



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Tusla
***- Supporting the engagement of
children in formal education***

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Tusla: The Child and Family Agency

The National Educational Welfare Board is now a service under the new Child and Family Agency. The agency's services include a range of universal and targeted services for children and families:

- Child protection and welfare services
- Educational Welfare Services
- Psychological Services
- Alternative care
- Family and locally-based community supports
- Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based services

www.tusla.ie

Supporting the ‘seldom heard’ child

Policies to support children at risk of early school leaving mainly situated in:

1. The Department of Education and Skills:

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) strategy

2. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs: broader policy framework for children and youth services

3. Tusla: Child and Family Agency

National Statistics

- One-third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25 years, with young people aged between 10 and 24 years representing 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million
- Just over 90% of young people completed second level education in 2014, with half progressing into third level education, and a fifth into vocational training
- In 2013, 14% of young people aged 15-24 were living in consistent poverty
- 21% of children reported going to school or to bed hungry in 2010 (N=16,000)

Sources: Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) ***National Youth Strategy 2015-2020***. Dublin; Currie C et al. eds. ***Social determinants of health and well-being among young people. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey***. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 6).

Definition of School Failure

From a **systemic perspective**, school failure occurs when an education system fails to provide fair and inclusive education services that lead to enriching student learning. At the **school level**, school failure can be defined as the incapacity of a school to provide fair and inclusive education and an adequate learning environment for students to achieve the outcomes worthy of their efforts and ability. From an **individual perspective**, school failure can be defined as the failure of a student to obtain a minimum level of knowledge and skills, which can at the extreme lead to dropping out of school.

Source: Field, S., M. Kuczera and B. Pont (2007) *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*. Education and Training Policy, OECD, Paris.

Reasons for Early School Leaving

- **A gradual process of alienation and disengagement – can begin in Primary school with poor attendance.**
- **Mismatch between needs of child and demands of formal schooling**
- **Academic underachievement- low literacy levels**
- **Streaming – ability grouping.**
- **School Climate- Teacher / pupil relationships.**
- **Negative school experiences (isolation, rejection, poor interaction with peers, bullying)- critical in young persons decision to leave school early.**
- **Young people leave or disengage from school for a wide variety of reasons at different stages of their schooling.**

Source: Byrne. D. & Smyth E. (2010) *No Way Back? The Dynamics of Early School Leaving*. ESRI Dublin

Relationship between Poverty and Educational Disadvantage

- High rates of early school leaving
- Teenage pregnancy
- Negative self-esteem
- Distress
- Apathy
- Depression
- Powerlessness
- Criminality
- Dependence on welfare or illicit earnings
- Sub-optimal physical and mental health

Source: T. Kellaghan, Weir, S., Ó hUallacháin, S. & Morgan, M. **Educational Disadvantage in Ireland** (1995).

DEIS (Opportunity) – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools



- Plan focuses on addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years).

Supports available to schools under the DEIS Programme

- Reduced pupil:teacher ratio in Band 1 primary schools in urban areas with most disadvantage
- Allocation of administrative principal on lower figures than generally apply in primary schools in urban areas
- Additional capitation funding based on level of disadvantage
- Additional funding for schools books
- Access to the School Meals Programme
- A range of professional development supports.
- Access to numeracy / literacy supports and measures at primary level
- Access to Home School Community Liaison services
- Access to the School Completion Programme
- Enhanced guidance counselling provision at post primary level
- Access to planning supports
- Provision for school library and librarian support in post primary schools with most disadvantage
- Access to the Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied in Post-Primary

Educational Welfare Services

Child and Family Agency

Maria Tobin


Senior Manager, Integrated Services

Nov, 2015

HSCL, SCP and EWS

A Memorandum of Agreement between the NEWB, (now EWS) and the Department of Education and Skills outlines the NEWB's obligation to develop:

“...a single, strategic approach reflecting equally the nature of and strengths of each of the services, including the National Educational Welfare Service to address school attendance, participation and retention.”



The three strands- Home, School, Community Liaison, School Completion Programme and Educational Welfare Service are committed to maximising:

- Attendance
- Participation
- Retention

Support for All

- Universal and preventative work supporting all children and families to engage, participate, attend and achieve in school
- DEIS schools have additional resources in acknowledgement of additional need
- Needs of pupils are met as a result of school policies, practice and DEIS supports

Support for some

- Students whose needs are not met under universal and preventative supports. They have additional difficulties in the areas of learning, engagement, behaviour, attendance, or punctuality
- Schools already have protocols for targeting the students needing more support than others. EWS service strand personnel (HSCL/SCP/EWO) provide specific support to those named pupils and their families

Support for few

- A small number of students in every school present with more complex needs
- They may be in receipt of targeted support but their needs are not being met
- The situation has escalated and the EWS service strand staff need to provide proportionate support to children and families in crisis
- Pupils at serious risk
- A multi-disciplined, tailored, cohesive and structured response is required

Whole School Approach

The work of EWS, in relation to APR, is done in collaboration with existing school supports and structures:

- School Management
- Care Team
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team
- Guidance Counsellor


Parents

The EWS recognises parents as the primary educators and as an invaluable resource:

- Relationships are nurtured (HSCL home visits)
- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their own and their child's education
- Educational and personal development programmes organised for parents in school
- Parents are involved in shaping school policies

HSCL Scheme- Objectives

- To maximise active participation in learning process, particularly of at- risk children
- To promote active cooperation between home, school and community agencies
- To raise parental awareness of their own capacities to enhance their children's educational progress

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- To enhance children's uptake from education
 - Attendance, Participation, Retention, Progression and Life-long learning
 - Dissemination of positive outcomes throughout system



Home Visitation

- Support, rapport, information and encouragement
- Welcoming face of school
- Building trust
- Identifying potential parent leaders
- Building relationships that will support learning environment



Dr. Concepta Conaty, founder of HSCL Scheme

- Core vision of empowerment, participation, liberation
- Power of parents as the most important anchor in child's life; as prime educator, whose involvement has potential to radically transform how we educate
- Building sustainable local communities-altruism, cooperation, inclusiveness

Community

EWS personnel work collaboratively with family support services in the community (statutory and voluntary):

- Referrals
- Meitheal
- Training
- Maximising recourses



**"Is ar scáth a chéile a
mhaireann na daoine"**



Overall Aim of the School Completion Programme



A programme that aims to have a significant positive impact on levels of young people's retention in primary and second level schools and on numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or equivalent.

School Completion Programme – Current Provision

- 124 SCP projects operating in clusters comprising primary and post-primary schools targeting approximately 37,000 children, approximately 700 out-of-school
- 470 primary schools
- 224 post-primary schools



8 Principles of School Completion

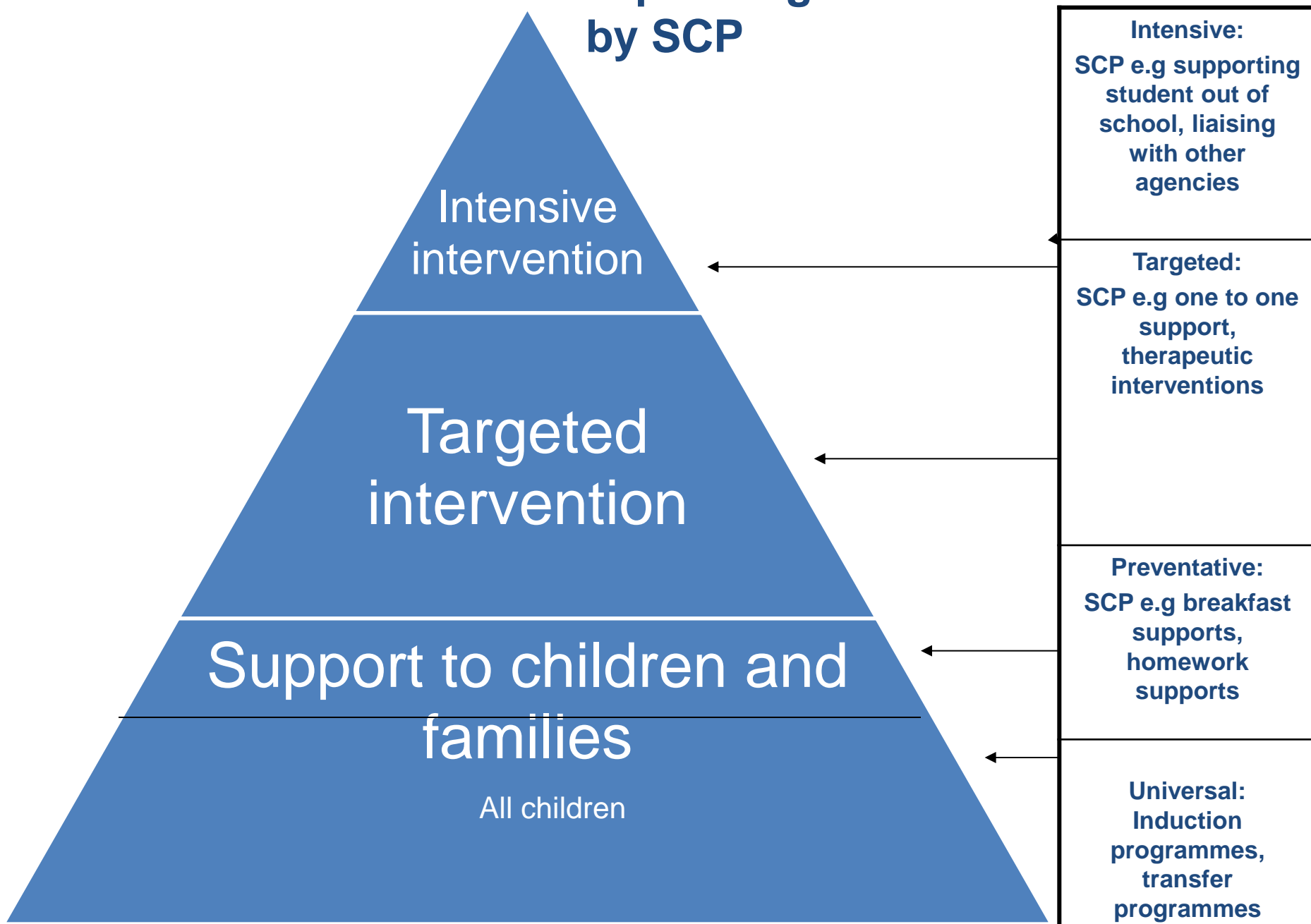
1. Principle of Partnership
2. Young person centred
3. Preventative in nature
4. Bottom – up approach
5. Inclusion based on agreed set of criteria
6. Whole school approach married with Tailoring
7. Breaking the Pattern of ESL is key to Programme
8. Supports: In – School
After School
Out-of-School
Holiday Provision



Specific Aims of the School Completion Programme

- To **retain** young people in the formal education system to completion of the Senior Cycle, or equivalent.
- To **improve the quality of participation and educational attainment** of targeted children in the education process.
- To bring together **all relevant local stakeholders** (home, school, youth, community, statutory and voluntary) to tackle early school leaving.
- To offer **supports** in primary and post-primary schools towards the prevention of educational disadvantage.
- To encourage young people who have left mainstream education to **return** to school.
- To **influence** in a positive way policies relating to the prevention of early school leaving in the education system.

Current interventions responding to children's needs by SCP

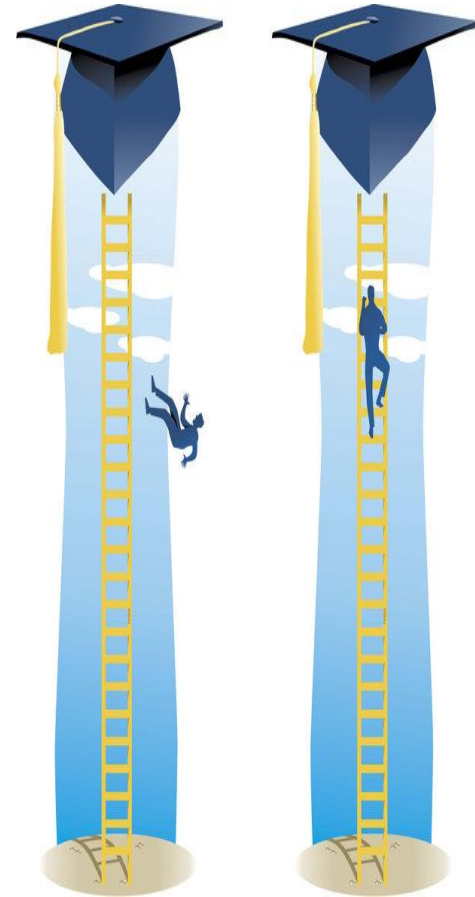


Identifying young people at risk of ESL: Most commonly used indicators in SCP



- Poor attendance
- School refusal
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural issues
- Family History of Early School Leaving
- Chronic learning difficulties (literacy and numeracy)
- Family circumstances
- Member of minority ethnic group
- Economic stress
- Poor educational attainment
- Lack of social skills
- Substance misuse (in family and /or young person)
- Lack of participation / engagement in school
- Lack of family support
- Experience of trauma (bereavement / separation etc.)
- Involvement of outside agencies
- Lack of self-esteem
- Socially withdrawn

Source: *SCP Guidelines on Identifying Young People at Risk of Early School Leaving (2006).*



SCP Components of Prevention and Education Support

- In-school
- After-school
- Out-of-school
- Holiday time



ESRI Review of SCP – time for reform?

Independent review of SCP published October 2015

- Positive overall, noting in particular the flexible response SCP provides within the system.
- Governance structures regarded as weak and in need of reform
- SCP needs to be further embedded within DEIS school planning and evaluation
- Clustering arrangements needs to be reviewed, but aligned with any changes recommended by the DEIS review
- Funding should be allocated through the identification of need

Perceived Outcomes

- Improvement in primary attendance levels and retention
- Difficulty in assessing ‘impact’ of SCP
- Perceived outcomes:
 - Successful transition from primary to post-primary
 - Positive school experience
 - Increased junior cycle retention
 - Improved attendance



Success.

- The proportion of early school leavers in Ireland in 2013 (8.4%) compares favourably to the EU-28 average of 12% and ranks Ireland as eleventh in the list of EU member states.
- As part of the EU2020 agenda on education and training, Ireland has adopted a target of further reducing early school leaving to no more than 8% by the year 2020.
- Of the 2008 entry cohort, **96.89% sat the Junior Certificate exams** in 2011 or 2012 and **90.56% sat the Leaving Certificate exams** in 2013 or 2014.
- The average retention rate for DEIS second level schools continues to increase and is at a rate of **82.1% for the 2008 cohort**, this is an increased rate from 68.2% for the 2001 cohort.
- For 2008, there is approximately a 3% difference in the Junior Certificate rate between DEIS and non-DEIS schools. The Leaving Certificate retention rate for the 2008 cohort in DEIS schools is just over 82%, which is around 8.5% lower than then the national average rate.

Source: Retention Rates of Pupils in Second-Level Schools 2008 Entry Cohort (February 2015).
Department of Education and Skills

What are the challenges?



Challenges



- Difficult budgetary climate
- Recession still impacting on family economic / social circumstances – wider and deeper
- Growing youth population, more young people staying in school – additional strain on current and future resources.
- Alternative progression routes squeezed (e.g. Apprenticeships, Youthreach, FAS courses, tight labour market).
- Traveller / Roma education