

# CHAPTER 7- SPECIAL NEEDS

## CAIBIDIL 7 - RIACHTANAI SPEISIALTA

Children with special needs, in the context of this audit, are those as defined by the Special Education Review Committee (1993):

*"those whose disabilities and/or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom is not sufficiently challenging."* (DoE, 1993: 18)

This interpretation is reiterated by the White Paper on Early Childhood Education, Ready to Learn (DES, 1999a: 83). This considers the spectrum of abilities, from children with specific disabilities to gifted children. Specific disabilities and conditions include children with intellectual disability, emotional and behavioural disorders, physical and sensory disabilities, biological impairment, developmental delay, specific learning disabilities, specific speech and language disorders and autism (Coolahan, 1998).

The child does not exist in a vacuum prior to entry to an early years setting and it is the experiences in his/her family and community that provide the starting point for learning in the new context (DES, 1999b). Early and accurate diagnosis is essential, yet in many cases, especially for children with mild learning difficulties, the crucial years for the provision of remediation are often passed prior to identification (INTO, 2000a). Moreover, children with mild intellectual impairment often benefit most from interventions, accentuating the necessity of early identification for this cohort of children. Interventions are most successful when they are tailored to meet the needs of the individual learner and therefore, more accurate measurements and indicators are essential (DES, 1999a).

The role of parents is vital in the education and care of all children but parental involvement for children with special needs is an imperative (DoE, 1993). Early childhood care and education services can act as a source of support for parents who may feel isolated and ill equipped to provide for the needs of their child. Parents may know that there is a developmental delay or abnormality but official diagnosis oftentimes occurs in these settings. To this end, a supportive element is needed as parents adjust to the knowledge of having a child with special needs (DES, 1999a).

There is unequivocal consensus that quality early childhood care and education is of paramount importance in the holistic development of the child (INTO, 1995a; DES, 1999a). The value and necessity of these early childhood experiences is accentuated for children with special needs, with consequent benefits in the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children (Coolahan, 1998). The

Is iad na leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta, i gcomhthéacs an iniúchta seo, ná na leanaí sin a ndéanann an Special Education Review Committee (1993) sainmhíniú orthu mar seo a leanas:

*"those whose disabilities and/or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom is not sufficiently challenging."* (DoE, 1993: 18)

Déantar an léirmhíniú sin a athlua sa Pháipéar Bán faoi Oideachas Luath-Óige, Ready to Learn (DES, 1999a: 83). Féachann sé sin ar an speictream cumas, ó leanaí ag a bhfuil éagumais shonracha go leanaí a bhfuil buanna speisialta acu. Áirítear ar éagúmais agus reachta sonracha leanaí ag a bhfuil míchumas intleachtach, neamhoird mhothúchána agus iompraíochta, míchumais fhisiceacha agus chéadfacha, lagú bitheolaíoch, moillaga forbartha, míchumais shonracha foghlama, neamhoird shonracha urlabhra agus teanga agus uathachas (Coolahan, 1998).

Ní mhaireann an leanbh ar a c(h)onlán féin sula dtéann sé/sí isteach i dtimpeallacht Luath-Óige agus is iad na heispéiris ina t(h)eaghlach agus ina p(h)obal féin a sholáthraíonn túsphointe na foghlama sa chomhthéacs nua (DES, 1999b). Tá diagnóis luath agus chruinn ríthábhachtach, ach in go leor cásanna, go háirithe i gcás leanaí ag a bhfuil deacrachtaí éatroma foghlama, is minic go mbíonn na blianta ríthábhachtacha chun críche leigheasacháin thart sula dtugtar faoi deara iad (INTO, 2000a). Ina theannta sin, i gcás leanaí ag a bhfuil lagú éatrom intleachtúil, is minic a bhaineann siad an tairbhe is mó as béim a leagan ar an ngá atá le luathaithe don ghrúpa seo leanaí. Is é is fearr a éiríonn le hidirghabhálacha nuair a dhéantar iad a shainiú chun freastal ar riachtanais an fhoghlaim aonair agus dá bhrí sin, tá tomhais agus táscairí níos cruinne ríthábhachtach (DES, 1999a).

Tá ról na dtuismitheoirí ríthábhachtach d'oideachas agus cúram gach linbh ach tá rannpháirtíocht tuismitheoirí riachtanach do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta (DoE, 1993). Is féidir le seirbhísí oideachais agus cúraim Luath-Óige feidhmiú mar fhoinsé tacaíochta do thuismitheoirí a bhraitheann go bhfuil siad fágtha ar a gconlán féin agus nach bhfuil ar a gcumas freastal ar riachtanais an linbh. D'fhéadfadh fios a bheith ag tuismitheoirí go bhfuil moillaga forbartha nó mínormáltacht ag baint leis an leanbh ach is minic a tharlaíonn diagnóis oifigiúil sna timpeallachtaí sin. Chuige sin, tá gá le gné tacaíochta de réir mar a théann leanaí i dtaithí ar a fhios a bheith acu go bhfuil leanbh acu ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta (DES, 1999a).

White Paper on Early Childhood Education (DES, 1999a: 83) cites the rationale for early childhood care and education for children with special needs;

- Early learning provides the foundation for later attainment, thus the provision of apposite developmentally appropriate experiences is a prerequisite to future learning
- Quality interventions reduce difficulties of certain disabilities and help to prevent additional problems
- Interventions support families in adjusting to caring for a child with special needs in a community of supports.

It is essential to remain cognisant of the heterogeneity of the special needs population when considering interventions. The aforementioned definition provided by the Special Education Review Committee Report (DoE, 1993) highlights the spectrum of needs such children have, from physical to intellectual and from mild to severe. This necessitates a complex array of interventions and settings to ensure that all individuals receive a programme congruent with their individual needs and delivered in an apposite way. This varied population come from a range of backgrounds and are also affected by their environment, thus necessitating cognisance of this wide range of issues impinging on early childhood care and education policies regarding special needs (INTO, 2000a).

The Department of Education and Science or other government departments do not provide an inclusive, targeted and comprehensive range of interventions for children with special needs and there is great reliance on voluntary organisations to provide such services. This unco-ordinated, fragmented and often absent service prompts McGough (2000) to state;

*"What we need is an organised system of early educational intervention for young children with special needs which provides the range of settings dictated by the complexities of their needs including access to intervention programmes which are part of the mainstream primary school system"* (INTO, 2000a: 37).

Many reports and individuals in the sector have reiterated this sentiment, demanding a comprehensive policy and provision in the early years for children with special needs. Numerous government reports in the 1990s including the Special Education Review Committee Report (DoE, 1993) and the White Paper on Education (DoE, 1995), advocate early interventions for children with special needs, but do not explore the nature or delivery of such services.

The Report on the National Forum for Early Childhood Education (Coolahan, 1998) espouses the need for multidisciplinary teams, including paediatricians, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists and physiotherapists. The role of the teacher or early years practitioner on this team is imperative, as this is where the crux of the interaction takes place on a daily

Táthar ar aonfhocal go mbaineann tábhacht nach beag le caighdeán an oideachais agus an chúraim Luath-Óige maidir le forbairt iomlánaíoch an linbh (INTO, 1995a; DES, 1999a). Géaraítear luach agus riachtanas na n-eispéireas Luath-Óige sin i gcás leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta, agus eascraíonn sochair d'fhorbairt fhisiciúil, chognaíoch, mhothúcháinach agus shóisialta an linbh astu sin (Coolahan, 1998). Luann an Páipéar Bán faoi Oideachas Luath-Óige (DES, 1990a:83) an réasúnaíocht a bhaineann le hoideachas agus cúram Luath-Óige do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta;

- Soláthraíonn an fhoghlaim luath bunús do ghnóthachtáil níos déanaí, agus dá bhrí sin is réamhriachtanas iad eispéiris chuí forbartha don fhoghlaim tráth níos déanaí
- Laghdaíonn idirghabhálacha ar ardchaighdeán na deacrachtaí a bhaineann le míchumais áirithe agus cuidíonn siad le fadhbanna breise a chosc
- Tugann idirghabhálacha tacaíocht do theaghligh agus iad ag dul in oiriúint do chúram a dhéanamh do leanbh ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta i bpobal tacaíochtaí.

Ní mór cuimhneamh ar ilchineálacht an phobail ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta agus idirghabhálacha á meas. Leagann an sainmhíniú thuas a rinne an Special Education Review Committee Report (DoE, 1993) béim ar speictream na riachtanas a bhí ag leanaí den chineál sin, ó riachtanais fhisiceacha go riachtanais intleachtacha agus ó riachtanais éatroma go riachtanais throma. Éilíonn sé sin raon casta idirghabhálacha agus timpeallachtaí le cinntiú go bhfaigheann gach duine clár a oireann dá c(h)uid riachtanas aonair agus go ndéantar an clár sin a sheachadadh ar bhealach cuí. Baineann raon leathan cúlraí leis an bpobal ilghnéitheach sin agus imríonn an timpeallacht tionchar orthu freisin, agus dá bhrí sin ní mór cuimhneamh ar an réimse leathan saincheistanna a bhíonn i gceist le beartais um oideachas agus cúram Luath-Óige maidir le riachtanais speisialta (INTO, 2000a).

Ní sholáthraíonn an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ná ranna eile rialtais raon cuimsitheach, spriocdhírithé agus uilechuimsitheach idirghabhálacha do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta agus braitear níos mó ar eagraíochtaí deonacha chun seirbhísí den chineál sin a chur ar fáil. Is éard atá le rá an McGough (2000) faoin tseirbhís sin atá neamhchomhordaithe, briste agus easnamhach uaireanta ná:

*"What we need is an organised system of early educational intervention for young children with special needs which provides the range of settings dictated by the complexities of their needs including access to intervention programmes which are part of the mainstream primary school system"* (INTO, 2000a: 37).

Tá go leor tuarascálacha agus daoine aonair san earnáil tar éis an tuiscint sin a threisiú, agus éilítear

basis. Consequently, in-career development must be provided on an ongoing basis to ensure that practitioners are equipped with the most recent skills and knowledge to deliver quality services (INTO, 2000a). This range of supports, with the potential to access further periphery services is necessary to address the diverse needs of this grouping.

Appropriate early childhood care and education in this context is a form of intervention. Children require a variety of systematic strategies to support their development in the early years and many of these may be transmitted in a wider social support model, incorporating assistance to parents, families and the wider community of the child (DES, 1999a). Such a comprehensive web of supports complement and reinforce the separate elements leading to greater effectiveness and success. Early interventions can assist in accelerating development and reducing the impact of a disability in all aspects of the person's life, from childhood through to adulthood.

Provision for children with special needs is now increasingly provided in integrated, inclusive and mainstream settings. Segregated settings still exist and these are most appropriate for certain special needs. The determining force must always be the needs of the individual child and services must be tailored to meet these needs. Early identification must lead to early and appropriate intervention as a right for the child. The involvement of multiple state agencies in the identification, provision and delivery of services has led to duplications and voids, thus highlighting the necessity for enhanced co-ordination and harmonisation.

Difficulties to be considered in addressing special needs include;

- Demographic and prevalence issues which lead to difficulties in rural settings e.g. access to services
- The dichotomy between education and care
- Tailoring curricular and methodological approaches to the individual needs of each child (DES, 1999a: 88)

Research has proven that interventions are most successful when the programmes are intensive, targeted, well-planned and documented, provided in small-group contexts, delivered by skilled/expert practitioners and are designed to meet the specific needs of the individual child (INTO, 1995a; DES, 1999a).

The following **categories** emerged in the collation of the data on Special Needs:

- 7.1 Educational Intervention and Development
- 7.2 General Disability
- 7.3 Government Publications
- 7.4 Inclusion and Integration
- 7.5 Intellectual Disabilities
- 7.6 Physical and Sensory Disabilities

beartas agus soláthar cuimsitheach sna blianta tosaigh do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta. Éilíonn go leor tuarascálacha rialtais sna 1990idí, lena n-áirítear an Special Education Review Committee Report (DoE, 1993) agus an Páipéar Bán Oideachais (DoE, 1995), idirghabhálacha luath do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta, ach ní dhéanann siad iniúchadh ar chineál ná ar sheachadadh na seirbhísí sin.

Luann an Tuarascáil ón Early Childhood Education (Coolahan, 1998) an gá atá le foirne ildisciplíneacha, lena n-áirítear leanbhlianna, síceolaithe, oibríthe sóisialta, teiripeoirí urlabhara agus fisiteiripeoirí. Tá ról an mhúinteora nó an chleachtóra blianta luatha ar an bhfoireann sin riachtanach, mar is leo siúd a tharaíonn croílár na hidirghníomhaíochta ó lá go lá. Dá réir sin, ní mór forbairt inghairme a sholáthar ar bhonn leanúnach le cinntiú go mbíonn na scileanna agus an t-eolas is déanaí ag cleachtóirí chun seirbhísí ar ardchaighdeán a sheachadadh (INTO, 2000a). Tá an réimse tacaíochtaí sin, mar aon leis an bpoitéinseal rochtain a fháil ar sheirbhísí tánaisteacha, riachtanach chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar riachtanais éagsúla an ghrúpa sin.

Is cineál idirghabhála é cúram agus oideachas cuí Luath-Óige sa chomhthéacs sin. Éilíonn leanaí straitéisí éagsúla córasacha chun tacú lena bhforbairt sna blianta luatha agus féadfar go leor acu sin a sheachadadh i múnla tacaíochta níos leithne sa tsochaí, lena gcumhdaítear cúnamh do thuismitheoirí, do theaghligh agus do phobal níos leithne an linbh (DES, 1999a). Tagann gréasán cuimsitheach tacaíochtaí den chineál sin leis na gnéithe leithleacha agus treisíonn sé iad chun éifeachtacht agus rathúlacht níos fearr a chinntiú. Is féidir le hidirghabhálacha luatha cuidiú le dlús a chur faoin bhforbairt agus le tionchar an mhíchumais a laghdú i ngach gné de shaol an duine, ón óige ar aghaidh go saol an duine fásta.

Táthar ag déanamh soláthair do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta níos mó agus níos mó i dtimpeallachtaí comhtháite, uilechuimsitheacha agus príomhshrutha. Tá timpeallachtaí leithscartha fós ann agus tá siad an-oiriúnach do riachtanais speisialta áirithe. Ní mór gurb iad riachtanais an linbh aonair an bunús do chinntí i gcónaí agus ní mór seirbhísí a oiriúnu chun freastal ar na riachtanais sin. Ní mór go dtiocfaidh idirghabháil chúí agus luath as aithint luath mar cheart don leanbh. De bharr go raibh iliomad eagraíochtaí stáit i gceist in aithint, i soláthar agus i seachadadh seirbhísí, tá dúbláil agus easnaimh tagtha chun cinn, rud a léiríonn an gá atá le comhordú agus comhtháthú níos fearr.

I measc na ndeacrachtaí a chaitear a mheas agus aghaidh á tabhairt ar riachtanais speisialta tá:

- Saincheisteanna déimeagrafacha agus forleithne a chruthaíonn deacrachtaí i dtimpeallachtaí tuaithe, e.g. rochtain ar sheirbhísí
- An diceatóime idir oideachas agus cúram
- Cuir chuige churaclaim agus mhodheolaíochta a chur in oiriúint do riachtanais gach linbh aonair

These are then analysed under the aforementioned **sub-categories** of:

- Descriptive/Analysis
- Evaluation
- Guidelines
- Policy

(DES, 1999a: 88)

Tá sé cruthaithe ag taighde go mbíonn an rath is mó ar idirghabhálacha nuair a bhíonn cláir dian, spriocdhírthe, dea-phleanáilte agus cáipéisithe, nuair a chuirtear ar fáil i ngrúpaí beaga iad, nuair a sheachadann cleachtóirí sciliúla/sainoilte iad agus nuair a bhíonn siad deartha chun freastal ar riachtanais shonracha an linbh aonair (INTO, 1995a; DES, 1999a).

Tháinig na **catagóirí** seo a leanas chun cinn agus na sonraí faoi Riachtanais Speisialta a bheith á gcur le chéile:

- 7.1 Forbairt agus Idirghabháil Oideachasúil
- 7.2 Míchumas Ginearálta
- 7.3 Foilseacháin Rialtais
- 7.4 Uilechuimsitheacht agus Comhtháthú
- 7.5 Míchumais Intleachtacha
- 7.6 Míchumais Fhisiceacha agus Chéadfacha

Déantar iad sin a anailísiú faoi na **fochatagóirí** a luadh roimhe seo:

- Tuairisciúil/Anailísiúil
- Meastóireacht
- Treoirínite
- Beartas

## 7.1 EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The importance of appropriate educational interventions is of paramount importance for children with special needs (INTO, 2000a). While education and care are inextricably linked in the early years, all children are entitled to apposite educational experiences for their needs. Play is the main medium of instruction in these early years and this is largely provided in an integrated setting. Much of the Irish research relates to the formal education system and a focus on the early years would prove a valuable resource in the planning and delivery of services.

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## 7.1 FORBAIRT AGUS IDIRGHABHÁIL OIDEACHASÚIL

Tá an tábhacht a bhaineann le hidirghabhálacha oideachasúla cuí thar a bheith tábhachtach i gcás leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta (INTO, 2000a). Cé go bhfuil ceangal doshéanta idir oideachas agus cúram sna blianta tosaigh, tá gach leanbh i dteideal eispéiris chuí oideachais a oireann dá gcuid riachtanas. Is é an príomh-mheán teagaisc sna blianta tosaigh sin ná spraoi agus den chuid is mó, cuirtear é sin ar fáil i dtimpeallacht chomtháite. Baineann go leor den taighde a rinneadh in Éirinn leis an gcóras foirmiúil oideachais agus sholáthródh fócas ar na blianta tosaigh acmhainn luachmhar do phleanáil agus seachadadh seirbhísí.

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National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2002). *Draft Curriculum Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Severe and Profound General Learning Disabilities. Volume 3: Arts Education, Physical Education and SPHE*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

#### 7.1.4 Policy / Beartas:

Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1995a). *Early Childhood Education: Issues and Concerns*. Dublin: Irish National Teachers' Organisation.

Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2000a). *Early Years Learning – Proceedings of Early Childhood Conference*. Dublin: Irish National Teachers' Organisation.

## 7.2 GENERAL DISABILITY

There has been a difficulty in recent years in the definition of what constitutes special needs. There is a danger that the term will be used too widely, so as to lose clarity, or too narrowly, so as to exclude those with genuine needs. In this time, special needs and disability have gained a wide interpretation from physical, sensory and intellectual in a wide spectrum from mild to severe. This category contains many of the generic publications in relation to special needs, attitudes to disability and support structures in place for children with special needs.

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

Harris, P. (1995). Who am I? Concepts of Disability and Their Implications for People with Learning Difficulties. *Disability and Society*, Volume 10, No. 3, pp. 341-351.

Burke, U. (1999). *Quality of Life in Chronic Childhood Illness*. Ph.D Thesis. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin.

Carpenter, B. (1999). Supporting Families: The Case for Early Intervention. *Reach*, Volume 12, No. 2, pp. 75-84.

NAMHI (1999). Directory of Services: *The National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland*. Dublin: NAMHI.

Pfizer Healthcare (1999). *Tots and Toddlers Health*. Dublin: Pfizer Healthcare.

South Eastern Health Board (1999). *Children with Special Needs*. Kilkenny: South Eastern Health Board.

Children in Hospital Ireland and the Irish Association for Hospital Play specialists (2000). *The Hospital Playlink*. Dublin: Children in Hospital Ireland.

North Eastern Health Board (2000). *Foundations for Diversity – Report of the Pilot Project. Early Intervention Services for Children with Developmental Delay and their Families*. Meath: Meath Community Services.

Cleary, A. (2001). "The Child, the Family and Disability." pp. 145-166. (in) Cleary, A., Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, M. and Quin, S. (Eds.) (2001). *Understanding Children, Volume 2: Changing Experiences and Family Forms*. Dublin: Oak Tree Press.

National Disability Authority Research Unit and Research and Evaluation Services (2001). *Attitudes to*

## 7.2 MÍCHUMAS GINEARÁLTA

Baineann deacracht, le blianta beaga anuas, leis an sainmhíniú ar cad is riachtanais speisialta ann. Tá an baol ann go mbainfear úsáid ró-fhorleathan as an téarma, agus ar an gcaoi sin caillfidh sé an bhrí a bhaineann leis, nó úsáid róchúng, agus ar an gcaoi sin fágfar iad sin a bhfuil riachtanais dháiríre acu ar lár. I rith an ama sin, baineadh brí leathan as riachtanais speisialta agus as míchumas ó fhisiceach, chéadfach agus intleachtach i speicream leathan ó éatrom go trom. Áirítear sa chatagóir seo go leor de na gnáthfhoilseacháin a bhaineann le riachtanais speisialta, le dearcaí faoi mhíchumas agus le struchtúir thacaíochta atá ann do leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta.

*Disability: Preliminary Findings of a Survey Commissioned by the National Disability Authority.* Dublin: National Disability Authority.

Senior, J. (2001). *Educational, Medical and Advisory Provision for Children with Epilepsy in the Republic of Ireland.* Ph.D. Thesis. Dublin: University College Dublin.

Tallaght Partnership (2001). *I Don't Know How You Do It – A Small Insight into the Lives and Concerns of Parents of Children with Disabilities.* Dublin: Tallaght Partnership.

Westbic (2001). *Research Report into the Needs of People with Disabilities.* Roscommon: Roscommon Partnership Company.

National Disability Authority (2002a). *Disability Related Research in Ireland 1996-2001.* Dublin: National Disability Authority.

### 7.2.2 Evaluation / Meastóireacht:

South Eastern Health Board (1996b). *Needs Assessment of Children with Special Needs – Waterford.* Kilkenny: South Eastern Health Board.

Watson, D. (1996). *An Analysis and Evaluation of Statistical Information on People with Disabilities in Ireland: Report for the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities.* Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

McCormack, B. (1997). *Analysis of Development of Disability Services in Ireland. The Local Support Service.* Dublin: St. Michael's House.

### 7.2.3 Policy / Beartas:

Combat Poverty Agency (1994). *Papers from National Conference on Disability, Exclusion and Poverty.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (1996). *A Strategy for Equality: Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities.* Report Commissioned by the Department of Equality and Law Reform. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Zappone, K. (2000). *Charting the Equality Agenda.* Dublin: Equality Authority.

Brothers of Charity Services (2001). *Going Forward Together - The Brothers of Charity Services Ethos.* Galway: Brothers of Charity Services.

Pillinger, J. (2001). *Equality/ Diversity and Quality Customer Service. QCS Equality/ Diversity Sub Group.* Dublin: Department of the Taoiseach/ Equality Authority.

National Disability Authority (2002b). *Submission to Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 1996 and (Amended) Regulations 1997 Review Group.* Dublin: National Disability Authority.

## 7.3 GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

There have been numerous publications by the government on the topic of special needs in the last decade. One of the most prominent of these is the Report of the Special Education Review Committee (DoE, 1993). There has also been a strengthening in the legislation for the rights of children with special needs by virtue of the Education Act (DES, 1998b) and this will be further enhanced in the future when the Disability Bill is enshrined into law (DJELR, 2001d). The subject of special needs is addressed in the majority of government publications relating to children, emphasising its importance in national policy terms.

## 7.3 FOILSEACHÁIN RIALTAIS

Tháinig go leor foilseachán ón rialtas faoi riachtanais speisialta le deich mbliana anuas. Ceann de na foilseacháin is tábhachtaí díobh sin is ea an Tuarascáil ón Special Education Review Committee (DoE, 1993). Treisíodh cearta leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta sa reachtaíocht de bhun an Achta Oideachais (DES, 1998b) agus cuirfear tuilleadh leis sin amach anseo nuair a dhéanfar dlí den Bhillle Míchumais (DJELR, 2001d). Tugtar aghaidh ar riachtanais speisialta i bhformhór na bhfoilseachán rialtais a bhaineann le leanaí, rud a léiríonn an tábhacht a bhaineann leo i dtéarmaí beartais náisiúnta.

### 7.3.1 Policy / Beartas:

Department of Education (1990). *Report of the Primary Education Review Body*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Health (1990). *Needs and Abilities – A Policy of the Intellectually Disabled: Report of a Review Group on Mental Handicap Services*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Health (1991). *Child Care Act*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education (1992a). *Green Paper on Education – Education for a Changing World*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education (1993). *Report of the Special Education Review Committee*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Coolahan, J. (Ed.) (1994). *Report of the National Education Convention Secretariat*. Dublin: National Education Convention Secretariat.

National Rehabilitation Board (1994). *Equal Status: Submission to the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities*. Dublin: National Rehabilitation Board.

Department of Education (1995). *White Paper on Education – Charting Our Educational Future*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Equality and Law Reform (1995b). *Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Health and Children (1997b). *Services to Persons with a Mental Handicap/ Intellectual Disability. Assessment of Need 1997-2001*. Dublin: Department of Health.

Coolahan, J. (Ed.) (1998). *Report on the National Forum for Early Childhood Education*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1998a). *A National Educational Psychological Service - Report of the Planning Group*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1998b). *Education Act*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1999a). *Ready to Learn - A White Paper on Early Childhood Education*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1999b). *Primary School Curriculum*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1999f). *Education Welfare Bill*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999a). *Progress Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities – Towards Equal Citizenship*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (2000a). *Education Welfare Act*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (2000b). *Learning Support Guidelines*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Health and Children (2000g). *The Health of our Children – Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2001d). *The Disability Bill 2001*. Dublin: The Stationery Office

Department of Health and Children (2002f). *What do I do Now? The Parents Future Planning Group. A Book to Assist Parents upon Hearing that their Child has Special Needs*. Dublin: Health Promotion Unit.

## 7.4 INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

There has been a major emphasis on the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream settings, when this is appropriate to their needs (DES, 1999a). This integration must be supported by the correct education/training of practitioners, the provision of suitable equipment and facilities and access to wider support services where necessary (INTO, 2000a). When this is achieved, positive effects accrue to the individual in the form of enhanced physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.

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

Meehan, S. (1992). *Parents of Special Needs Children: Perceptions of Integrated Education*. M.Ed. Thesis. Cork: University College Cork.

Fitzpatrick, L. (1995). *The Social Integration of Children with Learning Difficulties under the Age of 6 into Mainstream Playgroups – An Observational Study*. Dublin: St. John of God.

Gash, H. (1997). Changes in Children's Attitude to Handicap Following Classroom Experience. *Frontline*, Volume 29, pp. 10-14.

## 7.4 COMHATHÁTHÚ AGUS UILECHUIMSITHEACHT

Leagadh béim mhór ar uilechuimsitheacht leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta i dtimpeallachtaí príomhshrutha, nuair a oireann sé sin dá gcuid riachtanas (DES, 1999a). Ní mór go mbeidh tacaíocht ag an gcomhatháthú sin ó cheartoideachas/oiliúint cleachtóirí, ó sholáthar trealaimh agus saoráidí cuí agus ó rochtain ar sheirbhísí níos leithne tacaíochta nuair is cuí (INTO, 2000a). Nuair a bhaintear é sin amach, imrítear tionchar dearfach ar an duine aonair i dtéarmaí forbartha feabhsaithe fisiceacha, intleachtacha, mothúchánaí agus sóisialta.

## 7.5 INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Intellectual disabilities cover a wide range of learning impairments. There has been improved understanding and identification of these conditions in recent years, leading to enhanced remedial supports. Early identification is imperative as interventions at an early age are far more effective than in subsequent years (Coolahan, 1998; INTO, 2000a). There has been a considered move in the integration of children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream settings and while there is an array of supports available to support children with additional needs, there is a great need to enhance the assistance to the individual settings and practitioners in the education and care of children with special needs.

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

Kinneen, E. (1990). *Speech and Language Developments of 5-7 Year Olds with a History of Febrile Convulsions*. Galway: Western Health Board.

McEvoy, J. and McConkey, R. (1990). Correspondence Errors in Counting Objects by Children with a Mental Handicap. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, Volume 11, pp. 249-260.

McEvoy, J. and McConkey, R. (1991). The Performance of Children with a Moderate Mental Handicap on Simple Counting Tasks. *Journal of Mental Deficiency Research*, Volume 35, pp. 446-458.

Devitt, S. (1995). *Inclusion of Children with Intellectual Disabilities into Mainstream Settings*. Dublin: St. John of God.

Gash, H. (1996). Educational Services for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Rural and Urban Areas of Republic of Ireland. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, Volume 15, No. 3, pp. 20-24.

Keogh, F. Hughes, M. and Walsh, D. (1996). *Census of Special Units in Ireland*. Dublin: Working Group on Services for Disturbed Mentally 111.

## 7.5 MÍCHUMAIS INTLEACHTACHA

Cumhdaíonn míchumais intleachtacha réimse leathan laguithe foghlama. Tuigtear agus aithnítear níos fearr na reachta sin le blianta beaga anuas, rud a thug tacaíochtaí níos fearr feabhais. Tá aithint luath ríthábhachtach mar go mbíonn idirghabhálacha ag aois luath i bhfad níos éifeachtaí ná idirghabhálacha tráth níos déanaí (Coolahan, 1998; INTO, 2000a). Táthar ag bogadh i dtreo leanaí ag a bhfuil míchumais intleachtacha a chomhatháthú i dtimpeallachtaí príomhshrutha agus cé go bhfuil réimse tacaíochtaí ar fáil chun tacú le leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise, tá gá mór ann cur leis an gcúnamh a thugtar do na timpeallachtaí aonair agus do chleachtóirí aonair maidir le hoideachas agus cúram leanaí ag a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta.

National Rehabilitation Board (1996). *The Epidemiology of Childhood Hearing Impairment in Southeast Ireland: Implications for Service Providers*. Dublin: National Rehabilitation Board.

O'Halloran, S. (1996). Care Provision for People with Mental Handicap. *An Bord Altranais News*, Volume 8, No. 3, pp. 4-7.

Guidera, E. (1997). *Perspectives on Children Experiencing Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*. Dublin: M.A. Thesis. Dublin: University College Dublin.

National Intellectual Disability Database (1997). *Annual Report of the National Intellectual Disability Database Committee 1996*. Dublin: Health Research Board.

Geaney, F. (2000). *Special Learning Difficulties/ Dyslexia and the Effects of Parental Separation – A Case Study Involving Two Boys*. Dublin: M.A. Thesis. Dublin: University College Dublin.

Mulvany, F. (2000). *Annual Report of the National Intellectual Disability Database Committee 1998-1999*. Dublin: Health Research Board.

Mulvany, F. (2001). *Annual Report of the National Intellectual Disability Database Committee 2000*. Dublin: Health Research Board.

Mulvany, F. (2003). *Annual Report of the National Intellectual Disability Database Committee 2001*. Dublin: Health Research Board.

### 7.5.2 Evaluation / Meastóireacht:

Garvey-Cecchetti, B. (1992). Mayo Screening Test for Early Language Development. Testing a Test. *Health Service News*, Volume 3, No. 1, pp. 2.

McGinty-Hastings, C. (1997). *An Investigation into Aspects of the Mayo Early Language Screening Test*. Galway: Western Health Board.

Flanagan, O. and Ó Nualláin, S. (2001). A Study Looking at the Effectiveness of Developmental Screening in Identifying Learning Disabilities in Early Childhood. *Irish Medical Journal*, Volume 94, No. 5, pp. 148-150.

## 7.6 PHYSICAL AND SENSORY DISABILITY

There has been increased research and developments in relation to the care and education of children with physical and sensory disabilities (Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a). The Department of Education and Science provide interventions for children with sensory impairment from an early age and this is extended into the formal education sector. Care and education is provided on an integrated basis in so far as is feasible and beneficial to the individual pupils (DES, 1999a).

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

Dennis, R. (1993). *Quality of Life as Context for Planning and Evaluation of Services for People with Disabilities*. Dublin: Enable Ireland.

Mullin, E., Oulton, K. and James, T. (1995). Skills Training with Parents of Physically Disabled Persons. *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research*, Volume 18, pp. 142-145.

Matthews, P. (1996). *The Irish Deaf Community : Volume 1: History of Education, Language and Culture*. Baile Átha Cliath: Institiuid Teangeolaíochta Éireann.

Tubridy, J. (1996). *Pegged Down – Experiences of People in Ireland with Significant Physical Disabilities*.

## 7.6 MÍCHUMAS FISICEACH AGUS CÉADFACH

Tá méadú tagtha ar thaighde agus ar fhorbairtí i leith cúraim agus oideachais do leanaí atá faoi mhíchumais fhisiceacha agus chéadfacha (Coolahan, 1998; DES, 1999a). Déanann an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta idirghabháil i gcás leanaí ag a bhfuil lagú céadfach ó aois luath agus leantar ar aghaidh leis sin san earnáil oideachais fhoirmiúil. Déantar cúram agus oideachas a sholáthar ar bhonn comhtháite chomh fada agus is féidir agus is tairbheach do na daltaí aonair (DES, 1999a).

Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Greaney, J. and Reason, R. (1999). Phonological Processing and Learning to Read in Braille. *Dyslexia: An International Journal of Theory and Practice*, Volume 5, pp. 215-226.

Ó Baoill, D. and Matthews, P. (2000). *The Irish Deaf Community, Volume 2: The Structure of Irish Sign Language*. Dublin: Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann.

Leeson, L. (2001). *Aspects of Verbal Valency in Irish Sign Language*. Ph.D. Thesis. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin.

Dempsey, R. (2002). "An Introduction to Visual Impairment in Preschool Children." pp. 308-315. (in) Horgan, M. and Douglas, F. (Eds.) (2002). *Lessons for the 21st Century – Research, Reflection, Renewal*: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference.

#### 7.6.2 Evaluation / Meastóireacht:

McGrattan, M. (1998). *An Evaluation of the Impact of a Music Programme on the Social, Emotional and Cultural Development of Deaf Children*. Dublin: M.A. Thesis. Dublin: University College Dublin.

National Association for Deaf People (2002). *School Report – Need for Improvement: Improving the Education System for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People*. Dublin: National Association for Deaf People.