi deara go bhfuil méadú suntasach ann maidir le taighde ar na luathbhlianta ó 1990 i leith, taighde acadúil agus taighde iarchéime in institiúidí tríú leibhéil araon. Tá scagadh déanta ar eisint an taighde a rinneadh roimh 1990 agus tugadh ar aghaidh é isteach sa taighde a rinneadh ina dhiaidh sin.

Tá iontas agus lúcháir orainn maidir leis an saibhreas taighde atá ar fáil sa chomhthéacs Éireannach. Bailíodh, tiomsaíodh agus rinneadh anailís ar beagnach 1100 píosa taighde, méid suntasach i dtír ina raibh an earnáil chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige fágtha le ganntanas acmhainní agus easpa forbartha thar na blianta. Bhí freagra iontach ón earnáil ar scéala an iniúchta agus bhí iontas ginearálta ann maidir leis an méid taighde atá ar fáil i láthair na huaire in Éirinn.

Bhí na paraiméadair d'ábhar taighde leathan chun críche an tionscadail seo, agus áiríodh leabhair, caibidlí, ailt in irisleabhair, páipéir bheartais, aighneachtaí, páipéir staide, tráchtas iarchéime/taighde iarchéime agus staidéir idirnáisiúnta chomparáideacha. Baineadh úsáid as an léirmhíniú cuimsitheach seo ar thaighde chun cinntiú go léireofaí go hoiriúnach san iniúchadh an éagsúlacht mhór taighde a rinneadh i suímh agus i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla, agus ag éirí as sin go bhfeabhsófaí a áisiúlacht mar acmhainn tagartha. D'ainneoin taighde fhairsing agus cúraim agus an t-iniúchadh á chur i gcrích, níl aon dul as go mb'fhéidir go bhfuil páipéir thaighde a fágadh ar lár nó b'fhéidir gur cuireadh sa chatagóir mhícheart iad. Sa chás sin, téigh i dteagmháil leis an Lárionad agus cuirfead na foilseacháin sin isteach nó ceartófar iad in aon eagrán eile den iniúchadh taighde a dhéanfar amach anseo. Cuirfead foilseacháin nua agus ceartúcháin isteach ar bhonn leanúnach i mbunachar sonraí inchoardaithe ar-líne, a bheidh ar fáil ar láithreán líonra an Lárionaid ([www.cecde.ie](http://www.cecde.ie)), agus mar sin beidh sé i gcónaí mar acmhainn reatha don earnáil.

#### ACHOIMRE AR CHAIBIDLÍ:

Déanann an **Mhodheolaíocht** imlíne ar an mbealach a rinneadh an t-iniúchadh taighde seo. Déantar próifíl ar an méid mór cur chuige agus modhanna ar baineadh úsáid astu agus na sonraí á mbailliú. Mínítear freisin mar a roinneadh na foilseacháin de réir dhá théama déag, déantar imlíne ar nádúr dinimiciúil na gcatagóirí anailíse agus sainmhínítear na fochatagóirí anailíse.

Tagraíonn Caibidil 1 d'fhoilseacháin a bhaineann leis **An Óige agus An tSochaí** in Éirinn. Tá réamhrá ann, ar tráchttaireacht é, ar thionchair shocheolaíochta, eacnamaíochta, chultúrtha agus staire ar fhorbairt sheirbhíse chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige. Cuirimid foilseacháin i láthair faoi na ceannteidil chatagóire seo a leanas (a) an óige in Éirinn, (b) peirspictíochtaí eacnamaíochta, (c) foilseacháin Rialtais, (d) peirspictíochtaí staire, (e) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta agus (f) peirspictíochtaí socheolaíochta.

Baineann Caibidil 2 leis **An Leanbh atá ag Forbairt** sa chomhthéacs Éireannach. Sa réamhrá, déanaimid imlíne ar nádúr iomlánaíoch fhorbairt agus fhoghlaim leanaí agus léirímid an tábhacht a bhaineann le heispéiris sna

**Childhood Services** are outlined. We begin by discussing the development of services over the last decade and by looking at the steps that have been taken to progress their delivery and improve their quality. Publications are classified under the category headings of (a) centre-based preschool services, (b) family supports, (c) government publications, (d) international perspectives, (e) non-centre-based services and (f) school-based services.

Chapter 4 regards the **Quality** of provision and services in the early childhood care and education sector. In our introduction, we emphasise the importance of quality services in the early years and highlight that quality is a dynamic and evolutionary concept that must address both the tangible and non-tangible aspects of service settings. The categories used to group publications include (a) government publications, (b) international perspectives, (c) quality indicators and (d) quality of service provision.

In Chapter 5, **Parents and Families**, we begin by describing the economic and social changes that have impacted on family life in Ireland. We discuss the crucial role of parents and families in early childhood care and education. Publications here are categorised under the headings of (a) family supports, (b) government publications, (c) international perspectives, (d) parental education and training, (e) parental involvement in infant classes and (f) partnership and participation.

Chapter 6 relates to **Educational Disadvantage** in the early years. The introduction highlights educational disadvantage as a multidimensional problem and emphasises the benefits of early intervention initiatives. We present publications under the category headings of (a) government publications, (b) integrated approaches, (c) international perspectives, (d) local initiatives, (e) school-based programmes and (f) socio-economic disadvantage.

Chapter 7 focuses on children with **Special Needs**. The introduction emphasises the added importance of early years experiences for these children and looks at the nature of the interventions required. Publications are grouped under the category headings of (a) educational intervention and development, (b) general disability, (c) government publications, (d) inclusion and integration, (e) intellectual disabilities and (f) physical and sensory disabilities.

In Chapter 8, **Curriculum and Methodology**, the introduction outlines the different frameworks or approaches to care and education in the early years. We classify publications in the categories of (a) assessment, (b) curriculum development, (c) curriculum implementation, (d) curriculum philosophies, (e) government publications, (f) international perspectives and (g) methodologies.

Chapter 9 focuses on **Staffing, Training and Qualifications** in the early years sector. The introduction stresses the need for a high standard of education and training for staff working in the early years sector and outlines the developments at policy level to achieve this. The categories used to group publications include (a) delivery mechanisms/methodologies, (b) education and training, (c) government publications, (d) human resource management and (e) international perspectives.

luathbhlianta ar fhás agus ar fhorbairt leanaí ina dhiaidh sin. Tá foilseacháin curtha i ngrúpaí de réir na gcatagóirí seo a leanas: (a) forbairt leanaí, (b) leas leanaí, (c) foilseacháin Rialtais agus (d) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta.

I gCaibidil 3, déantar imlíne ar fhoilseacháin taighde a bhaineann le **Seirbhísí Luath-Óige**. Tosaímid trí phlé a dhéanamh ar sheirbhísí le deich mbliana anuas agus trí bhreathnú ar na céimeanna atá glactha chun seachadadh na seirbhísí sin a chur chun cinn agus chun cáilíocht na seirbhísí a fheabhsú. Tá foilseacháin rangaithe de réir na gceannteideal catagóire seo a leanas (a) seirbhísí réamhscoile lonnaithe in ionaid, (b) tacaíocht teaghlaigh, (c) foilseacháin Rialtais, (d) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta, (e) seirbhísí nach bhfuil lonnaithe in ionaid agus (f) seirbhísí lonnaithe i scoileanna.

Baineann Caibidil 4 le **Cáilíocht** an tsoláthair agus na seirbhísí san earnáil chúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige. Sa réamhrá anseo againn, cuirimid béim ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le seirbhísí cáilíochta sna luathbhlianta agus léirímid gur coincheap dinimiciúil agus éabhlóideach is ea cáilíocht a chaitheadh aghaidh a thabhairt ar na gnéithe inláimhsithe agus doláimhsithe araon a bhaineann le suímh seirbhísí. I measc na gcatagóirí a mbaintear úsáid astu chun foilseacháin a ghrúpáil tá (a) foilseacháin Rialtais, (b) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta, (c) táscairí cáilíochta agus (d) cáilíocht sholáthar seirbhísí.

I gCaibidil 5, **Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh**, tosaímid trí chur síos a dhéanamh ar na hathruithe eacnamaíocha agus sóisialacha a imríonn tionchar ar an saol teaghlaigh in Éirinn. Déanaimid plé ar an ról mórthábhachtach a bhíonn ag tuismitheoirí agus teaghlaigh i gcúram agus oideachas Luath-Óige. Cuirtear foilseacháin sa chás seo i gcatagóirí faoi na ceanteidil seo a leanas (a) tacaíochtaí teaghlaigh, (b) foilseacháin Rialtais, (c) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta, (d) oideachas agus oiliúint do thuismitheoirí, (e) páirtíocht tuismitheoirí i ranganna naíonán agus (f) comhpháirtíocht agus rannpháirtíocht.

Baineann Caibidil 6 le **Míbhuntáiste Oideachasúil** sna luathbhlianta. Léiríonn an réamhrá míbhuntáiste oideachasúil a bheith mar fhadhb ilghnéitheach agus cuirtear béim ar an leas a bhaineann le tionscnaimh idirghabhála luath. Cuirimid foilseacháin i láthair faoi na ceanteidil chatagóire seo a leanas (a) foilseacháin Rialtais, (b) cur chuige chomhtháite, (c) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta, (d) tionscnaimh logánta, (e) cláir lonnaithe i scoileanna agus (f) míbhuntáiste socheacnamaíoch.

Díríonn Caibidil 7 ar leanaí a bhfuil **Riachtanais Speisialta** acu. Cuireann an réamhrá béim ar an tábhacht bhreise a bhaineann le heispéiris luathbhlianta i gcás na leanaí seo agus breathnaíonn sé ar nádúr na hidirghabhála a bhíonn riachtanach. Tá grúpáil déanta ar fhoilseacháin faoi na ceanteidil chatagóire seo a leanas (a) idirghabháil agus forbairt oideachasúil, (b) míchumas ginearálta, (c) foilseacháin Rialtais, (d) uilechuimsitheacht agus comhtháthú, (e) míchumais intleachtacha agus (f) míchumais fhísiceacha agus chéadfaíochta.

I gCaibidil 8, **Curaclaim agus Modheolaíocht**, déanann an réamhrá imlíne ar na creatlaí nó ar an gcur chuige éagsúil i leith cúraim agus oideachais sna luathbhlianta. Rangáimid foilseacháin sna catagóirí seo a leanas (a) meastóireacht, (b) forbairt churaclaim, (c) cur i bhfeidhm curaclaim, (d) fealsúnacht curaclaim, (e) foilseacháin Rialtais, (f)

Chapter 10 details research in relation to **Irish Language Education** in early childhood care and education services. The introduction highlights the early years as an optimum period for language development and looks at the use of Irish as a first and second language in both preschool and school settings. We present the publications here under the category headings of (a) bilingualism, (b) first language acquisition, (c) government publications, (d) language structure, (e) language use, (f) literacy, (g) parents and families, (h) preschool education and care, (i) school-based issues and (j) second-language acquisition.

Chapter 11 pertains to **Cultural Diversity** in the early years. It is prefaced with a discussion of the importance of responding to the needs of the growing numbers of children attending care and education services from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It stresses the value of an intercultural approach. We group the publications here under the category headings of (a) anti-racism, rights and welfare, (b) culture and ethnicity, (c) education, (d) government publications, (e) international perspectives and (f) language.

In Chapter 12, we focus on **Children's Rights** in society. The introduction outlines policy developments in this area and emphasises the importance of giving children a voice as active citizens in our society. Publications are grouped under the category headings of (a) government publications, (b) promoting children's voices and (c) protecting children's rights.

The **Conclusions and Recommendations** summarise the main findings and highlights some of the gaps emerging in the research collected to date. It makes a number of recommendations, for example, the need for further research to fill the current gaps and the importance of using research to inform policy and practice.

The audit is provided in both English and Irish. The names of authors and publications are provided in the language and format in which they were published. In addition to the categorisation of each publication, a full bibliography as well as an author index is provided for your convenience. We hope that this audit will provide a valuable resource for all stakeholders in the early childhood care and education sector. We would welcome your feedback on this publication and we look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming months and years.

peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta agus (g) modheolaíocht. Díríonn Caibidil 9 ar **Fhoireann, Oiliúint agus Cáilíochtaí** in earnáil na luathbhlianta. Cuireann an réamhrá béim ar an riachtanas atá ann d'oidéachas d'ardchaighdeán agus d'oiliúint do chomhaltáí foirne a oibríonn in earnáil na luathbhlianta agus déanann sé imlíne ar na forbairtí ag leibhéal na mbeartas chun é sin a bhaint amach. I measc na gcatagóirí a mbaintear úsáid astu chun foilseacháin a ghrúpáil tá (a) meicníochtaí/modheolaíocht seachadta, (b) oidéachas agus oiliúint, (c) foilseacháin Rialtais, (d) bainistíocht ar acmhainní daonna agus (e) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta.

Tugtar mionsonraí i gCaibidil 10 maidir le taighde a bhaineann le h**Oideachas Gaeilge** i seirbhísí chúram agus oidéachas Luath-Óige. Léiríonn an réamhrá gur tréimhse de mhórhábhacht í na luathbhlianta maidir le forbairt teanga agus breathnaítear ar úsáid na Gaeilge mar mháthairtheanga agus mar an dara teanga i suímh réamhscoile agus scoile araon. Cuirimid na foilseacháin seo i láthair faoi na ceanteidil chatagóire seo a leanas (a) dátheangachas, (b) glacadh na máthairtheanga, (c) foilseacháin Rialtais, (d) struchtúr teanga, (e) úsáid teanga, (f) litearthacht, (g) tuismitheoirí agus teaghlaigh, (h) oidéachas agus cúram réamhscoile, (i) saincheistanna a bhaineann le scoileanna agus (j) sealbhú na dara teanga.

Baineann Caibidil 11 le h**Éagsúlacht Chultúir** sna luathbhlianta. Tá réamhrá ann ina bpléitear an tábhacht a bhaineann le freagairt do riachtanais na leanaí a fhreastalaíonn ar sheirbhísí cúraim agus oidéachais a bhfuil cúlraí éagsúla cultúir agus eitneacha acu, líon leanaí atá ag dul i méid. Cuireann sé béim ar an luach a bhaineann le cur chuige idirchultúrtha. Cuirimid na foilseacháin sa chás seo i ngrúpaí faoi na ceanteidil chatagóire seo a leanas (a) frithchíochas, cearta agus leas, (b) cultúr agus eitneachas, (c) oidéachas, (d) foilseacháin Rialtais, (e) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta agus (f) teanga.

I gCaibidil 12, dírimid ar **Chearta Leanáí** sa tsochaí. Déanann an réamhrá imlíne ar fhorbairtí beartais sa réimse seo agus cuireann sé béim ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le guth a thabhairt do leanaí mar shaoránaigh ghníomhacha inár sochaí. Déantar grúpaí ar na foilseacháin faoi na ceanteidil chatagóire seo a leanas (a) foilseacháin Rialtais, (b) guthanna leanaí a chur chun cinn agus (c) cearta leanaí a chosaint.

Déantar achoimre ar na príomhthorthaí i **Conclúidí agus Moltaí** agus léirítear cuid de na bearnaí atá ag teacht chun cinn sa taighde a bailíodh go dtí seo. Déantar roinnt moltaí, mar shampla, an riachtanas atá le níos mó taighde chun na bearnaí atá ann faoi láthair a líonadh agus an tábhacht a bhaineann le húsáid a bhaint as taighde chun beartas agus cleachtas a chur ar an eolas.

Tá an t-íniúchadh ar fáil i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge araon. Tá ainmneacha na n-údar agus na bhfoilseachán curtha ar fáil sa teanga agus san fhormaid inar foilsíodh iad. Chomh maith le gach foilseachán a bheith curtha i gcatagóir, tá leabharliosta iomlán agus innéacs údar curtha ar fáil do do chaoithiúlacht. Tá súil againn go soláthróidh an t-íniúchadh seo acmhainn luachmhar do gach duine a bhaineann leis an earnáil chúram agus oidéachas Luath-Óige. Cuirfimid fáilte roimh aischothú uait ar an bhfoilseachán seo agus táimid ag súil le leanúint ar aghaidh le bheith ag comhoibriú leat sna míonna agus sna blianta atá romhainn.