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Quality
Cáilíocht

20 Quality

The quality of ECCE services has come to the fore of Irish policy and practice in recent years. Recent developments, for example the EOCP (2000-2006), and the establishment of the CCCs and the CECDE, has provided a renewed impetus for the development of quality in the Irish context. Research is of critical importance to ensure that the development of the sector in quantitative terms is accompanied by a concomitant emphasis on the quality of the experiences we provide for our youngest children in ECCE settings.

The theme of Quality within ECCE services is comprised of research that is generic in nature rather than specific to any of the sixteen national Standards of *Síolta*. It consists of 113 publications, which have been divided into the following sub-themes following a process of thematic analysis:

- Quality – Developing Policy [37]
- Quality – Developing Practice [16]
- Quality Assurance/ Improvement Programmes [30]
- Defining Quality [6]
- Assessing Quality [15]
- Supporting Quality [9]

Quality – Developing Policy

Owing to the participatory and consultative way in which policy has been developed in recent years, a large number of documents and publications are contained within the sub-theme, Quality – Developing Policy. Area Development Management (2002) and the National Development Plan Community Support Framework Evaluation Unit (2003) produced evaluations of aspects of the EOCP that impacted on the further development of the quality strand within the programme. Overviews of the level of quality in ECCE services in Ireland have been provided by a number of researchers, including Bernard (2002a), Carswell (2002), Hayes (1992b; 1996b; 2002b), Horgan and Douglas (2001) and the IPPA (2001; 2002a). The development of *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, by the CECDE has generated a large volume of research to underpin and inform its content and processes. Most particularly, it is supported by ‘four pillars of research’, three of which look at quality in the Irish context (CECDE, 2004a;

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Thug beartas agus cleachtas na hÉireann le blianta beaga anuas aghaidh ar cháilíocht na seirbhísí COLO. Spreag forbairtí a tharla le déanaí, mar shampla an EOCP (2000-2006) agus bunú na CCCanna agus an CECDE forbairt na cáilíochta i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann arís. Baineann tábhacht shuntasach le taighde chun a chinntiú mar a fhorbraítear an earnáil i dtéarmaí cainníochtúla, leagtar béim ag an am céanna ar cháilíocht an taithí a chuirimid ar fáil dár leanáil is óige i suímh COLO.

Cuimsíonn an téama Cáilíocht laistigh de sheirbhísí COLO taighde ginearálta in áit taighde a bhaineann go sonrach le haon cheann de na sé Chaighdeán náisiúnta déag de *Síolta*. Cuimsíonn sé 113 foilseachán, a roinneadh sna fo-théamaí seo a leanas i ndiaidh anailíse téamaí:

- Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Beartais [37]
- Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Cleachtais [16]
- Cláir Deimhnithe/Feabhsaithe Cáilíochta [30]
- Cáilíocht a Shainmhíniú [6]
- Cáilíocht a Mheas [15]
- Ag Tacú le Cáilíocht [9]

Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Beartais

Mar thoradh ar an mbealach rannpháirteach agus comhchomhairleach inar forbraíodh an beartas le blianta beaga anuas, cuimsíonn an fo-théama Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Beartais líon mór cáipéisí agus foilseachán. Tháirg Bainistíocht Forbartha Ceantair (2002) agus Aonad Meastóireachta Chreatlach Thacaíochta Phobail an Phlean Forbartha Náisiúnta meastóireachtaí ar ghnéithe an EOCP a raibh tionchar acu ar fhorbairt bhreise an tsnáithe cháilíochta laistigh den chlár. Thug roinnt taighdeoirí, lena n-áirítear Bernard (2002a), Carswell (2002), Hayes (1992b; 1996b; 2002b), Horgan agus Douglas (2001) agus an IPPA (2001; 2002a) forbhreathnú ar leibhéal na cáilíochta i seirbhísí COLO in Éirinn. Ghin forbairt *Síolta*, an Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d’Oideachas na Luath-Óige, ag an CECDE líon mór taighde chun a ábhar agus a phróiseas a thacú agus a threorú. Tugann ‘ceithre philéar taighde’ tacaíocht shonrach dó, le trí cinn acu ag féachaint ar cháilíocht i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann (CECDE 2004a; 2004b; 2005a; 2005c) agus an ceathrú ceann ag tabhairt comparáid trasnáisiúnta idir cáilíocht i sé dhlíne idirnáisiúnta (CECDE,

2004b; 2005a; 2005c) and a fourth that provides a cross-national comparison of quality in six international jurisdictions (CECDE, 2005b). Individual presentations and articles on the development of *Síolta* have also been documented by CECDE staff, including Duignan (2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2005a; 2005b; 2006b), Kiernan (2003b), Schonfeld (2004b; 2004e), Schonfeld and Kiernan (2003) and Walsh (2005a; 2006b). Proceedings of the international conference hosted by the CECDE in 2004 have been published (CECDE, 2005d), while a number of individual contributions to these are also contained in this sub-theme (De Valera, 2005; Duignan, 2005a; Hayes, 2005b; Schonfeld, 2005; Urban, 2005; Walsh, 2005a).

2005b). Rinne foireann an CECDE cur síos ar láithreoiréachtaí agus ailt aonair ar fhorbairt *Síolta* freisin, lena n-áirítear Duignan (2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2005a; 2005b; 2006b), Kiernan (2003b), Schonfeld (2004b; 2004e), Schonfeld agus Kiernan (2003) agus Walsh (2005a; 2006b). Foilsíodh imeachtaí na comhdhála náisiúnta a raibh an Lárionad mar óstach uirthi (CECDE, 2005d) agus cuimsítear roinnt aighneas aonair ón gcomhdháil sin san fho-théama seo freisin (De Valera, 2005; Duignan, 2005a; Hayes, 2005b; Schonfeld, 2005; Urban, 2005; Walsh, 2005a).

Area Development Management (2002). *Staffing, Quality and Childcare Provision: An Evaluation of the Community Support Strand of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 1998-2000*. Report Commissioned from Goodbody Economic Consultants. Dublin: Area Development Management.

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Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2004a). *Talking About Quality – Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

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De Valera, S. (2005). Minister's Address (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 8-11.

Douglas, F. (2006e). How to Write an Article on Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (in) Murphy, R. (Ed.) (2006a). *Exploring Children's Lives – A Handbook of Early Childhood Research*. Cork: Early Childhood Research Unit and OMEP Ireland, pp. 103-111.

Duignan, M. (2004a). The Best for Children – Developing Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland. Paper presented at *Diversity in Early Years Education: A North/ South Project*, Newry, April 2004.

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Duignan, M. (2004c). A Report of a National Consultation towards the Development of a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education. Paper presented at EECERA Conference, *Quality Curricula: The Influence of Research, Policy and Praxis*, Malta, September 2004.

Duignan, M. (2005a). Reflections on a National Review of Policy, Research and Practice in Ireland (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 70-79.

Duignan, M. (2005b). Talking About Quality: Report of a Consultation Process on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland. *Child Care in Practice*, Volume 11, No. 2, April 2005, pp. 211-230.

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Hayes, N. (2005b). Questions on Quality: Some Concluding Observations (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 411-414.

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Schonfeld, H. (2004e). Best Practice in Early Childhood Care and Education. Paper presented at Best Practice in Children's Services Conference, *Doing our Best for Children and Young People*, Kilkenny, October 2004.

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Walsh, T. (2005a). Quality; A Global Issue? An International Review of Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education 1990-2004 (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 162-177.

Walsh, T. (2006b). Insights on Quality: A National Review of Policy, Practice and Research Relating to Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland 1990-2004 (in) Hayes, N. (Ed.) (2006). *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education and Care: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2005*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 184-192.

Quality – Developing Practice

Quality – Developing Practice has also been the subject of a number of pieces of research. Guidance and support for the development and improvement of quality within settings has been produced by Canavan (2000), Daly (2003) and the Western Health Board (2000). A specific focus on quality ECCE services in rural areas has been documented by the Cross-border Rural Childcare Project (1998) and Hayes and Moore (1998). Childminding Ireland (2000b), the Lagan Family Daycare Network (2003), McGeeney (2004), McGrath (2004) and Murray (2004) focus on the development of quality experiences for young children in childminding settings, while Westmeath CCC (2006) provide guidance on establishing and operating quality school-age childcare. The NCNA (1990; 1998; 2003b) have produced and updated guidance to ensure quality experiences for children attending nurseries in Ireland.

Canavan, A. (2000). *Quality Childcare in the Workplace – A Step-by-Step Guide for Employers*. Dublin: Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre.

Childminding Ireland (2000b). *Guidelines for Good Practice for Childminders*. Wicklow: Childminding Ireland.

Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Cleachtais

Bhain roinnt píosáí taighde le Cáilíocht – Ag Forbairt Cleachtais freisin. Tháinig Canavan (2000), Daly (2003) agus Bord Sláinte an Iarthair (2000) treoir agus tacaíocht d'fhorbairt agus feabhsú cáilíochta laistigh de shuímh. Bhí fócas ar leith ag an Tionscadal Cúraim Leanaí Tuaithe Trasteorann (1998) agus Hayes agus Moore (1998) ar sheirbhísí COLO ar chaighdeán ard i limistéir tuaithe. Dírionn Feighlíocht Leanaí Éireann (2000b), Líonra Cúraim Lae Teaghlach an Lagáin (2003), McGeeney (2004), McGrath (2004) agus Murray (2004) ar fhorbairt eispéireas ar ardchaighdeán do leanaí óga i suímh chúraim leanaí agus tugann CCC na hIarmhí (2006) treoir faoi conas cúram lae ar chaighdeán ard a bhunú agus a fheidhmiú do leanaí ag aois scoile. D'eisigh agus nuashonraigh an NCNA (1990; 1998; 2003b) treoir chun a chinntiú go mbíonn taithí ar ardchaighdeán ag leanaí a fhreastalaíonn ar naíolanna in Éirinn.

Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project (1998). *Needs Led Planning for Quality Early Years Service in Rural Areas*. Enniskillen: Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project.

Daly, M. (2003). The Community Playgroup Initiative 2001-2004 - A Project to Enhance Quality in the Early Years Settings (in) Hayes, N. and Kernan, M. (Eds.) (2003a). *Transformations: Theory and Practice in Early Education: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2003*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 264-280.

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Hayes, N. and Moore, N. (1998). *Quality in Services for Young Children in Rural Areas*. Unpublished Report to the Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project.

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Lagan Family Daycare Network (2003). *Best Practice Guidelines for Childminders*. Donegal: Lagan Family Daycare Network.

McGeeney, L. (2004). Standards for Childminding in Ireland. Paper presented at *Quality and Standards in Childminding* Conference, Mullingar, June 2004.

McGrath, D. (2004). Quality Assurance in Childminding. Paper presented at *Quality and Standards in Childminding* Conference, Mullingar, June 2004.

Murray, P. (2004). A Child's Experience of Quality. Paper presented at *Quality and Standards in Childminding* Conference, Mullingar, June 2004.

National Children's Nurseries Association (1990). *Quality Nursery Care for Your Child*. Dublin: National Children's Nurseries Association.

National Children's Nurseries Association (1998). *Towards Quality Daycare*. Dublin: National Children's Nurseries Association.

National Children's Nurseries Association (2003b). *Towards Quality Daycare – Minimum Quality Standards in a Nursery*. Dublin: National Children's Nurseries Association.

Western Health Board (2000). *A Guide to Quality Practice in Pre-school Services*. Galway: Western Health Board.

Westmeath County Childcare Committee (2006). *A Guide to Developing a Quality School Age Childcare Programme*. Westmeath: Westmeath County Childcare Committee.

Quality Assurance/ Improvement Programmes

The development and introduction of a range of Quality Assurance/ Improvement Programmes has led to the generation of a significant range of research on their implementation and evaluation. The BCCN (2004; 2005) have published details of their quality assurance programme and its accompanying assessment mechanisms. The IPPA Quality Improvement Programme has been documented by Brennan and Joyce (2006), the IPPA (2002c; 2003) and

Clár Deimhnithe/Feabhsaithe Cáilíochta

Mar thoradh ar fhorbairt agus tabhairt isteach raon Clár Deimhnithe/Feabhsaithe Cáilíochta, gineadh go leor taighde faoina gcur i bhfeidhm agus a meastóireacht. D'fhoilsigh an BCCN (2004; 2005) sonraí a gclár deimhnithe cáilíochta agus na meicníochtaí measúnachta lena mbaineann. Rinne Brennan agus Joyce (2006), an IPPA (2002c; 2003) agus Murphy (2004) cur síos ar Chlár Feabhsaithe Cáilíochta an IPPA. Bhain go leor láithreoirachtaí agus alt le foireann an CECDE le foilsíú *Síolta*, an

- Murphy (2004). The publication of *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006a), has been the subject of many presentations and articles by CECDE staff, including Duignan (2005d; 2006a), Duignan and Walsh (2006), Duignan *et al.* (2006), Fallon (2005b; 2005c; 2006a; 2006b), Fallon and Walsh (2006), Kiernan (2003a), Schonfeld (2004d) and Walsh (2005d; 2006c). Corbett (2003), Hooper (2005; 2006) and the NCNA (2003c; 2006) have documented the development and implementation of the NCNA Centre of Excellence Award. Research has also been published on the Childminding Ireland quality awareness programme (Hayes Murray, 2003), the High/Scope quality assurance programme (High/Scope Ireland, 2003; Madigan, 2005) and the Montessori certification process (St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland (2003a; 2003b).
- Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d'Oideachas na Luath-Óige (CECDE, 2006a), Duignan (2005d; 2006a), Duignan agus Walsh (2006), Duignan *et al.* (2006), Fallon (2005b; 2005c; 2006a; 2006b), Fallon agus Walsh (2006), Kiernan (2003a), Schonfeld (2004d) agus Walsh (2005d; 2006c) ina measc. Rinne Corbett (2003), Hooper (2005; 2006) agus an NCNA (2003c; 2006) cur síos ar fhorbairt agus cur i ngníomh Gradam Ionaid Feabhais an NCNA. Foilsíodh taighde freisin ar chlár um fheasacht ar cháilíocht Fheighlíocht Leanaí Éireann (Hayes Murray, 2003), clár deimhniúcháin cáilíochta High/Scope (High/Scope Ireland, 2003; Madigan, 2005) agus próiseas creidiúnaithe Montessori (St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland, 2003a; 2003b).
- Border Counties Childcare Network (2004). *Border Counties Childcare Network Quality Assurance Programme*. Monaghan: Border Counties Childcare Network.
- Border Counties Childcare Network (2005). *Quality Development and Accreditation Programme – Element Two: Service Evaluation System*. Monaghan: Border Counties Childcare Network.
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- Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2006a). *Síolta – The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.
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- Duignan, M. (2005d). The National Quality Framework in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland: Structure and Content. Paper presented at the EECERA Conference, *Young Children as Citizens: Identity, Belonging, Participation*, Dublin, August/ September 2005.
- Duignan, M. (2006a). A Vision for the Future – Principles of Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland (in) Hayes, N. (Ed.) (2006). *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education and Care: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2005*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 166-173.
- Duignan, M. and Walsh, T. (2006). *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. Symposium presented at the EECERA Annual Conference, *Democracy and Culture in Early Childhood Education*, Iceland, September 2006.
- Duignan, M., Fallon, J., O'Dwyer, M., Schonfeld, H. and Walsh, T. (2006). *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland (in) Mitchell, P. (Ed.) (2006). *The Education Matters Yearbook 2006*. Dublin: Primary ABC, pp. 203-207.
- Fallon, J. (2005b). A Conceptual Framework of Young Children's Development and Learning in Ireland: The Implications for Quality in Early Years Care and Education (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 94-101.

Fallon, J. (2005c). The National Quality Framework in Early Childhood Care and Education (NFQ/ECCE) in Ireland: A Methodology. Paper presented at the EECERA Conference, *Young Children as Citizens: Identity, Belonging, Participation*, Dublin, August/ September 2005.

Fallon, J. (2006a). Informing the National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education (NFQ/ECCE): A Thematic Perspective on Child Learning and Development in Ireland (in) Hayes, N. (Ed.) (2006). *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education and Care: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2005*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 174-183.

Fallon, J. (2006b). The National Quality Framework in Early Childhood Education (in) Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2006). *Leading Early Years Education – Proceedings of November '05 Consultative Conference on Education*. Dublin: Irish National Teachers' Organisation, pp. 100-104.

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Hayes Murray, P. (2003). *Quality Awareness Programme - Participant's Handbook*. Wicklow: Childminding Ireland.

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Hooper, A. (2005). The National Children's Nurseries Association Centre of Excellence Programme: A Tool for Defining and Assessing Quality in the Irish Childcare System (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.). (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 112-120.

Hooper, A. (2006). A Tool for Defining and Assessing Quality in the Irish Childcare System. Paper presented at the OMEP (Ireland) Annual Research Conference, *In Celebration of Difference in the Early Years*, University College Cork, April 2006.

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IPPA, The Early Childhood Organisation (2003). Existing Quality Assurance Programmes. Paper presented at *Towards Quality Childcare Provision in Carlow*. Carlow County Childcare Committee Conference, Carlow, November 2003.

Kiernan, G. (2003a). *The Best for Children: Developing Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland*. Paper presented at the National Children's Nurseries Association Annual Conference, Dublin Castle.

Madigan, I. (2005). Defining, Assessing and Supporting Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education: The High/Scope Ireland Model (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 129-135.

Murphy, E. (2004). *Training Transition Transformation: The Study of an IPPA Quality Improvement Programme in Cork City and County*. M. Phil. Thesis. Cork: University College Cork.

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Schonfeld, H. (2004d). A Conceptual Framework of Young Children's Development and Learning in Ireland: The Implications for Quality in Early Years Care and Education. Paper presented at EECERA, *Quality Curricula: The Influence, Policy and Praxis*, Malta, September 2004.

St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland (2003a). Existing Quality Assurance Programmes. Paper presented at *Towards Quality Childcare Provision in Carlow* Conference, November 2003.

St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland (2003b). *Certification Process for Montessori Schools*. Dublin: St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland.

Walsh, T. (2005d). The National Quality Framework in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland – Context and Characteristics. Paper presented at the EECERA Conference, *Young Children as Citizens: Identity, Belonging, Participation*, Dublin, August/ September 2005.

Walsh, T. (2006c). The National Quality Framework for ECE. Paper presented at the OMEP (Ireland) Annual Research Conference, *In Celebration of Difference in the Early Years*, University College Cork, April 2006.

Defining Quality

Research relating to Defining Quality in the Irish context has also increased significantly in recent years. David (2005) documented the impact of research on how quality is defined in ECCE services. The Centre for Social and Educational Research has produced a report on the multiple perspectives on quality that exist in Ireland from a range of stakeholders, including children (Mahony and Hayes, 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2006c).

David, T. (2005). Questions of Quality: The Contribution of Research Evidence to Definitions of Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care Practice (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 22-29.

Donnelly, P. (2005b). Quality: Control or Autonomy? (in) Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (Ed.) (2005d). *'Questions of Quality' - Conference Proceedings*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, pp. 55-61.

Mahony, K. and Hayes, N. (2005). Power Relations in Defining Quality Early Childhood Education. Paper presented at the EECERA Conference, *Young Children as Citizens: Identity, Belonging, Participation*, Dublin, August/ September 2005.

Mahony, K. and Hayes, N. (2006a). *In Search of Quality: Multiple Perspectives*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

Mahony, K. and Hayes, N. (2006b). *CECDE Research Series 2006 - In Search of Quality: Multiple Perspectives: Executive Summary*. Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

Mahony, K. and Hayes, N. (2006c). Researching Quality in Irish Early Education (in) Hayes, N. (Ed.) (2006). *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education and Care: Proceedings of the OMEP (Ireland) Conference 2005*. Cork: OMEP (Ireland), pp. 193-206.

Assessing Quality

Assessing Quality in ECCE settings, especially the more intangible features of process quality, has remained an onerous and somewhat contentious issue. The possibility of using ECERS has been documented (Clifford, 2005; Hennessy and Delaney, 1999), although this tool has been

Cáilíocht a Shainmhíniú

Le blianta beaga anuas, tá méadú suntasach tagtha ar thaighde ar Cháilíocht a Shainmhíniú i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Rinne David (2005) cur síos ar thionchar an taighde ar conas a shainmhíniú an cháilíocht i seirbhísí COLO. Tháinig an tlonad um Thaighde Sóisialta agus Oideachais tuairisc faoi na peirspictíochtaí éagsúla ar cháilíocht in Éirinn ó raon páirtithe leasmhara, leanaí san áireamh (Mahony agus Hayes, 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2006c).

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Cáilíocht a Mheas

Tá na modhanna a úsáidtear chun Cáilíocht i Suímh COLO a Mheas, go háirithe modhanna a úsáidtear chun gnéithe níos dolámhsithe de cháilíocht an phróisis a mheas, deacair agus conspóideach. Rinneadh cur síos ar an bhféidearthacht ECERS a úsáid (Clifford, 2005;

critiqued by certain researchers (Douglas, 2005a; 2006f). The European Commission (2002) and the European Commission Network on Childcare (1996a) have produced quality targets and indicators for use across European Union member states. The role and impact of the Preschool Regulations in Ireland on the assessment of quality within services has been researched by Gleeson (2003), O’Kane (2004a; 2004b; 2005a; 2005b) and O’Kane and Kernan (2002).

Hennessey agus Delaney, 1999), cé go mbíonn roinnt taighdeoirí criticiúil faoin uirlis sin (Douglas, 2005a; 2006f). Tháirg an Coimisiún Eorpach (2002) agus Líonra Cúraim Leanaí an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh (1996a) spriocanna agus táscairí cáilíochta le bheith úsáidte i mballstáit an Aontais Eorpaigh. Rinne Gleeson (2003), O’Kane (2004a; 2004b; 2005a; 2005b) agus O’Kane agus Kernan (2002) taighde ar ról agus tionchar na Rialachán Réamhscoile in Éirinn ar mheasúnacht cáilíochta laistigh de sheirbhísí.

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Supporting Quality

In tandem with defining and assessing quality, the important issue of Supporting Quality in the Irish context has formed the subject of a number of pieces of research. Brennan (2005a), Duignan (2005c), Joyce (2006a; 2006b) and Joyce and Leyden (2005) suggest mechanisms to support quality in ECCE and school-age childcare settings, including play, the professional development of practitioners and action research. French (2000b; 2003) produced comprehensive guidelines for early years settings to support best practice. The role of the EOCP in supporting the quality of services has been documented by Moreau (2005), while Pobal (2006a) has published a report on the contribution of the CCCs and the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations to advancing the quality agenda.

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Ag Tacú le Cáilíocht

Le cois cáilíocht a shainmhíniú agus a mheas, bhain roinnt píosaí taighde leis an tsaincheist thábhachtach maidir le Tacú le Cáilíocht i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Molann Brennan (2005a), Duignan (2005c), Joyce (2006a; 2006b) agus Joyce agus Leyden (2005) meicníochtaí chun tacú le cáilíocht i suímh COLO agus i suímh chúraim leanaí do leanaí ag aois scoile, lena n-áirítear súgradh, forbairt ghairmiúil cleachtóirí agus taighde feidhmeach. D’éisigh French (2000b; 2003) treoirlínte cuimsitheacha do shuímh na mblianta luatha chun tacú le dea-chleachtas. Rinne Moreau (2005) cur síos ar ról an EOCP maidir le tacú le cáilíocht seirbhísí, agus d’fhoilsigh Pobal (2006a) tuairisc faoi conas a chabhraigh CCCanna agus Eagraíochtaí Deonacha Náisiúnta Cúraim Leanáí le cur chun cinn an chláir oibre cáilíochta.

