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Early Childhood
Services
Seirbhísí Luath-Óige

Early Childhood Services is the largest theme within the Second Edition of the Audit of Research, consisting of 401 publications. It contains nine sub-themes to ensure that publications are easily accessed within it. These sub-themes are:

- Censuses and Evaluations of Services [102]
- Guidance for Parents and ECCE Providers [24]
- National Policy and Provision [90]
- Local and Regional Policy and Provision [46]
- City/ County Childcare Committee Strategic Plans [33]
- School-based Provision and School-age ECCE [33]
- Childminding Provision [26]
- Men in ECCE [11]
- International Perspectives [36]

The theme contains a large number of publications relating to general evaluations of ECCE provision and delivery in Ireland over the past sixteen years. The range of publications is evidence of the general upsurge in investment in ECCE in recent years, which has had a subsequent positive impact on the quantity of research being produced.

Censuses and Evaluations of Services

A large number of publications relate to enumerating services through Censuses and Evaluations of Services. The largest category within this emanates from Area Development Management [now Pobal] (2000a; 2001; 2003), which carried out a census of provision in all counties. Many existing ECCE service providers and services have evaluated their own effectiveness (Barnardos, 2000b; 2000c; 2000d; Bradley, 2005; Canavan, 2002; County Wexford Partnership, 2000; Craig and Hayes, 1998; Craig *et al.*, 1998b; McGlone, 2003; Tallaght Partnership, 1995) and sustainability (ANMAR Consultants and R&D Consultants, 2004; Canal Communities Partnership, 2004; Morris, 1997; Murphy, 1994; Partas *et al.*, 2004; Tallaght Partnership, 2002) in recent years. Consultation with service users, such as parents and children, has also been a feature of a number of publications (Carlow CCC, 2005a; Gallo, 2004a; 2004b; Hanlon, 2006; Kane, 2005a). The South Eastern Health Board (1993; 1994; 1996a; 1997a; 1998) has also conducted a number of

Is é Seirbhísí Luath-Óige an téama is mó sa Dara hEagrán den Iniúchadh Taighde, le 401 foilseachán san áireamh ann. Cuimsíonn sé naoi bhfo-théama chun a chinntiú go mbeidh sé éasca teacht ar na foilseacháin sa téama seo. Is iad seo a leanas na fo-théamaí:

- Móráirimh agus Meastóireachtaí ar Sheirbhísí [102]
- Treoir do Thuismitheoirí agus Soláthraithe COLO [24]
- Beartas agus Soláthar Náisiúnta [90]
- Beartas agus Soláthar Áitiúil agus Réigiúnach [46]
- Pleananna Straitéiseacha Coistí Cúraim Leanaí Cathrach/Contae [33]
- Soláthar Scoilbhunaithe agus COLO ag Aois Scoile [33]
- Soláthar Feighlíochta Leanaí [26]
- Fir i COLO [11]
- Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta [36]

Cuimsíonn an téama seo líon mór foilseachán a bhaineann le meastóireachtaí ginearálta ar sholáthar agus seachadadh COLO in Éirinn le sé bliana déag anuas. Léiríonn raon na bhfoilseachán an borradh ginearálta atá tagtha ar infheistíocht i COLO le blianta beaga anuas, a raibh tionchar dearfach aige ar mhéid an taighde a táirgeadh.

Móráirimh agus Meastóireachtaí ar Sheirbhísí

Baineann líon mór foilseachán le seirbhísí a chomhaireamh trí mheán Móráireamh agus Meastóireachtaí ar Sheirbhísí. Is í Area Development Management [ar a dtugtar Pobal anois] a tháirg an chatagóir is mó laistigh de sin (2000a; 2001; 2003), mar rinne sí móráireamh ar an soláthar sna contaetha uile. Rinne a lán soláthraithe seirbhíse agus seirbhísí COLO meastóireacht ar a n-éifeachtúlacht (Barnardos, 2000b; 2000c; 2000d; Bradley, 2005; Canavan, 2002; Comhpháirtíocht Chontae Loch Garman, 2000; Craig agus Hayes, 1998; Craig *et al.*, 1998b; McGlone, 2003; Comhpháirtíocht Thamhlachta, 1995) agus a n-inmharthanacht féin (ANMAR Consultants agus R&D Consultants, 2004; Comhpháirtíocht Phobail na Canálach, 2004; Morris, 1997; Murphy, 1994; Partas *et al.*, 2004; Comhpháirtíocht Thamhlachta, 2002) le blianta beaga anuas. Bhí comhairliúchán le húsáideoirí seirbhíse, cosúil le tuismitheoirí agus leanaí, mar ghné roinnt foilseachán (CCC Cheatharlach,

reviews of its Child Care and Family Support services within its region.

2005a; Gallo, 2004a; 2004b; Hanlon, 2006; Kane, 2005a). Rinne Bord Sláinte an Oirdheiscirt (1993; 1994; 1996a; 1997a; 1998) roinnt athbhreithnithe ar a sheirbhísí Cúraim Leanaí agus Tacaíochta Teaghlaigh laistigh dá réigiún.

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Rinneadh go leor oibre chun Treoir a sholáthar do Thuismitheoirí agus Soláthraithe COLO, rud a léiríonn an t-éileamh leanúnach ar thacaíocht. Táirgeadh a lán de na foilseacháin seo chun tacú le suímh agus le cleachtóirí agus na suímh sin á reáchtáil agus á n-eagrú acu (Líonra Cúraim Leanaí Chontaetha na Teorann [BCCN], 1997; 2000b; CCC an Chabháin, 2001; CCC Chill Dara, 2003c; CCC Liatroma, 2005a; Bord Sláinte Cheantar an Tuaiscirt *et al.*, 2002b; O'Sullivan agus Gibbons, 1997). D'fhoilsigh Barnardos (1999), NCNA (2003a), Bord Sláinte Cheantar an Tuaiscirt *et al.* (2002a) agus Bord Sláinte an Iarthair (2002) treoir do thuismitheoirí faoi conas suímh chúraim leanaí ar ardchaighdeán a roghnú. Cuireann foilseacháin eile treoir níos sonraí ar fáil do shuímh, faoi shaincheisteanna cosúil le beartais agus nósanna imeachta a fhorbairt (CCC Luimnigh *et al.*, 2003) agus conas a chinntiú go mbíonn éagsúlacht agus comhionannas mar ghnéithe bunúsacha an chleachtais laistigh de shuímh (OMC, 2006b; Pobal, 2006b).

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National Policy and Provision

As detailed in the Introduction, there has been an upsurge in the amount of National Policy and Provision in Ireland in recent years. A number of government departments and agencies have produced a range of policy documents relating to ECCE in recent years, including Area Development Management (1999; 2000b; 2002; 2005), the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (1994), the Department of Equality and Law Reform (1994), the DJELR (1998a; 1999c; 2000a; 2000c; 2001a; 2004a) and Pobal (2006a; 2006c). National policy has also been informed by the preparation of a number of position papers (IPPA, 1998) and

Beartas agus Soláthar Náisiúnta

Mar a mhínítear sa Réamhrá, tá borradh mór tagtha ar líon an Bheartais agus an tSoláthair Náisiúnta in Éirinn le blianta beaga anuas. Tháinig roinnt rann agus gníomhaireachtaí rialtais raon cáipéisí beartais a bhaineann le COLO le blianta beaga anuas, lena n-áirítear Area Development Management (1999; 2000b; 2002; 2005), an Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta (1994), an Roinn Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí (1994), an DJELR (1998a; 1999c; 2000a; 2000c; 2001a; 2004a) agus Pobal (2006a; 2006c). Thug ullmhú roinnt páipéar seasaimh (IPPA, 1998) agus roinnt aighneas (CCC Fhine Gall, 2005c) ag raon eagraíochtaí agus

submissions (Fingal CCC, 2005c) from a range of organisations and agencies. The sub-theme also includes the initial national Preschool Regulations (Department of Health, 1996a; DHC, 1997a) and the revised regulations published in 2006 (DHC, 2006). Both national (Aontas, 2003; Irish Business and Employers Confederation, 1998; Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2002; NESF, 1997; 2005; National Women's Council of Ireland, 2005) and international organisations (European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit, 1999; OECD, 2004a; 2004b) have provided reviews of policy and practice relating to ECCE in Ireland. Policy and provision from an economic perspective has formed the focus of a number of publications (Chevalier *et al.*, 2006; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1999; Hyland, 1998; Newman, 2005). A range of national voluntary childcare organisations have contributed to the policy and practice debate by publishing documents from their perspective, including the IPPA (1997; 1998) and the NCNA (1990; 1998; 2002b; 2003c; 2006). Research from the DES (2006b), Douglas (1994), Gaynor (1997), Gilligan (1991), Hanrahan (2002), Hennessy and Hayes (1997), Kernan (2000) and McKenna (1990; 1994) provides an insight into the policy and practice development processes in Ireland in recent years.

gníomhaireachtaí treoir don bheartas náisiúnta freisin. Cuimsíonn an fo-théama seo na Rialacháin Réamhscoile náisiúnta tosaigh (an Roinn Sláinte, 1996a; DHC, 1997a) agus na rialacháin leasaithe a foilsíodh i 2006 (DHC, 2006). Rinne eagraíochtaí náisiúnta (Aontas, 2003; Irish Business and Employers Confederation, 1998; Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2002; NESF, 1997; 2005; National Women's Council of Ireland, 2005) agus idirnáisiúnta (European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit, 1999; OECD, 2004a; 2004b) araon athbhreithnithe ar bheartas agus cleachtas COLO in Éirinn. Bhí beartas agus soláthar ó pheirspictíocht eacnamaíoch mar fhócas roinnt foilseachán (Chevalier *et al.*, 2006; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1999; Hyland, 1998; Newman, 2005). Chuir raon eagraíochtaí cúraim leanaí deonacha leis an díospóireacht bheartais agus chleachtais trí cháipéisí óna ndearcaí féin a fhoilsiú, lena n-áirítear an IPPA (1997; 1998) agus an NCNA (1990; 1998; 2002b; 2003c; 2006). Tugann taighde ón DES (2006b), Douglas (1994), Gaynor (1997), Gilligan (1991), Hanrahan (2002), Hennessy agus Hayes (1997), Kernan (2000) agus McKenna (1990; 1994) léargas ar na próisis a úsáideadh chun beartais agus cleachtais in Éirinn a fhorbairt le blianta beaga anuas.

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Local and Regional Policy and Provision

ECCE provision in Ireland has developed largely in response to local need, and the infrastructure in place to promote development is regionally based. Consequently, considerable documentation has emerged relating to Local and Regional Policy and Provision. Many publications are commissioned pieces of research from regional and local organisations in order to inform policy and practice development. The development and support of Community Playgroups in Ireland forms a large part of this section, with organisations and individuals such as Brennan (2003), the Community Playgroup Initiative (2003), Community Playgroups Together (2003), Daly (2003), French (2005; 2006b), French and Daly (2005), the Katherine Howard Foundation (2005), Spring *et al.* (2005) and Whyte *et al.* (2006a; 2006b) focusing on this aspect of service provision. Other research focuses on the challenge of providing integrated and coordinated services at a local level for parents, including Bernard (1998b), Bernard *et al.* (1998), Community Consultants Ltd. (2006) and the Working Together Group (1998). The Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project (1996; 1998; 2000) and Walmsley and Fitzpatrick (2003) have produced much research on the provision of quality childcare in rural areas. Other researchers have focused more particularly on the needs of specific groups in local areas, such as drug users (Ballymun Partnership Childcare Funders Quality Assurance Group, 2005), those affected by disadvantage (McKeown and Fitzgerald, 1997) and those seeking after-school provision (Cross-Border Women's Network and BCCN, 2000).

Beartas agus Soláthar Áitiúil agus Réigiúnach

D'fhorbair soláthar COLO in Éirinn den chuid is mó mar fhreagra ar riachtanas áitiúil, agus tá an bonneagar atá ann chun forbairt a chur chun cinn bunaithe go réigiúnach. Mar sin, tá go leor cáipéisí foilsithe a bhaineann le Beartas agus Soláthar Áitiúil agus Réigiúnach. Is píosáí taighde ó eagraíochtaí réigiúnacha agus áitiúla iad cuid mhaith de na foilseacháin, a coimisiúnaíodh chun treoir a thabhairt d'fhorbairt beartais agus cleachtas. Baineann a lán píosáí taighde sa chuid seo le forbairt agus tacaíocht Grúpaí Súgartha Pobail in Éirinn, le heagraíochtaí agus údair cosúil le Brennan (2003), Community Playgroup Initiative (2003), Community Playgroups Together (2003), Daly (2003), French (2005; 2006b), French agus Daly (2005), Katherine Howard Foundation (2005), Spring *et al.* (2005) agus Whyte *et al.* (2006a; 2006b) ag díriú ar an ngné seo den soláthar seirbhíse. Díríonn taighde eile, lena n-áirítear Bernard (1998b), Bernard *et al.* (1998), Community Consultants Teo. (2006) agus an Working Together Group (1998), ar an dúshlán a bhaineann le seirbhísí comhtháite agus comhordaithe a sholáthar do thuismitheoirí ar leibhéal áitiúil. Tháinig an Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project (1996; 1998; 2000) agus Walmsley agus Fitzpatrick (2003) a lán taighde faoi chúram leanaí ar ardchaighdeán a sholáthar i gceantair tuaithe. Dhírigh taighdeoirí eile ar riachtanais ghrúpaí sonracha i limistéir áitiúla, cosúil le húsáideoirí drugaí (Ballymun Partnership Childcare Funders Quality Assurance Group, 2005), daoine faoi mhíbhuntáiste (McKeown agus Fitzgerald, 1997) agus daoine ag lorg soláthar i ndiaidh na scoile (Cross-Border Women's Network agus BCCN, 2000).

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City/ County Childcare Committee Strategic Plans

The advent of a local infrastructure for ECCE services in Ireland has led to the publication of CCC Strategic Plans by all thirty-three committees. These detail the aims and strategies of each of the CCCs from their establishment and were guided by the DJELR to meet the requirements of the relevant programmes.

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Pleananna Straitéiseacha Coistí Cúraim Leanáí Cathrach/Contae

Mar thoradh ar bhunú bonneagair áitiúil do sheirbhísí COLO in Éirinn, d'fhoilsigh an trí choiste cúraim leanáí is tríocha Pleananna Straitéiseacha CCC. Déanann siad cur síos mionchruinn ar chuspóirí agus straitéisí gach CCC ó bunaíodh é, agus thug an DJELR treoir dóibh chun cabhrú leo riachtanais na glár ábhartha a bhaint amach.

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School-based Provision and School-age ECCE

Large numbers of four-year-olds and virtually all five-year-olds are attending the infant classes in primary schools and increasing numbers are accessing after-school services. School-based Provision and School-age ECCE is a significant factor in ECCE and has attracted considerable attention. Griffin *et al.* (2005) and Hayes and Kernan (2001) provide an insight into policy and practice within the infant classes. The Early Start initiative within schools is also the subject of a number of publications (DES, 2002c; Educational Research Centre, 1998). The INTO (1995d; 2000a; 2003a) has published a number of policy documents relating to provision with primary schools. The provision of school-age childcare has also become the focus of a large amount of research, enhanced by a report from the DJELR on the issue (Childcare Directorate, 2005). The BCCN (2003b), the County Childcare Committees Support and Development Workers Network (2005), Holt and Pugh (2004), Moloney (2005; 2006a; 2006b) and the NCNA (2000a) provide guidance on the establishment and running of after-school services. A number of publications detail the nature of provision within after-school services (Hennessy, 2000; Kildare CCC, 2006c; Pugh, 1999), some reporting on children's perceptions in this regard (Hennessy, 2001; Hennessy and Donnelly, 2005). McCormack has documented a number of models in Ireland for providing after-school care (McCormack, 2006a; 2006b; 2006c).

Soláthar Scoilbhunaithe agus COLO ag Aois Scoile

Tá líon mór leanaí ceithre bliana d'aois agus beagnach na leanaí uile cúig bliana d'aois ag freastal ar na ranganna naíonán i mbunscoileanna agus tá níos mó agus níos mó de na leanaí sin ag baint úsáide as seirbhísí iar-scoile. Is fachtóir suntasach i COLO é an Soláthar Scoilbhunaithe agus COLO ag Aois Scoile agus tá spéis mhór ann. Tugann Griffin *et al.* (2005) agus Hayes agus Kernan (2001) léargas ar bheartas agus cleachtas sna ranganna naíonán. Déileálann roinnt foilseachán (DES, 2002c; an tIonad Taighde Oideachais, 1998) leis an tionscnamh Tús Luath i scoileanna. D'fhoilsigh an INTO (1995d; 2000a; 2003a) roinnt cáipéisí beartais a bhaineann le soláthar i mbunscoileanna. Bhí soláthar cúraim leanaí do leanaí ag aois scoile mar fhócas líon mór taighde freisin, cuidithe ag tuarascáil ón DJELR faoin tsaincheist (An Stiúrthóireacht Cúraim Leanaí, 2005). Tugann an BCCN (2003b), Lónra Oibríthe Tacaíochta agus Forbartha na gCoistí Cúraim Leanaí Contae (2005), Holt agus Pugh (2004), Moloney (2005; 2006a; 2006b) agus an NCNA (2000a) treoir faoi bhunú agus reáchtáil seirbhísí iar-scoile. Déanann roinnt foilseachán mionchur síos ar chineál an tsoláthair laistigh de sheirbhísí iar-scoile (Hennessy, 2000; CCC Chill Dara, 2006c; Pugh, 1999), le roinnt acu ag tuairisciú dhearcáí na leanaí ina leith (Hennessy, 2001; Hennessy agus Donnelly, 2005). Scríobh McCormack faoi roinnt samhlacha a úsáidtear in Éirinn chun cúram iar-scoile a sholáthar (McCormack, 2006a; 2006b; 2006c).

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Childminding Provision

One of the most prevalent forms of ECCE services in Ireland is Childminding Provision. Childminding Ireland has produced guidelines and indicators for its membership in relation to quality provision (Childminding Ireland, 2000b; 2003; 2004; Murray, 2001a; 2001b; 2003; 2004). A number of publications provide guidance to parents in relation to choosing a quality childminder to meet their ECCE needs, such as Barnardos (1999), Cavan CCC and Monaghan CCC (2003) and Leitrim CCC (2003c). Specific guidelines and a support structure for

Soláthar Feighlíochta Leanai

Is é ceann de na cineálacha is coitianta seirbhíse COLO in Éirinn ná Soláthar Feighlíochta Leanai. Tá treoirínte agus táscairí táirgthe ag Feighlíocht Leanai Éireann dá baill maidir le soláthar ar ardchaighdeán a chur ar fáil (Feighlíocht Leanai Éireann, 2000b; 2003; 2004; Murray, 2001a; 2001b; 2003; 2004). Tugann roinnt foilseachán, cosúil le Barnardos (1999), CCC an Chabháin agus CCC Mhuineacháin (2003) agus CCC Liatroma (2003c) treoir do thuismitheoirí chun cabhrú leo cúramóir leanai ar chaighdeán ard a roghnú le freastal ar a

childminders have been introduced in recent years (Childcare Directorate, 2003; OMC, 2006a). CCCs have been proactive in developing materials of interest and use for childminders under their remit (Galway CCC, 2003a; 2003b; 2003f; 2003g; Kildare CCC, 2003b; Roscommon CCC, 2003b).

riachtanais maidir le COLO. Cuireadh treoirlínte sonracha agus struchtúr tacaíochta ar fáil do chúramóirí leanaí le blianta beaga anuas (An Stiúrthóireacht Cúraim Leanaí 2003; OMC, 2006a). D'oibrigh CCCanna go díograiseach chun ábhair a bheadh spéisiúil agus úsáideach do na chúramóirí leanaí ina réigiúin a fhorbairt (CCC na Gaillimhe 2003a; 2003b; 2003f; 2003g; CCC Chill Dara, 2003b; CCC Ros Comáin, 2003b).

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Men in ECCE

The changing nature of the early years sector is evidenced by the inclusion of a sub-theme relating to Men in ECCE. A conference hosted by Kilkenny CCC in 2004 focused specifically on this theme, with contributions from a range of presenters (Fine-Davis, 2004b; Kieran and O'Neill, 2004; Pettersen, 2004; Russell, 2004; Schonfeld, 2004c). The European Commission Network on Childcare (1990) produced a policy document on the role of men in ECCE. Other researchers such as Fine-Davis *et al.* (2005) and Peeters (2005) have addressed the issue from an equality perspective.

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Fine-Davis, M. (2004b). Childcare in Ireland – Evolving Policy/ Future Directions. Paper presented at *Men in Childcare, Caring for the Future Conference*, Kilkenny, June 2004.

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Fir i COLO

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International Perspectives

The final sub-theme under Early Childhood Services relates to International Perspectives on the provision of ECCE. The European Commission and its agencies have been responsible for producing a number of policy documents related to the services provided across its member states (European Commission, 1996; 1999; European Commission Directorate General for Education, Training and Youth, 1995; European Commission Network on Childcare, 1990; 1994; 1996b; 1996c; Karlsson, 1995; Meijvogel and Petrie, 1996). Researchers have also published data related to cross national comparisons between Ireland and international jurisdictions relating to the range and quality of services (Clavero, 2004; David, 1999a; 1999b; Hennessy and Flaherty, 2001; Horgan and Douglas, 1995a; 1995c; Murray *et al.*, 1997; Ojala, 1997; 2000; Olmsted *et al.*, 2001; Sundlov, 2002). The OECD has placed a large emphasis on ECCE services across member states in recent years and a number of reviews by the international organisation have focused directly on Ireland (OECD, 1991; 2004a; 2004b), while others have taken a cross-national perspective (OECD, 1996; 1998; 1999).

Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta

Baineann an fo-théama deireanach faoi Sheirbhísí Luath-Óige le Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta ar sholáthar COLO. Bhí an Coimisiún Eorpach agus gníomhaireachtaí leis freagrach as roinnt cáipéisí beartais a eisiúint a bhain leis na seirbhísí curtha ar fáil ar fud a bhallstát (European Commission, 1996; 1999; European Commission Directorate General for Education, Training and Youth, 1995; European Commission Network on Childcare, 1990; 1994; 1996b; 1996c; Karlsson, 1995; Meijvogel and Petrie, 1996). D'fhoilsigh taighdeoirí sonraí freisin a bhain le comparáidí trasnáisiúnta idir Éire agus dlínsí idirnáisiúnta i leith raon agus cáilíocht na seirbhísí a cuireadh ar fáil (Clavero, 2004; David, 1999a; 1999b; Hennessy agus Flaherty, 2001; Horgan agus Douglas, 1995a; 1995c; Murray *et al.*, 1997; Ojala, 1997; 2000; Olmsted *et al.*, 2001; Sundlov, 2002). Tá béim mhór leagtha ag an OECD ar sheirbhísí COLO trasna ballstát le blianta beaga anuas agus rinne an eagraíocht idirnáisiúnta roinnt athbhreithnithe dírithe ar Éirinn (OECD, 1991; 2004a; 2004b) agus roinnt athbhreithnithe le peirspictíocht trasnáisiúnta (OECD, 1996; 1998; 1999).

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