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Newsletter of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education

CECDE

No. 2, October 02

Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of the CECDE Newsletter! I hope you found our last issue informative and useful. However, if you wish to be removed from the list of recipients – just let us know.

You will note that we found a name for our newsletter: **Alana**. It refers to the Irish term of endearment for a small child, 'a leanbh'. It expresses our view that children should be valued, nurtured and supported throughout childhood.

In this issue you will find reports on the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform: "Quality Childcare & Lifelong Learning" Conference & Launch and our submission to the Curriculum Development Unit of the Department of Education.

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

22 October:
Childcare Conference for
Service Providers
Salthill, Galway

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

Contact us

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Centre for Early Childhood
Development and Education

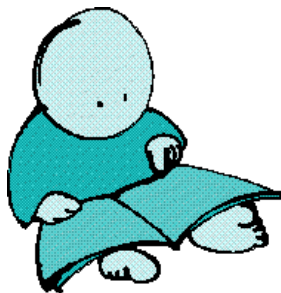
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The Team

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What's new?

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OECD Thematic Review

Following the completion of the "Background Paper" the OECD review of Early Childhood Education in Ireland continues with a panel of experts visiting us in November. For further information on this Department of Education and Science Initiative please contact the Centre.



[Employment Opportunities](#)

Become part of our children's future.

This is an exciting opportunity for those with the appropriate qualifications and experience to join a new educational initiative. This project is funded under the National Development Plan and paves the way for an Early Childhood Education Agency as outlined in the Government's White Paper. In line with this new start-up project, the Centre now wishes to appoint the following personnel:

Assistant Director

The Assistant Director will support the Director in the implementation of the agreed Work Programme over a three-year period. The Assistant Director will also supervise a comprehensive research strategy to inform the work of the Centre, on the basis of this Work Programme.

This is a senior position and a great opportunity for an energetic and highly motivated individual. Applicants should possess a post-graduate degree in a relevant discipline, a minimum of five years research experience, including published work. Applicants will also demonstrate highly developed interpersonal and communications skills. Knowledge of the early education sector (formal and informal) is important. Management experience and supervisory experience of post-graduate students is desirable.

Salary: €60,013

Information Officer

The Information Officer will source, maintain, process and disseminate information relevant to the activities of the Centre. He/She will also provide information to stakeholders and the general public using a variety of traditional and electronic media.

The applicant should possess a professional qualification in the area of research, information or communication with an excellent knowledge of modern communication and information technology. Highly developed interpersonal and communications skills are essential for the position.

Salary: €49,156

The positions are offered on a three-year fixed term contract basis with a probationary period of 6 months.

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education is an equal opportunities employer.

The Work Programme and Job Descriptions are available by contacting the CECDE.

Informal enquires to: Heino Schonfeld.

Please send applications with an up to date CV by post or email to arrive no later than 14th October 2002 for the attention of Maureen Kelly at:

Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education

St. Patrick's College

Drumcondra

Dublin 9.

Tel: 884 2225 or 884 2164

Email: early.childhood@spd.dcu.ie

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Launch of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education

The Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Noel Dempsey, T.D. will launch the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education on Thursday, October 31st, 2002 at 2.30 PM.

The event will take place in Belvedere House, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

We are celebrating on that day that the Centre is established and operational with most of its team on board. In addition we hope to introduce the new logo of the Centre and present its new home, the Gate Lodge in St. Patrick's College.

Invitations to the launch will be sent shortly. However if you wish to attend, please contact the Centre.

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[Quality Childcare and Lifelong Learning](#)

The National Coordinating Childcare Committee launched the document “**Quality Childcare & Lifelong Learning**” on September 24th & 25th at an international conference in Galway.

This “Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector” is the result of an intensive consultation process with many stakeholders, practitioners, providers and policymakers.

It sets out a clear pathway of progression for professional development in the childcare sector through education and training. It emphasises the need for education and training to be flexible, multidisciplinary and learner focused while retaining a child centred ethos.

The document will be submitted to the NQAI (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) and the national Awards Councils of FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) and HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council) to inform these bodies on education and training for the sector.

Copies of "Quality Childcare and Life Long Learning: A Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development in Early Childhood Care and Education" are available from the Childcare Directorate of the Minister's Department (Lo-Call 1890 20 90 30). An electronic version will shortly be available on the Department's website.

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Submission to the Curriculum Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science

The following are the recommendations of a much more comprehensive submission to the Curriculum Development Unit on the promotion of anti-racism and interculturalism in Early Childhood Education.

For the full submission please contact the Centre directly.

Recommendations

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education would like to make the following recommendations based on the information and arguments contained in this submission:

Policy Issues

- The Department of Education should acknowledge in principle the need for an anti-bias curriculum for early childhood care and education. This must then be developed, resourced and implemented immediately to ensure all pupils of ethnic minorities have equal access to a fair and comprehensive curriculum.
- All Early Childhood Education training courses should recognise the cultural distinctiveness of Travellers and other minority groups and should include anti-bias education that permeates the entire curriculum taught.
- The formulation of an anti-bias curriculum is of urgent necessity and long overdue at this time. This curriculum must underpin all early educational activities and endeavours and inform the methodologies used. This curriculum is necessary in all settings, regardless of pupil intake, to develop life-long attitudes respecting and appreciating cultural diversity.
- Educational supports in the early years and in the infant classes for ethnic minorities are lamentable at present. This accentuates the isolation of such minorities and increases their vulnerability in the school context. Services must be expanded to meet the needs of all minorities nationally, not for selected groups as is current practice.
- Provision of early childhood education for profoundly deaf children must be enhanced beyond provision in one school in Dublin. Tuition must be provided in their first language i.e. Irish Sign Language while other forms of oral communication can be developed subsequent to this.
- Early childhood education must be complemented by an overall societal education to challenge the prejudices and biases inherent in many adults. The home, and thus parents and the local community, are the most powerful influence on the child in the formative years so educational institutions cannot be a panacea for this societal ill.
- Delivery at all levels of early childhood education must be mainstreamed and the practice of segregated provision based on cultural difference, which can make sense in certain situations and contexts, should be phased out in favour of mainstream provision. However, choice must be afforded to minority groups to choose the context for their children's education.

School Organisation

- The overall culture and ethos of the educational setting must exude an anti-bias approach, from management through to the practitioner on the ground. The ethos must affirm the school's commitment and valuing of every member of the school community. This must include not only formal policies but permeate all aspects of the setting's life, including the hidden curriculum.

Curriculum and Teaching

- Resources and materials are needed to implement an anti-bias, intercultural curriculum. These must be representative of the backgrounds of all children, providing a diversity of ethnic and cultural images. Consequently, education can be conducted in a climate of tolerance and appreciation of minorities.
- Children, whose mother tongue is not English, are in urgent need of early intervention in the pre-school years to ensure they have the skills to express their own culture and to reduce their apartness from the dominant culture. Intensive provisions must become available in these early years and in the infant classes of the primary school to enhance ability in the mother tongue and in English language learning.

School Personnel and Parental Involvement

- The cultural diversity of childcare personnel should reflect the diversity of its clientele at all levels of delivery in the service. Quotas and positive discrimination could be utilised in the recruitment of such personnel.
- Pre-service and In-career development in anti-bias principles and approaches must be provided for all early school years practitioners on an on-going basis to ensure familiarity and compliance with the latest research and methodologies.
- Parental and community involvement are prerequisites of success at this stage of development and education. The system must embrace all cultures and backgrounds and respect and cherish them equally.

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