

Ready to Learn

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education

CECDE

No. 1, September 02

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of the "Ready to Learn" Newsletter! I hope you will find it a useful way of staying in touch with the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education. However, if you wish to be removed from the list of recipients – just let us know.

This first issue will give you some background information on the Centre and its staff. In addition, we will bring you the latest news about the Centre and the activities we are involved in.

Please contact us with your views, comments and ideas. At this stage, we would be particularly interested to hear what you would like to find useful in the Newsletter.

Heino Schonfeld
Director

Conferences and Events

24/25 September: "Quality Childcare & Lifelong Learning", Galway

4 – 6 October: IPPA AGM & Conference, Dublin

20-23 November: NAEYC Annual Conference, New York City

The Centre



CECDE is presently located in Belvedere House on the grounds of St. Patrick's College Drumcondra. However, shortly we will be moving to the refurbished Gate Lodge of St. Patrick's College.

Contact us

CECDE

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The Team



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What's new?

Centre for Early
Childhood
Development and
Education established

CECDE Director
appointed

NCCC to publish
document on training
and qualifications

Preschool Regulations
Reviewed

Background Report
on Early Childhood
Education prepared
for OECD

Request for
submissions

*"There is always
one moment in
childhood when
the door opens
and lets the
future in."*

Graham Greene, *The
Power and the Glory*



PRESS RELEASE

WOODS ANNOUNCES FIRST EVER CENTRE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED AND SPECIAL NEEDS PUPILS UNDER 6

27 September, 2001

The Minister for Education and Science, Dr. Michael Woods T.D., today launched a major new ground breaking initiative to promote early childhood education.

Under the initiative, the Minister has appointed St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) to jointly undertake and manage the first ever project to develop and support the provision of quality early childhood education. The Key objectives of the project are:

- To develop a quality framework covering all aspects of early childhood education, including a Quality in Education (QE) Mark for providers in the sector, and
- To introduce targeted supports for children up to six years of age from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with special needs

The initiative also includes the establishment of a Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, which will be the first of its kind in the country.

Funding for this pioneering project will be met from the £74m allocation provided by the Government under the National Development Plan for the implementation of the White Paper on Early Childhood Education "Ready to Learn".

Outlining the background to the new initiative, Dr. Woods said, "the Government recognises the value of early childhood education, particularly in tackling educational disadvantage. Research has shown that quality early education can have a highly significant impact on children's capacity to cope with the transition to formal schooling and provides lasting cognitive and social benefits that persist throughout adolescence and adulthood. The project which I have now launched is an important step in the development of such high quality early education".

The Minister said the new Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education will develop quality standards for early childhood education including:

- equipment and materials
- staff qualifications and training
- teaching and learning methods
- curriculum

- guidance for parents

The Centre will also design and pilot measures to encourage compliance with those quality standards by early education providers.

He said, “a key function of the Centre will be to examine and develop forms of early intervention and support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities, building on the experience of existing programmes. The work of the Centre will be undertaken in close consultation with my Department and the various agencies, advisory bodies and providers in the sector”.

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PRESS RELEASE

APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE CECDE HEINO SCHONFELD

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Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Heino Schonfeld as its Director.

The Department of Education and Science recently appointed the Dublin Institute of Technology and St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra to establish the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) to co-ordinate and develop early childhood development and education in Ireland.

The functions of the Centre are

- To develop early education quality standards in relation to all aspects of early childhood education including equipment and material, staff qualifications, training, learning objectives, teaching methodologies, curriculum and related areas;
- To develop a support framework to encourage compliance with quality standards by early education providers;
- To co-ordinate and enhance early education provision, including parental involvement, with a particular focus on disadvantaged and special needs groups;
- To undertake and/or commission research and development through which best practice in curriculum, teaching methodology and parent involvement may be implemented and evaluated.

Since 1999, Mr. Schonfeld has been Head of Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre. Under his leadership, the NCRC maintained and developed its influential role among Early Years practitioners and parents through information, training and publishing services throughout Ireland. Mr. Schonfeld's professional background has been in Social Work and Social Pedagogy. He has practised in Germany, the United States and in Ireland where he has worked for the past 16 years in the areas of child protection, special education and disability.

Mr. Schonfeld has served on a number of relevant national bodies and initiatives including the Steering Committee of the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, the Open Your Eyes to Child Poverty Initiative and the Disability Federation of Ireland.

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NCCC TO PUBLISH DOCUMENT ON TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

The National Coordinating Childcare Committee will launch a "Model Framework for qualifications in the Early Childhood Care" at the end of September 2002. The document has been produced by the Certifying Bodies Subgroup following a process of dialogue and consultation in relation to training and qualifications, a process which began in the ECCE sector during 1995 (OMNA 2000a) and continues today with the National Co-ordinating Childcare Committee (NCCC).

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education has submitted a number of comments in response to a draft document.

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CHILDCARE (PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES) REGULATIONS REVIEW CONTINUES

A review group established by the Minister for Children continues to review the "Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996 and (Amendment) Regulations, 1997". These regulations give effect to the provisions of Part VII of the Child Care Act, 1991 and provide for notification and inspection of certain pre-school services. The terms of reference of this Review Group are to review the regulations and to make recommendations to the Minister on amendments to them.

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education is represented on the group and contributes to its work.

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BACKGROUND REPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PREPARED FOR OECD

Between end 1998 and mid-2000, twelve countries - Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States - volunteered to participate in the OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy. These countries reached agreement concerning the framework, scope and process of the review and identified the major policy issues for investigation.

The goal of the review is to provide cross-national information to improve policy-making and planning in early childhood education and care in all OECD countries.

A new round of reviews was authorised by the OECD Education Committee in November 2001. To date, Hungary, Ireland and Mexico have volunteered for national reviews in the period 2002-3, with four other countries in the process of decision.

The Background Report on Ireland is currently being finalised under supervision of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education and a final report is expected to be published early next year.

More details: <http://www.oecd.org/EN/document/0,,EN-document-176-5-no-27-20308-0,00.html>

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REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS TO INFORM THE EDUCATION INPUT INTO THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AGAINST RACISM

The Curriculum Development Unit is inviting submissions from interested parties outlining their views and recommendations on how best to promote anti-racism and interculturalism across the education system, including pre-school and early education. The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education is presently drafting its submission.

Submissions should be submitted by Monday, September 16th and details are available from:

Anti-Racism and Interculturalism Section
Curriculum Development Unit
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Tel: 01-4535487

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