



Review of DEIS: Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education

Proceedings of a Joint Conference:
INTO and Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's
College, Drumcondra

5 December 2015

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Guest Presenters

Minister Aodhán Ó Riordáin
*Minister of State, Department of Justice and Equality and Arts,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht*

Daire Keogh
President, St Patrick's College

Carol Coulter
Director Childcare Law Reporting Project

Pat Courtney
Principal Teacher, North William Street

Panel Guests

Eibhlin Byrne
Director of Educational Welfare (Interim), Tusla

Caitriona O'Brien
*Principal Officer, Social Inclusion, Department of Education and
Skills*

Bernie McNally
Assistant Secretary, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Anne Colgan
Centre for Effective Services

Administration Team

Claire Garvey (INTO)
Ann McConnell (INTO)
Joe O'Reilly (INTO Intern)
Valerie McLoughlin (St. Patrick's College)

Compilation and Editing

Deirbhile Nic Craith
Director of Education and Research, INTO

Paul Downes
*Director, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's College,
DCU*

Foreword

These proceedings of the Conference on Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education – A review of DEIS, is a timely contribution to the policy debate on supporting pupils at risk of exclusion, their families and their teachers. The Minister for Education and Skills announced a review of DEIS – Delivering Equal Opportunities in Education – in 2015. DEIS was introduced in 2005 and has remained largely unchanged since, against the backdrop of major increases in child poverty since the economic crash. There is no doubt that many aspects of the DEIS support programme have been successful according to teachers and independent research. However, there are many pupils in our schools who are at risk of social exclusion, and who are not attending schools participating in the DEIS support programme. Any review of DEIS must consider how all pupils at risk of social exclusion are supported, while recognising the need to commit concentrated resources for those schools at highest need due to intergenerational poverty. Schools must not be penalised for their successes in DEIS. Any review of DEIS must involve a commitment to providing additional resources, rather than shifting resources between schools. A related concern with poverty includes the need to more systematically address child hunger in school to ensure children’s needs are not falling through the gaps, as well as to recognise the impact of the growing problem of homelessness and living in temporary accommodation on children’s education and wellbeing.

Schools cannot address issues of social exclusion on their own. Schools are but one arm of a comprehensive policy landscape which also addresses health, welfare and housing issues, all of which contribute to pupils’ success in school. The challenge at policy level is to invest in all dimensions and to ensure that pupils are supported seamlessly across the different dimensions of their lives. Nevertheless, schools play a crucial role in enabling pupils to reach their potential. Any review of DEIS must ensure that the missing supports and resources are provided, including in particular, resources to support the mental health, social and emotional well-being of pupils. Resources should also be provided through the family support outreach services of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. Psychological and therapy services are not currently well provided for due to insufficient investment. In addition, teachers’ well-being must be supported. The promised sabbatical leave scheme for teachers, part of the original DEIS programme, was never implemented. A review of DEIS provides an opportunity to develop a sabbatical scheme and to consider additional means to support teachers in DEIS schools.

The complex, multifaceted nature of children’s needs under the burden of the injustice of poverty requires a multifaceted response from State services. This multidisciplinary dimension to supports is reflected in the keynote presentations and range of workshop themes examined in the conference. A multidisciplinary team approach needs to be a central part of the new DEIS strategy.

Delegates to the conference attended by over 300 people were privileged to hear Dr Carol Coulter, Director of the Childcare Law Reporting Project. Her experience of meeting vulnerable children in the courts highlights the inadequacies in our system in relation to supporting children at risk and the need for a multidisciplinary team approach to meeting complex, overlapping needs, including trauma, addiction, mental health and family support services. Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, Minister of State, in formally opening the conference spoke of his own experience of being a principal teacher in a DEIS school, while Pat Courtney, currently a principal teacher in an urban DEIS school, outlined the achievements and frustrations

experienced on a daily basis in a DEIS school in a speech which received a standing ovation from the audience to illustrate the importance of his concerns.

The workshop presentations covered a range of issues and approaches vital to the new DEIS strategy: the family support outreach approach of social care workers as part of a multidisciplinary team in Familibase, Ballyfermot (Fiona Kearney), Preparing for Life's Early Years Home Visiting Programme (Noel Kelly, Northside Area Partnership), a community early years learning initiative for working with families including a literacy and parenting programme (Josephine Bleach, National College of Ireland), a focus on a national strategy for hunger prevention in school (Sinead Keenan, Healthy Food for All), educational needs and gaps in services for the Traveller and Roma Communities (Hilary Harmon, Pavee Point) and input from Mary Keane, National Coordinator of the National Behavioural Support Service on emotional and behavioural supports in schools.

Our thanks are due to all of the speakers for their insightful contributions to the conference. The commitment expressed by both Professor Daire Keogh, President, St Patrick's College and by Emma Dineen, INTO President, to supporting teachers working with poverty and social exclusion is acknowledged. We are also grateful to the panel contributors for accepting the invitation to respond to comments and questions from the delegates. The work of the organising team and workshop facilitators in ensuring a successful conference is also greatly appreciated.



Sheila Nunan
General Secretary
INTO



Paul Downes
Director
Educational Disadvantage Centre

October 2016

Part I

Introduction to Conference

In considering the DEIS review, currently under way by the Department of Education and Skills, it is vitally important that a range of views and experiences inform the process. The DEIS review should be a holistic review focusing on the comprehensive nature of DEIS supports, the criteria for inclusion in DEIS, and how pupils from socio-economically excluded backgrounds in schools not in DEIS can be supported. We welcome the commitment to establish an interdepartmental group for this review.

The number of children in Ireland at risk of poverty or social exclusion not only increased between 2008 and 2011, but registered the highest increase of all of the EU. There are significant challenges for pupils who are asylum seekers, particularly for those children living in direct provision. A more recent challenge is the increase in the number of children who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation. Addressing the effects of poverty and intergenerational exclusion in schools has to be supported by wider social policies that address socio-economic exclusion in society.

The ESRI's report on *Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS*¹ states that concentration of disadvantage has a negative impact on pupils' progress in schools and social class mix of schools matters. This raises the question whether learning resources should be directed more intensively at areas of concentrated disadvantage. The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is of the view that urban and rural disadvantage are quantitatively and qualitatively different (Weir and McAvinue, 2013²). While academic achievement may not be as great a challenge in rural schools, nonetheless there is socio-economic exclusion that impacts on pupils' holistic development in those schools that must be recognised and targeted for supports.

In comparison to previous programmes to support schools in meeting the needs of pupils at risk of not succeeding in school, DEIS had a more robust approach to target-setting, planning and evaluation. However, it is important to recognise that successes in DEIS built on the cumulative impact of previous programmes. Evaluations of DEIS have tended to have a narrow focus on achievement or outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and on attendance and retention of pupils in school. A drive for better outcomes cannot be used to obscure or downplay the need for resource inputs. The DEIS review must involve a positive commitment to invest further resources rather than become an exercise in taking from some DEIS schools to give to others. A strength of a previous programme, *Breaking the Cycle*, was in foregrounding the role of the arts for engaging marginalised pupils.

¹ Smyth, E., McCoy, S., Kingston, G. (2015) Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS, Research Series Number 39: The Economic and Social Research Centre

² Weir, S. & McAvinue, L. (2013). The Achievements and Characteristics of Pupils attending Rural Schools participating in DEIS. Dublin: Educational Research Centre

While the DEIS programme has been broadly welcomed, there are a number of issues to be addressed in the next DEIS support programme. For example, capitation grants urgently need to be increased as the current grant is insufficient to meet the full running costs of DEIS schools. These schools lack access to parental, community and corporate fundraising that supplement the income of many non-DEIS schools.

The revised teacher-pupil ratios introduced in 2012, coupled with the loss of some 'legacy' posts and other specialist posts such as the resource teachers for Travellers, have led to an increase in class size in DEIS schools. There is an urgent need for a reduced PTR for all DEIS schools. The recent reduction in the general PTR was not reflected in the PTR for DEIS Band One schools, an issue that has to be addressed as part of the DEIS review.

The Home School Community Liaison Programme and the School Completion programme play a valuable role in supporting children and families in DEIS schools. Regrettably rural DEIS schools lost their HSCL coordinators as part of the general cutbacks in education. This needs to be addressed in the review of DEIS.

Though not a part of the DEIS support programme, the importance of early intervention prior to starting school cannot be ignored. *Early Start*, a pre-school early intervention programme, was established twenty years ago to support children in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, and continues to be a very valuable education support. High quality pre-school education is considered to have a long term benefit for pupils, particularly for those children at risk (Sylva et al, 2008)³. The possibility of extending *Early Start* to all DEIS Band One schools should be considered as part of the review.

It is unacceptable that some children still come to school hungry (Downes & Maunsell, 2007)⁴ an issue of even more concern in light of the dramatic increases in child poverty since the economic crash. Breakfast clubs and after school clubs provided as part of the School Completion Programme assist in addressing this challenge, as does the school meals programme. However, a more systemic solution is required if hunger in schools is to be eliminated to ensure children do not fall through the gaps.

Support for literacy and numeracy programmes and the professional development available to teachers accompanying the introduction of particular literacy and numeracy programmes are welcomed by teachers. However, there are schools currently not in DEIS that would benefit from professional development support around the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

An explicit focus on pupils' mental health, well-being and their social and emotional development has been missing from the DEIS support programme and from evaluations. For some children, behavioural challenges arising from unmet social and emotional needs are the greatest barrier to their learning. The effect of the economic crash on children's and families' mental health makes the need to rectify the omission from the previous DEIS strategy all the more urgent. Multidisciplinary teams in and around schools are a feature of many European school systems and key to addressing complex needs of children and their families at risk of social exclusion, including their mental health needs.

³ Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Sammons, P. and Melhuish, E. (2008) 'Towards the transformation of practice in early childhood education: the effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) project', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 38:1, 23 - 36

⁴ Downes, P & Maunsell, C. (2007). *Count Us In. Tackling Early School Leaving in South West Inner City Dublin: An integrated response*. Commissioned report for the South West Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) with the support of funding by the South Inner City Local Drugs Task Force.

A longitudinal qualitative study is required to capture the impact of targeted supports on pupils' social and educational success over time. Education is a long term endeavour. We should invest in early years and primary education. That is where we sow the seeds to enable every child to reach his or her potential.

This conference is an opportunity to discuss how the system should better support pupils at risk of not succeeding in school as a result of poverty and socio-economic exclusion regardless of where they are located. There are schools, not currently in DEIS, who should be, given their profile of pupils. A mechanism to do this fairly and transparently needs to be developed.

However, in addition to demanding increased or more targeted resources we must also examine current provision and explore the potential for more effective deployment of those resources. There has been considerable progress over recent decades. A new DEIS support programme must build on the successes of the current programme.

We must also remember that schools alone cannot combat the effects of poverty and social exclusion. That is why it is essential that all individuals, organisations and institutions with a commitment to equality and social justice redouble their efforts to ensure that the adoption of social and economic policies that address socio-economic exclusion wherever it occurs in society.

Part 2

Proceedings of the Joint Conference

Review of DEIS

Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education

5 December 2015

I

Opening Addresses

Minister Aodhán Ó Riordáin

I am not going to give you a party political broadcast or that Government is great, why aren't you more grateful kind of speech, which I have over there! Because I do remember this time four years ago, and I'll say this publicly for the first time, the only time I felt like walking away from the whole government thing and my party, was the DEIS situation in 2011. I remember this period of time, when budget time used to be early December, between early December and Christmas time, I really thought about packing it in because I didn't think I could go back to the school which I loved and to the people that I work with who are so inspiring and look them in the face. Thankfully that situation resolved itself and it will be obvious later as to why that situation resolved itself.

But things haven't been easy the last few years and there is no point in saying that they have been. Decisions have been made that have been very difficult and the decisions that have been made have impacted greatly on the areas in which you work and the children that you teach and the children that you care about very much in your communities. So I am not, by any way, going to stand here and say that the garden is rosy but I am going to say that there is a turn in the economy and now we have an opportunity to make value judgements as to what kind of society we want to live in. Is this a society that we want to live in and is this the society where the best ambition you can come up with is the best in the world to do business! Or do we believe in some kind of a republic where we use the tax receipts and the opportunities that we have to invest in the areas of children and the education prospects for the future. And I obviously would believe in the latter and think you will too.

But let me talk a little bit about the nature of equality for a second, because whenever I come to an INTO event, I know someone always stands up and says that around the world they do things differently and invest in education differently and they do. But maybe we are always going to fail to an extent in the Irish education system because maybe the Irish education system is set up to fail. Maybe the Irish education system perpetuates inequality and we are only ever going to scratch the surface. Mark Candon, who is here, and I know you all know and I know very well and the very first thing he said to me when I became principal is to make sure that every decision you make has a child centred in the decision. So you may have decisions that you make that aren't popular and you may have rows with staff or parents or Board of Management but, at least, if at the centre of every decision you ever make is a child then you know nobody is ever going to question your integrity. But we don't do that in the overall education system.

If you go to Finland, which is often spoken of as the great progressive education force in the world and their literacy statistics are fantastic - you go to Finland, which I have done, I went over there on a nice little junket from the Education Committee of the Oireachtas. We worked very hard to address the education system in Finland and you meet all these politicians - centre-

right, centre-left, far-right, far-left, - all of them say that 'the fundamental thing that underpins our education system is equality and we all believe in it'. But equality isn't some kind of fluffy add-on luxury word that we talk about after we talk about the other stuff, equality underpins everything they do. So in Finland you don't have a multiplicity of schools, you don't have what you have here, a population the size of Manchester with 4,000 schools. You have one school district, one school. No parental choice which I think really irks some people here in Ireland that they would have no choice - one school district, one school. No boys, girls, primary, secondary, Catholic, Protestant whatever denomination school, everybody goes to the one school. Private education banned, fundraising banned as they don't need to fundraise. Isn't it ridiculous that a school needs to fundraise or a hospital? Other countries that come here think it is pathetic that we have raffles in schools. Teachers, they mightn't have the same pay-scale as they have here in Ireland, but the respect they have in Finnish society is remarkable. But that is the system that they have. There is no parental choice but you should see the schools - palaces.

Inevitably what happens in Ireland is that you compete against each other. I know that any teacher here would know what school they are competing with - as I know the school we used to compete with. You are all thinking of it now and you all think they have it sussed. Their uniforms are better. The parents seem to love them much more. I used to go to these conferences, like you guys, and there would always be somebody with a slide show and people saying, 'oh they all love him, parents love him'. Bursting at the door there is a queue outside with parents trying to get in. 'He's wonderful', and always on the news saying how wonderful he is and their junior infants all play trombone. Amazing and you're going "crying", but there is always a school that people walk past. People walk past my school to go to another school and they walk past that school to get to another school and people walk past that school to get to another school because, inevitably, our system is based on competition and who fails then? The poor kid, the Traveller kid, the migrant kid and the kid with special needs. That is inevitably what happens. So what I am saying here today is that, maybe, collectively that is underpinned by the Constitution. By the way, the Constitution was written in order to protect the rights of the minority. It was written that way to ensure that those of a religious minority have their religious freedom upheld in the education system. That was justifiable at that time, because there was a sense that we had a religious domination potentially in Ireland. But maybe, that is an elevated concept because maybe what has happened as a result of that, indirectly and again not deliberately, is the creation of a system where we are all in competition with each other and children aren't at the centre of that. And then children inevitably fail.

Can I just say what you are doing every day is absolutely incredible. I miss teaching every day because I miss the essential truth and lack of pretence of the working day. There is a huge amount, as you may have noticed, of pretence and fakeness attached to politics. There is nothing like that attached to the individual day that you struggle through sometimes, and other times you don't, because of the work that you do. I can remember going to conferences - we used to go to these leadership conferences and there would be people there from all different types of schools and inner city primary school principals would be over in the corner comparing stories of how terrible their schools were or this, that, or the other, or this funny story or that funny instance. And I remember we had a conversation once about how you deal with a situation where a child comes up to you and says why isn't teacher A speaking to teacher B. I remember we all started laughing and I was asked - it was about how we interact with children - I just said, I just lied to him, and a gasp came from the entire assembled audience of these wonderful teachers from all of these middle class schools as to why would you lie to a child. I said I have the children every day - why would you want to burden a child with the reality of two teachers not talking to each other? Why does that child need to know anything about it and again how could you lie to a child (gasps). I said, every day I go into my school and I tell them that they are the best kids in the world, from the best area in the world, with the best families in the world, in the best community in the world and some days I believe it and some

days it is true. But some days somebody gets shot dead. Some days it is a massive issue in the community and some days you don't believe it. Some days there is a burning car outside the gate of your school and some days you wish you could teach in these fluffy middle class schools that everybody seems to have a great time in. But some days it is true. So the bad days that you go through, you have to say it even though you don't believe it, because the kids need it, because what you have collectively created is a safe place for them to be and to be the best that they can possibly be because they need education and literacy and they need empowerment more than anyone of us will ever realise.

So what is government doing, says you to your man up there with his red tie on. We have to realise absolutely that the child that comes to your care at age four already has massive challenges. The idea that a school can fix everything is outdated and wrong. It can't. By the time they come under your care there is a massive gulf between a three year old, as Josephine Bleach will constantly tell you, in the report of 1995 on educational disadvantage in Ireland, the average three year old from a welfare dependent family has about one third fewer language capacity of the three year old from the professional family. So before they come anywhere near you there is already a massive gap. So how do we change that? Well, we have to roll out what we have begun to do in the Preparing for Life model (that Noel Kelly is here from), the Northside Partnership, the Young Ballymun model, CDI Tallaght model, and other such models from across the country to look at the very disadvantaged areas in our country and to look at issues of empowerment, issues of oral language, issues of literacy and to not look to blame. Sometimes I think governments or society seeks to blame, - to blame the parents for the issues that they are going through but every parent, I believe, looks into the cot at the early stage of the child's life and wants absolutely what is best for that child but sometimes things get in the way. Maternal depression is a big problem. In some parts of the city one quarter of mothers suffer with depression, and isolation. They turn to substance abuse and all that cycle of disadvantage and it begins again.

So early intervention is what the government has to do and to believe in and to look at the research and to follow the research. Look at what they say in the States. I read recently that in New York the prison service looks five, 10, 15 years hence at their capacity needs, how many cells they are going to need, how many prison spaces they are going to need. How they find that out? They look at the literacy rates of 10 year olds. The prison service of New York looks at the literacy rates of 10 year olds to find out what their prison capacity will need to be in 15-20 years' time. So that is the challenge that we have.

What I would say in conclusion is that yes, we have to do more, yes, DEIS has to be funded and protected and enhanced. Yes, there are schools around the country who, to be honest, maybe 20 years ago when Breaking the Cycle happened and when some schools didn't want to be considered a Breaking the Cycle school and wanted to stay out of that, the idea of being designated a disadvantaged school would have been a nightmare idea but that situation has changed now as they can see the advantages of DEIS. Yes, we have to invest more, yes, we have to do more and yes we have to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to teach - which is all that teachers ever want to do - and that we take the entirety of the school community as being part of the solution and not individual elements of it as part of the problem. And yes, we have to invest more in parents and the early years. But mainly we have to step back from the whole thing and say, 'is this system always going to perpetuate inequality?' We can't take the literacy approach of Finland or any other jurisdiction without taking their value system as well. Maybe that is the biggest challenge that we have. But that is why we are here. That is why each of us got up this morning - a cold, wet December morning when we really should be Christmas shopping - and came to this place to talk about what we talk about Monday to Friday, and we do it on a Saturday morning. It is testament to your belief system and the value system that you have that even though you work and live this every day of your lives when you, probably more

than anything else, need a break on a Saturday morning for your family duties or whatever, that this conference is oversubscribed and a waiting list for people who wanted to be here to talk about this. I think that is a testament to you and I also think it is a testament to the INTO because whatever else you might discuss or give out about or row about there is no more successful body, even more successful than the IFA than the INTO!

In concluding my remarks, I don't know if there are any teachers who are here that are gay, or single parents, or an unmarried parent or divorcee but last Wednesday night thanks to the support from the INTO we managed to amend Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act. It was a proud day, four years in the making, but that is the sort of organisation that the INTO is. It took on the issue before anybody else did and I think that is the kind of organisation that you have – it is successful and speaks the truth and constantly comes back to the issue of social exclusion and disadvantage. So thank you for listening to what I had to say and not throwing anything at me, I do appreciate it and enjoy the rest of your conference.

Professor Daire Keogh, President, St Patrick's College, Dublin City University

The Irish National Teachers Organisation and St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, were established within a decade of each other, and for a century and a half we have worked together in the cause of education. Vere Foster famously observed that, 'nothing is more important to the welfare of a nation than the education of its children', and we have both taken this maxim as our mission. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of generations of committed teachers, disadvantage and exclusion remain a feature of education, just as they were in our founders' time. It is precisely on that account, however, that we have assembled today to reflect upon issues on Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education, and to renew our commitment to the principle access and equity. The timing of the conference is particularly apt for St Patrick's College, too, as we join with the Church of Ireland College of Education, and the Mater Dei Institute, within Dublin City University. This is an opportunity for new beginnings, and for the DCU Institute of Education to declare its commitment to educational opportunity and to a continued partnership with the INTO.

This Joint National Conference of the INTO and the Educational Disadvantage Centre is unique in a number of ways. With over 300 attendees, it is the largest face to face policy and practice dialogue in the country for the DEIS review consultation process. Significantly, this dialogue includes a wide range of key stakeholders, including teachers, researchers, politicians, community and family groups, as well as senior civil servants directly responsible for drafting key elements of this core social policy agenda for the education system in Ireland today. The cross-sectoral focus of this conference illustrates not only the complexity of this area, bridging a range of government departments, policy and research domains. It also gives direct expression to the national and international research and advocacy work of the Educational Disadvantage Centre which has offered leadership on key issues – multidisciplinary teams in and around schools, supports for emotional distress, trauma and mental health, family support outreach for early intervention, prevention of hunger in school, Travellers' and ethnic minorities' rights, marginalised children's voices, lifelong learning. These key issues are to the forefront for development of the new DEIS strategy in Ireland and other strategies in this area beyond Ireland.

Prevention of poverty and social exclusion in education is not only a major and indispensable component of Irish government policy over decades now. In an EU context, this is one of only two EU2020 *headline* targets for all of education – a headline target focusing on prevention of early school leaving. The vital importance of this DEIS policy review can be further appreciated through recognition that it will be the first *national* policy response to the issue of poverty and social inclusion in education since the economic crash, given that the first DEIS strategy was established in 2005 and the Area Based Childhood initiatives are local area responses.

I would especially like to thank the convenors of today's conference, Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith, Assistant General Secretary of the INTO, and Dr Paul Downes Director of Educational Disadvantage Centre in St Patrick's College.

Sheila Nunan, INTO General Secretary

My task is to introduce the keynote speaker and I am delighted to do that. I want to thank both the Minister, Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, and Professor Daire Keogh, President of St. Patrick's College, for their remarks. It is interesting that the Minister spoke very positively, and rightly, about progress in relation to equality in this particular year. Inequality, exclusion and poverty are at the heart of what we are discussing here at this conference today. There is evidence that the excellent positive work being done by teachers, particularly in DEIS schools, is showing that progress has been made.

The Irish Times this week highlighted that social class is the key factor that drives children's participation, retention and transfer into third level. I raise this point, because as trade unionists, we are facing into a very important general election and while we have a range of issues about which we are already lobbying and campaigning over the last year, we also, as citizens, have a huge responsibility to look at education as a common good and how it is funded. There is an attraction around tax reductions for all of us in our pay packets and we want to see that, but we have to be very alert to, and very clear about the implication of tax reductions on public expenditure. I think INTO will be making that point very clear. We will be auditing manifestos as they are published to see what extent the new economy will be about achieving that common good by proper investment in education. We must get the balance right. We have to see an increase in public expenditure and that has to be balanced against tax reductions. So I would urge you to be very alert, yourselves and your families and your school communities, and to look very closely in the course of the general election how that balance can be achieved. As trade unionists we are aware of poverty and inequalities, and issues like low pay and minimum wage. You meet parents every day who are unemployed or under-employed or employed on less than a living wage. We do our best with the children but it's hard to close the gap. INTO will be playing its part in motivating, supporting, advocating and campaigning on issues that hopefully will assist in closing that gap of poverty and inequality in our schools. We are championing once again the cause of educational disadvantage.

This morning we are particularly happy to have further evidence to confirm the marginalisation and exclusion of some of our children in our schools. Dr Carol Coulter will be speaking to you presently. Carol was a journalist with the Irish Times for a number of years and was their legal affairs editor before, in 2012, she became the Director of the Childcare Reporting Project. This was a hugely important project that lifted the lid and put a spotlight on issues relating to childcare - issues that you, yourselves, have been grappling with, in terms of child protection legislation, in terms of Children First and in terms of reporting concerns. Carol will present an analysis of what she and her colleagues have seen in the course of their study in the Childcare Reporting Project. We're delighted that we have representatives here from Tusla and from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs because if there is one issue that teachers regularly raise at our meetings is their frustration that, on paper we talk about coordination and integration of services, but in practice, in our classrooms, the reality is very different. We very much welcome the Tusla and DCYA representatives here today as, it is only through conversations and dialogue that we can develop protocols for all of us employed by the State to try to close the gap of poverty and inequality and work meaningfully together. There is nothing more traumatic, I think, for both the school, and obviously for the parents of the child concerned, than the process of a child being subject to a care order. I think what Carol will tell us will be very insightful. I look forward to her address and on your behalf would like to welcome Dr Carol Coulter.

2

Presentations

Social exclusion and child protection

Carol Coulter

One of the lesser-known recommendations to come from successive reports on the failures of the State to protect vulnerable children, ranging from the Ryan report on institutional care to the Shannon/Gibbons report on child deaths, was one to bring transparency to the courts which make decisions on child protection. Until 2012, not only were all such proceedings held behind closed doors, but no-one involved in them could disclose to any third party what had taken place.

Thus the reasons why the HSE, now the Child and Family Agency, brought proceedings to take children into care, the kind of evidence presented, the outcomes of such cases, all remained hidden from public view, apart from the occasional scandalous failure that broke through when a child died or a serious instance of sexual abuse was revealed in the criminal courts.

That changed with the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2007, which outlined the basis for changing the in camera rule in these cases. The details of who could attend cases in order to prepare reports was made in Regulations under that Act which named a number of academic and research institutions. The Child Care Law Reporting Project was set up in November 2012 under these Regulations, allowing reports to be written subject to maintaining the anonymity of the families and children concerned. Part of those Regulations state that the Minister must be satisfied the information published “is likely to provide information which will assist in the better operation of the Act, in particular in relation to the care and protection of children.”

Therefore, the purpose of the reporting project is two-fold: to bring transparency to child care proceedings and to collect information “which will assist in the better operation of the Act”. We fulfilled the former by attending child care proceedings and writing reports of individual cases, published at intervals on our website; and the latter by collecting data on all cases mentioned during our attendance, collating and analysing it in the statistics published in two interim and now our Final Report. We also collected our observations on the conduct of cases and some of the issues arising from them and made recommendations on improving the child protection system, to fulfil our mandate of assisting in the better operation of the legislation in relation to the care and protection of children.

To date we have published approximately 300 case reports, ranging in length from about 400 words to 20,000 words, in 11 quarterly volumes. Volume 3 of 2015 is currently on our website, Volume 4 of 2015 will be published before the end of the year and the others are all available on the Archive page. A number of the case reports are successive reports published in different volumes on the same case as it wends its way through the system, but the majority are reports of one particular hearing during the progress of a case, which might have a number of hearings, and illustrate the work of the court and of the social workers, guardians ad litem, lawyers and others in child care proceedings. They are reports at a given point in the case, and may not include its eventual outcome.

Some reports are composite reports of a number of cases heard on the same day, usually short hearings which involve the renewal of Interim Care Orders or reviews of existing Care Orders. The reports also include cases where children are returned to their families, cases where the court orders services or plans for children on the application of their guardians *ad litem*, and various other aspects of the work of the court in over-seeing the child protection system. They are not all bad news stories, and throughout the life of the project so far we have seen many instances where the intervention of the Child and Family Agency has helped families deal with the issues that were having a negative impact on their children.

We have collected and analysed data on 1,272 cases, 1,194 in the District Court and 78 in the High Court, where secure care cases and those concerning disputes about country of jurisdiction are heard. Based on the fact that, according to the latest available figures, there are 3,664 children in court-ordered care (and 2,666 in voluntary care) we estimate that we have captured data on approximately 30 per cent of all the cases that go before the child care courts. (This is only an approximate figure, as not all the children currently in care have featured in court appearances in the past three years, and some who have featured in such cases are likely to have left care since.)

Child protection law

I think it would be useful to outline briefly the law relating to child protection. The central piece of legislation is the Child Care Act 1991, along with its various amendments. However, it must be stressed that this, like all our legislation, is subordinate to the Constitution, which guarantees the rights of the family and, since the enactment of the Children's Amendment, the specific rights of children.

In this, our child protection legislation exists within a very different context to that in the neighbouring jurisdiction of England and Wales, where there is no written constitution and no constitutional protection for the family. This has inevitably marked their child protection legislation and practice, and there taking a child into care is not necessarily seen as a last resort. However, in our legal system it is a last resort, and Section 3 (2)(c) of the Child Care Act 1991 states that it was in the best interests of children that they grow up within their families.

The same Act obliges the State, through the Child and Family Agency (CFA), to identify children in need of care and protection and to supply that. This includes various forms of family support. If this fails to protect the child, the CFA should seek an appropriate order in the courts. The orders provided for in the Act are an Emergency Care Order, an Interim Care Order, a Care

Order and a Supervision Order. An Emergency Care Order is granted when there is “an immediate and serious” risk to the child. It is important to stress that the risk must be both immediate and serious. A serious risk that has continued for some time is not enough for an Emergency Care Order, and nor is a perceived immediate risk which is not serious. For example, a concern about the parentage of a blond Roma child, while perhaps of immediate concern, would not be so serious as to warrant an Emergency Care Order.

An Interim Order is made when “there is reason to believe” that the safety or welfare of a child is at serious risk. It is envisaged as a precursor to a Care Order, providing for the safety of the child while the case for a “full” Care Order is prepared, which usually involves a number of assessments of the child and the parent or parents. A full Care Order (until the child is 18 or “for such shorter period as the court may determine” is made when the court is “satisfied” (as distinct from “has reason to believe”) that abuse or neglect of a child, as described above, has existed, exists at the time of the proceedings or is likely to occur in future, and that only a full Care Order will avert that risk.

A Supervision Order is made when the risks outlined above exist, but not to a sufficient degree to justify removing the children from their home, and the CFA considers that it is desirable that the child be visited in his or her own home to ensure that their welfare is being promoted and any necessary medical or other interventions are taking place.

The insertion of a specific amendment into the constitution protecting the rights of children, though voted by the electorate in 2012, only finally cleared the last hurdle of legal challenges earlier this year, and it is too early to say what impact it will have on child protection practice.

The cold words of the law do not really convey just how demanding child protection proceedings are, and how difficult it can be to achieve a balance between the needs of a child to develop and grow and the need to respect the rights and feelings of parents who have often suffered multiple deprivations. Social work academics Brid Fetherstone, Sue White and Kate Morris have written: “Social workers are charged with entering the lives and moral worlds of families, many of whom have routinely experienced disrespect, and have longstanding histories of material and emotional deprivation ... As the research evidence suggests, service users often feel fearful and powerless in their interactions with social workers, and this feeds into encounters that may be characterised by misunderstandings at best and aggression at worst.” We have seen this spill over into court proceedings, which are sometimes very adversarial, and where parents clearly feel victimised.

Teachers are likely to have better relationships with vulnerable families, but even then they undoubtedly sometimes encounter suspicion from people whose experience of official society has been uniformly negative.

Data

The data we assembled from attending court since 2012 demonstrates just how deprived materially, emotionally and educationally, most of the families who come before the child care courts are. While attending the proceedings we noted various items of information about the

family, the child and the case on data sheets, which were then processed to produce our statistics.

We noted the main reason for seeking the order in question. While the emphasis in the legislation is on the situation of the child, where there was a lot of evidence on parental behaviour we noted this. For example, a parent's drug or alcohol addiction was very likely to have led to a child's neglect or abuse. We considered it important to note the issues relating to the parents when they are presented as very serious factors in the case. Unless the underlying causes of much of the neglect and abuse experienced by children are understood we cannot develop a societal response to tackling them.

Parental disability emerges as a major factor in one in six cases. The vast majority of these involved cognitive disability or mental health problems, and sometimes both. Drug and alcohol abuse feature in one in five cases, so together they accounted for almost 40 per cent of cases. A heading of "multiple" problems can be assumed to include drug and/or alcohol problems, domestic violence and mental or cognitive issues.

Some forms of physical or sexual abuse, and some extremes of neglect, are so serious that they overshadow all other issues and they were presented as the major issue in our statistics. But it cannot be assumed that substance abuse or parental disability was absent in these cases. The total number of cases where some form of abuse featured as the main issue was 159, or 13 per cent of cases, of which almost four per cent related to sex abuse.

The parents

While in many of the cases there were two respondents cited in the proceedings, that is, both parents, and in some cases three or more where there was more than one father, this did not mean the parents were parenting together. This was only the case in one in five cases, with 11.3 per cent of respondents being married and 9.4 per cent cohabiting. Over 20 per cent of respondents were described as divorced or separated, the majority of whom had been in cohabiting relationships which had come to an end. Four per cent were widowed, in which we included those who had lost a cohabiting partner, and a similar number were separated by prison or hospitalisation. The largest group of respondent parents, 38.3 per cent, were single, meaning that the child had, up to the time of the application, been parented by just one parent, almost always the mother with no significant involvement from the father.

This means that, of the respondents whose status we were able to establish, 74 per cent were parenting alone. Parenting alone is difficult for anyone, even those of full ability and with strong social networks. As we have seen, many of these parents suffered from disabilities or addictions, and our reports show that they also often suffered from social isolation, so were particularly vulnerable.

Ethnicity

From the outset we also noted the respondents' ethnicity. We were surprised to find that a disproportionate number of the families before the child protection courts – almost one third – had at least one parent from an ethnic minority, in which we included Irish Travellers, who accounted for 4.4 per cent. In fact, this is almost certainly an under-estimation, as we did not

record settled Travellers where no evidence of their ethnicity was given during the case. Travellers only make up 0.6 per cent of the Irish population, so they are significantly over-represented in the child care courts.

Excluding Travellers, 26.5 per cent of respondents included at least one parent from an ethnic minority. "Mixed" included both families where one parent was Irish and the other from an ethnic minority, and those where both were from different ethnic minorities. "Mixed" made up the largest single group, at 7.7 per cent, closely followed by Africans, at 7.6 per cent. Europeans accounted for five per cent, and we have observed that these are invariably from Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. This does not include Roma, who usually also come from Eastern Europe, and made up 1.4 per cent. Parents from the UK accounted for 2.4 per cent of all respondents.

These figures need to be seen in the context of the Irish population as a whole. According to the 2011 Census 12.5 per cent of the population (544,357) is now from ethnic minorities. Poland, Latvia and Lithuania together account for a third of all non-Irish, and 3.8 per cent of the entire population, with UK nationals making up another 20 per cent, or 2.5 per cent of the population as a whole. According to the Census, Nigeria and South Africa are the countries of origin for most Africans living here, accounting for 22,514 of the non-Irish population. Other African countries contributed much smaller numbers. Even if the total African population of Ireland amounts to 40,000, this is less than one per cent of the Irish population as a whole.

Thus African families are about seven times more likely to face child protection proceedings than are Irish people, and this figure is likely to be greater if the "Mixed" category includes one African parent, as we have observed it often does. Eastern Europeans are about 1.5 times as likely as Irish people to face the child care courts.

The children

We also noted the age-group of the children who were the subject of the application, grouping them in five-year tranches. We also noted whether or not the children had special needs. We found that in just under 10 per cent of cases care applications were made for very young infants under 12 months old, including a number of new-borns. One in four children was of pre-school age, half were between five and 14, and 15 per cent were older teenagers. This contrasts with a number of other countries, notably the Scandinavian countries, where the majority of children in care are older teenagers who have exhibited serious behavioural problems.

A very high proportion of the children coming into care have special needs. Our figures show that one in four of them had special needs, and many of them had more than one type of special need. In fact, this is likely to be an under-estimation, as in certain types of hearings during an ongoing case there may be no evidence given of a child's special needs, as such proceedings are mainly paper-based exercises, where the judge receives a report and, if necessary, seeks clarification on it.

Guardians *ad litem* (GAL), who are appointed to represent both the views and the best interests of the child, were appointed in 53 per cent of cases. In most of these cases the GAL

also had legal representation. This means that some child care proceedings can involve four legal teams: for the CFA, one each for each parent, and for the GAL. The appointment and regulation of guardians *ad litem* is currently under discussion by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and is likely to be changed in the light of the Children's amendment to the Constitution, which states that the voice of the child must be heard in all proceedings concerning them. The issue of the legal representation of GALs is one of the items on the agenda of these discussions.

Care of children

Just under 80 per cent of the children went into foster care, with 8.3 per cent remaining at home under Supervision Orders. The remainder, just over 10 per cent, went into residential units. This does not include the children who were subject to Secure Care Orders in the High Court, which deals with compulsory detention of children for their own protection and appropriate therapy. The proportion of children in relative foster care (17.7 per cent) following court orders is lower than the total proportion of children in relative foster care which, according to CFA/Tusla figures is about 40 per cent, but it is very likely that where relative foster care is available the parents are more likely to agree to voluntary care. Even when the cases come to court the parents consent to the orders sought in almost four out of 10 of all applications, and the issue of consent did not arise in a further third, so only a minority were contested.

Regional variation

We found considerable variation around the country both in the number and kind of applications brought by the CFA and the way in which they were dealt with by the courts. The same variation is revealed in the statistics on all cases collected by the Courts Service, which we have also published on our website.

Dublin accounted for just over 40 per cent of all the cases we attended. Cork accounted for 15.7 per cent, which accords with its status as our second city. Other major cities, notably Limerick and Waterford, accounted for a substantial proportion of the cases, as did the Tipperary towns of Clonmel and Nenagh, and Wexford. However, some midland towns, for example Carlow and Tullamore, saw the number of child care cases barely reaching double figures. We cannot explain this. It may mean that a higher threshold for seeking care orders exists in some parts of the country than in others, or that better family support exists, meaning that fewer orders are needed.

It is also clear from the type of orders sought that the policy and culture of the CFA varies around the country. Supervision Orders were more likely to be sought in Munster than in the rest of the country, representing 12.3 per cent of applications in Cork, 15.3 per cent in Waterford, 12.9 per cent in Clonmel and 20 per cent in Mallow. This compares with 5.8 per cent of the applications in Dublin and a national average of 8.3 per cent.

More than half the cases we attended in Cork and Nenagh involved reviews of existing Care Orders, showing that these courts continue to take a close interest in what happens to the

child after the order is made. In other parts of the country once an order is made the court has little further involvement.

We also see regional variation in the ethnic background of respondents appearing in court. Unsurprisingly, Dublin saw a higher proportion of respondents from ethnic minorities than any other District Court, with a non-Irish respondent in one in three cases, including 14 per cent African. Louth also saw a high proportion of non-Irish respondents, especially of European and mixed background, who made up 16.7 and 14.3 per cent of respondents respectively. Limerick and Cavan had high numbers of Traveller respondents, and Wexford saw a high proportion of parents from a UK background. This reflects the fact that a number of UK-based families land in Rosslare having fled the UK in order to escape anticipated care proceedings there.

Reasons for seeking orders in context of family status and ethnic background

Allegations of sexual, physical and emotional abuse are more likely in married families than in those where the parents are co-habiting, separated or single, accounting for a third of all married families. However, alleged alcohol and drug abuse, along with neglect, are more likely where the parents are single, co-habiting or separated. We do not know if lone parent families are more closely scrutinised by social services than married families, resulting in reports of obvious abuse being the prompts for intervention in married families, while evidence of substance abuse might be enough to prompt such intervention in single-parent families.

Parental disability is spread across various types of family status and we know this mainly refers to cognitive disability and mental illness.

Allegations of sexual abuse featured disproportionately among Traveller families, who accounted for six of the 38 cases where alleged sexual abuse was the main issue, or 16 per cent of all cases, while Travellers account for four per cent of child care cases. Allegations of physical or emotional abuse featured in 12 of the 90 African families, with the general heading of abuse prior to mid-2013 featuring in a further 11, and we know from observing these cases that this generally meant physical abuse. Parental disability was also very common in African families, featuring in 19 cases. From attending these cases, we know that very frequently this represents mental health problems on the part of the mother, who is sometimes living in direct provision or is likely to have done in the past.

These figures, which should be read in conjunction with the Courts Service statistics on all child care proceedings in the District Court, raise a number of issues of policy and practice for the CFA/Tusla, for other State services and for the courts. In particular, the huge variation in the numbers and types of applications both sought and granted raises the issue of consistency in policy in bringing applications on the part of the CFA; the prevalence of disability and ethnic minorities among the respondents raises questions about the provision of services to these groups; and the differences in the use of reviews of orders and in outcomes raises the issue of consistency across the various District Courts.

Child protection and schools

The taking of children into State care, and the intervention of the State in families in less drastic ways, clearly has implications for teachers and schools. While we only examined what happened in court, and not the broader treatment of child protection referrals, we know from evidence given in court that it was often how a child behaved in school, or their non-attendance at school, that prompted an intervention from the CFA. In addition, school attendance officers have now become part of that agency, though they have rarely been present in the courts we attended. We have also seen very few teachers give evidence in child protection cases, even when the child's performance in school formed part of the CFA case presented by social workers.

One of the things we observed was the disjunction between different services and state agencies that have input into the welfare of children, particularly vulnerable children. Public health nurses are the first people who encounter new-born babies and their mothers, yet they are not part of the Child and Family Agency and their valuable input is not received at a very early stage.

Parents, too often, do not receive the support they need to parent their children. The Child Care Act stresses that children should be cared for by their own families, and the policy of the CFA is to support families who need help. However, as we have seen, a high proportion of the parents who face child care proceedings suffer from addiction to alcohol or drugs, from mental health problems or cognitive disabilities. Services for people with all these problems are not only woefully inadequate, they are, of course, outside the remit of the Child and Family Agency and, where they do exist, have no consistent child protection focus.

As our statistics reveal, a high proportion of the children who end up in care have special needs, particularly educational and psychological special needs, yet these are not matched by the services available and sometimes a substantial part of court time is taken up by a guardian *ad litem* arguing with the Child and Family Agency about providing the services the child needs. We were present at one case where days were taken up with an argument as to whether the CFA or the Department of Education should pay for a special needs assistant for four months, until the next round of SNA allocations, for a disturbed child in care whose behaviour was disrupting the school. The legal costs of the case would have paid for several special needs assistants.

It is clear from the INTO submission on DEIS schools that these issues are all too familiar to teachers. That submission stated: "While teachers had positive experiences of the DEIS support programme in general, teachers noted the lack of certain types of supports. For example, teachers are not happy with the level of support available for children with social and emotional difficulties. Schools need much better access to educational psychological services, clinical psychological services, and therapy services, such as speech and language and occupational therapy."

"In addition teachers are strongly of the view that counselling services should be available to pupils in DEIS schools, because many pupils experience trauma and difficulties in their home environments which impacts on their well-being and dispositions for learning. Many teachers are

also of the view that the DEIS support programme does not adequately respond to the needs of children with English as an additional language and to the needs of Traveller children, particularly since the Traveller specific resources were withdrawn and the number of language support teachers significantly reduced.”

“Support services for children with social and emotional difficulties are not available for the majority of children requiring such services. Waiting lists for CAMHS are unacceptable, often more than two years. Children do not have access to counselling. Some schools spend the DEIS grant on accessing counselling support for pupils. A new structure is required to provide multi-disciplinary services to children, including mental health support, psychiatric support, counselling and therapy services such as speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. All schools should have access to multi-disciplinary support services, with priority given to DEIS schools initially. The mental health of pupils is seriously under-supported at present. Children in disadvantaged areas are less likely to be brought to appointments outside school. Therefore, services should be available in schools. As a start, support from the National Behaviour Support Service should be extended to primary schools.”

I have no doubt that these words would be endorsed by the vast majority of those involved in the child care system, including the judges who hear child-care cases, and who frequently have recourse to court orders to obtain specific services for children in care. The time is long overdue for all services relevant to vulnerable children and their families to be coordinated.

But neither the court system, nor the Child and Family Agency, nor our schools can alone compensate for the deprivation and marginalisation suffered by too many families. Our priorities as a society need to change so that poverty and educational and emotional disadvantage, which lie at the root of so much child neglect and abuse, are eliminated.

The Final Report of the Child Care Law Reporting Project is on

http://www.childlawproject.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CCLRP-Full-final-report_FINAL2.pdf

The Primary School Experience

Pat Courtney, principal teacher, St. Vincent's Boys' School

A Chathaoirigh, good morning everyone. I am here as principal teacher of North William Street, representing our school community, and also as Chairperson of Dublin North Central School Completion project and as a delegate of Dublin City North INTO.

Would I be hopelessly naive to believe that this upcoming review [of DEIS] will deliver for our young needy students? Should I be more realistic and accept something less?

I have a slide here that I put together to outline the successes of DEIS. How we should be proud of the successes of our schools and programmes. Perhaps we should be proud? But are we truly making a difference? How are we delivering for our needy pupils? Indeed, can we deliver?

In our school, and of my knowledge of other DEIS schools, I feel we delivered as best we could. Children do love coming to school. It's an oasis. A dream land. A little piece of 'fairy land' perhaps, dropped into often damaged family lives, lived out in volatile communities. Parents value the possibility of educational achievement that they never had.

However, we have to remind ourselves again of the heavy burdens many our young pupils have on their backs as they come to our schools.



Heavy Bags to carry?

- chronic anxiety
- hopelessness
- mental and physical health problems
- addiction
- poor housing and more often homelessness

- marginalisation
- poverty
- poor family experience of education
- alienation
- fear of violence and criminality

New Irish, with many of the above, but with the additional challenges of being new to Ireland, with little English, culturally adrift in our communities. Think of a particular needy young person in your school and evaluate their chance of staying on board the education boat that we know leaves the shores of pre-school and junior infants on a very precarious voyage. What is the likely destination?

Is it to University / College and employment or *more realistically* perhaps to Mountjoy or Wheatfield, or to the streets or outside the clinic, or tragically passing away all too soon?

My Fears

We are at a review, a pause. What prompted this review is a concern to me. Is there a real commitment among decision makers to dare to use the language of *Breaking the Cycle* or *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Education*? To imagine and think out what that might look like and then work back to bridge the gap with supports and actions to make that happen. How in any new DEIS will equality or success in education be measured and resourced? In comparison with National Standards cherishing every child in the state equally or will children's attainment be evaluated against a 'competing' DEIS school down the road?

I fear that a subtle shift to lower expectations would excuse lower investment in our schools.

- Is there a commitment to delivering equality in education?
- Will DEIS school against DEIS School be the standard of quality? Without substantial additional funding for the new DEIS, there is the real risk of a divisive taking of resources from one DEIS school to another. This must not be allowed to happen.
- PTR - cuts to posts. Legacy issue!
- Will it be a full arts based or limited curriculum?
- Quality of health services and impact on education?
- How will our schools be affected by Child Protection / Welfare Plans? Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) and School Completion Programme (SCP). Focus on Education?

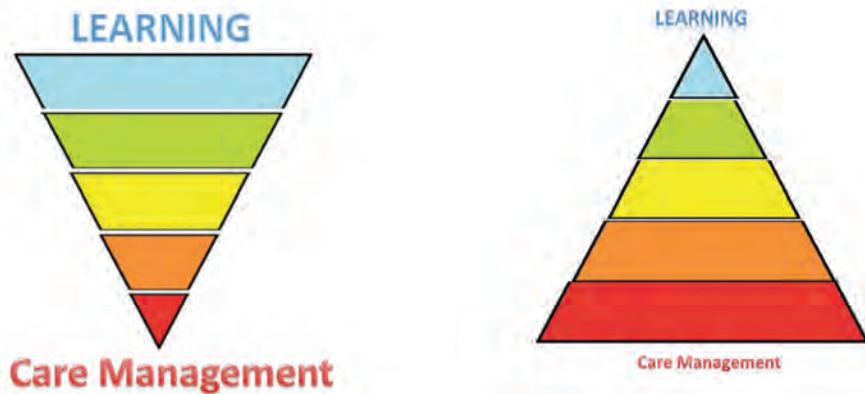
The recent ESRI (2015)⁵ report on the possible goals of DEIS states that: 'the goal may be to reduce the negative effect of the concentration of disadvantaged students; in other words, the aim may be to reduce the gap in achievement between working-class students in DEIS schools and working-class students in non DEIS schools. The DEIS programme was explicitly motivated by the existence of a 'multiplier effect' in schools with a high concentration of disadvantage. Thus, this would seem to be a fairer test of the success of DEIS' (pp.76-77). This is an unacceptable lowering of horizons. The goal is to make achievement of working class students *equal* to other students nationally, to cherish all our children equally. It is not to accept one standard for those experiencing poverty and another standard for others which would

⁵ Smyth, E., McCoy, S., Kingston, G. (2015) Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS, Research Series Number 39: The Economic and Social Research Centre

support a shift to lower expectations for DEIS schools that would excuse lower investment in our schools.

Let's remind ourselves - remember that all young people have the same basic needs.

In more advantaged communities with more resources the care and welfare piece is largely met at home and in the community, resulting in a richer education-focused school experience.



But in our schools we are often swamped by unmet care needs ever narrowing the window for real learning. Much of the curriculum has to be hidden away, like vegetables in a child's soup, in activities that will engage the children for short segments of time before unmet needs wash in to swamp learning in that lesson. However, we, as in DEIS schools, have proven that with supports, targeted programmes, and skilled teaching, every child can attain remarkable levels of achievement.

Solutions

Children should not come to school sick, hungry, tired, anxious, afraid and troubled. But they do! We need:

- Increased grants to match experiences of average income families
- High quality school environments - play spaces, kitchens and classrooms
- Successful positive experiences in education
- High staff to pupil ratios - ancillary and lunch staff

You can't do Reading Recovery without a dedicated teacher. You can't feed 150 hungry children twice a day without fridges, kitchens, food and staff. It's said, "It takes a village to raise a child".... but if your village is a dangerous place or a hopeless place without resources then your school is your only chance.

At a recent case conference the doctor attending told us that problems we sought solutions to would not be addressed until the parent returned to addiction counselling. This will be a long process involving many agencies but all the while the education boats of his peers will sail away. When, and if, Mam addresses her addiction effectively or the child goes into care, he will be further adrift.

At another recent case conference it was reported that therapy from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) will not be offered as the emotional distress of the child

was a normal response to his family environment. Therapy would not be offered until the family became stable. All the while, what of the child's education? Why will CAMHS no longer engage with, nor accept referrals from schools?

My thoughts:

- Health Services based in school - Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Psychology etc
- Early Assessment – school-based access to Art Therapy, Play Therapy, Sensory Integration etc
- High staff to pupil ratios in school
- A responsive Arts-based curriculum
- Schools to have restored contact with Mental Health Services: e.g. CAMHS
- Children can't learn to read without their glasses.
- Mental Health Services can only be accessed through a health Professional. What if no health professional is involved with you?
- Do GPs know the children better than their teachers?
- Who can fill out the 15 page form?
- How can marginalised refugees, migrants, Roma families access Health Services? They don't have contact with a GP, and probably don't understand reports /advice.
- You can't communicate with Roma families without a translator.
- You can't access a language-based curriculum without functional hearing.
- A website or inservice for staff or meeting with adults only or guidelines and pathways with long waiting lists, although helpful and necessary, are a poor substitute to active, therapeutic engagement with the needy children.

Furthermore, Home School Community Liaison and School Completion coordinators must continue to prioritise the educational goals of the children and not be completely swamped by the weight of child welfare obligations and targets. Schools must not be blocked from seeking help for vulnerable children from Mental Health professionals, like CAMHS.

Specifically on the crucial issue of PTR (Pupil Teacher Ratio) - on behalf of a group of DEIS schools, who hold legacy positions from previous schemes - our school communities are alarmed that these posts retained by this Government following an apology by Minister Quinn in March 2012 are again under threat. These legacy positions were given to our schools by the DES to allow us to reduce the PTR because of the acute level of disadvantage impacting on the families in our communities for many decades. The DES under 'The *Breaking the Cycle* Scheme' insisted on a PTR of 15 to 1 at junior primary as a critical effective early intervention strategy. I must demand, on behalf of our school communities, that the planned suppression of such, and other so called legacy posts, by the DES, which is currently paused pending this review, be stopped. In my own school, we fear, after this review, the Department will suppress another two teachers from the one already suppressed in 2012 after the apology of Minister Quinn.

It is my duty as a principal, as an INTO member, to fight this shocking attack on the work of our school community since 1994, and on the learning outcomes for the children currently attending and enrolled in the school. Any new scheme must restore the PTR of previous schemes.

We must recommit ourselves to demanding a full education experience for all our pupils. We must be able to carry the flag for the right to a full holistic educational experience for our most needy child.

Any new scheme must build on the successes of the past and must demand the resources to deliver a full and equal education for all our schools, for all our communities and for all the young citizens of this Republic.

3

Report from Discussion Groups

Introduction

Delegates broke up in to six discussion groups in order to discuss the various topics that emerged during the morning. Members of the INTO National Committees along with representatives from the Educational Disadvantage Centre, as well as the working group on Hunger Prevention in Schools acted as facilitators and rapporteurs. These groups were presented with a number of themes and discussion topics concerning DEIS, poverty and social inclusion in education. Reports from the different groups have been collated and are presented below under a number of thematic headings.

Review of DEIS

Delegates discussed difficulties associated with defining success in the DEIS review. There was a strong consensus that the DEIS review should include qualitative as well as quantitative components and that parents need to be engaged in the review. A quantitative approach to review, that includes for instance literacy and numeracy scores obtained from single time assessment, may not be an accurate way to measure progress. It was felt that multiple interacting variables can affect children's performance on standardised assessments in schools. An agreed priority among delegates was that the DEIS review should not lead to reduction of any services, on the contrary, it was suggested that granting DEIS status to additional schools who are not currently in the scheme should be considered.

Multidisciplinary teams in DEIS schools

A general consensus among delegates was that an interdepartmental coordination strategy should be devised for simplified access to and provision of support services. There was a strong consensus that a lack of direct links between schools and health services does not promote the needed holistic, integrated approach to working with children. Current administrative barriers to accessing resources and the overall fragmentation of current services, including the fragmentation of the structure of resource and learning support in schools, were identified. There was an agreed view that the provision of services needs to be linked back to schools.

Strengthening the services that address school attendance and an increased provision in parenting supports in schools was identified as a key issue. The need to support parents and provide attendance supports were identified by the group as a priority, particularly in relation to Traveller pupils. Delegates acknowledged the significant contribution of Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) in schools and identified the need for more clarity around the HSCL role in schools as well as more defined roles among education and other stakeholders. Many delegates expressed a view that the transfer of HSCL governance to Tusla was conducted without a proper period of consultation with schools. Many HSCL teachers in attendance

highlighted a growing sense of insecurity in respect of their future professional conditions. It was also agreed that rural DEIS schools are currently not sufficiently resourced and that this needs to be reviewed as part of DEIS.

There was a strong consensus that the strategy for integration of services should be directly linked to schools. However, it was raised that as this approach may add a significant administrative burden, such a decision would need to be coupled with the addition of coordination and implementation supports for schools. Building on the strengths of existing services in schools and communities, through consultation, as well as maintaining current resources in schools should be key policy considerations.

Approaches to food and diet in DEIS schools

One of the topics for discussion was food poverty. Research has indicated that there is a discernible link between access to healthy food and performance in school. The group discussion was based around why many parents from disadvantaged areas seemed to be 'food-poor' and what remedies or initiatives could be introduced to tackle this issue.

A view was taken that there were four main areas of concern in relation to the obstacles that schools faced when it came to healthy eating - these were affordability, accessibility, availability and awareness. Regarding accessibility a view was offered that many parents from disadvantaged areas may have to arrange travel to larger supermarkets that may stock a greater variety of healthy food alternatives. Local convenience stores may not have the same supply of fresh wholesome food that would be available in a supermarket. In terms of affordability and availability, concerns were raised about the ready availability of heavily-marketed cheap convenience foods compared to a lack of affordable healthy options. In this context the issue of awareness was raised. If parents were better informed regarding the advantages of a nutritional natural diet and indeed on how to prepare this type of food it would be of great benefit to their own families. Sinead Keenan from 'Healthy Food for All', who presented a workshop, raised a number of salient points in the context of healthy eating in DEIS schools. She stated that:

- Low income households spend disproportionately more of their income on food than higher income groups,
- 1 in 8 people live in food poverty - 600,000 people in 2016,
- 1 in 5 children go to school hungry,
- 1 in 6 children never eat breakfast on a school day,
- 1 in 4 nine year olds is obese. This proportion is rising in disadvantaged schools and impacts on all aspects of the child's life, including behaviour, resulting in poor academic performance, low concentration levels as well as disruptive behaviours.

Delegates were in agreement that schools can provide a good social setting for healthy eating. This has been demonstrated positively in DEIS schools. Obesity arises due to the lack of nutritious food and the consumption of the wrong combinations of non-nutritious food.

Delegates identified a number of challenges for schools aiming to provide school meals through the Schools Meals Programme. These included; a lack of space and facilities, insufficient funding, administrative burden, lack of training and capacity, concerns regarding food waste, potential social stigma for participants, coordinating parental involvement and the management of 'volunteers'.

It was pointed out in the course of the discussion that as many as 100 DEIS schools are not availing of the Schools Meals Programme. Part of the reason for this seemed to be attributed to bureaucracy and poor planning in terms of the administration of a coherent approach to implementing a successful school meals programme. Many delegates noted an apparent lack of policy oversight regarding the system as responsibility is spread over a number of government agencies. Some examples of this overlapping of responsibilities include the following:

- DES – responsible for school infrastructure: possible use of Summer Works Scheme to equip schools with catering facilities
- Department of Agriculture - responsible for the milk scheme and Food Dudes
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Department of Health - produces healthy eating guidelines
- Department of Social Protection – responsible for School Meals Programme

A number of key recommendations were made by delegates. These included the implementation of a national Food in School strategy, the expansion of the Schools Meals Programme, adequate staff training, a link to the primary curriculum with an overarching focus on the educational, health and social outcomes of such a strategy.

Poverty and social inclusion

Delegates discussed a number of issues and challenges facing schools in terms of poverty and social inclusion. A number of key questions were discussed in this regard, as outlined below.

The emerging needs of children experiencing poverty and social exclusion arising since the economic crash

Delegates felt that many children in DEIS Band One schools did not benefit sufficiently from the boom and as the tide went out their needs became more acute as the budgets of support services e.g., Barnardo's, were cut. Schools felt the needs of these children became more acute when the economic downturn hit.

Teachers attending the conference were of the opinion that the current EAL support system does not do enough to meet the needs of the increased numbers of newcomer children. Resources are being spread even more thinly. Accessing the curriculum is very difficult for older newcomer children.

What worked well in the School Support Programme under DEIS?

Three areas of the DEIS programme were identified by delegates as excellent supports: HSCL Coordinator, professional development opportunities and the position of a resource teacher for travellers.

In the context of the position of Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, delegates opined that the position may be lost at some point in the future because the contract has to be rotated amongst staff. According to delegates, boards of management have less autonomy in relation to who fills the post. The Department of Education and Skills policy is that the maximum length of time that a teacher can be deployed to the post of HSCL coordinator is five years at a time.

The benefits of professional development (e.g. schemes such as First Steps, Reading Recovery) for DEIS teachers was also discussed. Teachers identified a challenge in sustaining these

programmes and embedding them in schools when trained individual staff members leave the school.

There was a consensus among delegates in relation to the importance of having a Resource Teacher for Travellers (RTT). It was agreed that the argument should not be to replace the post, rather thought should be given to granting an increase in the new General Allocation Model for higher numbers of traveller children in order to support their needs.

The contribution of the School Completion Programme (SCP) to supporting pupils

Delegates expressed the view that the advantages provided for by SCP were excellent and the idea of enabling people to stay in school was very positive. Delegates made a number of suggestions that would lead to improvements in the scheme. These suggestions included greater access to educational psychologists and with 40% of children needing support in non-DEIS schools, it was recommended the SCP be expanded.

Delegates also highlighted the importance of an SCP coordinator in assisting in the transition from primary school to post-primary school.

Professor Emer Smyth from the ESRI, who was in attendance, discussed three main challenges in relation to the future of the SCP. These include the following:

- Issues regarding the importance of SCP in providing conditions for very disadvantaged children and children experiencing trauma to get into classrooms,
- Issues regarding governance of SCP,
- Budget cuts and the impact on SCP in-school activity.

The particular challenges for pupils experiencing poverty and social exclusion in rural areas

A number of delegates had experience teaching in rural DEIS schools and were invited to share observations surrounding some of the issues facing DEIS in a rural context. Some delegates expressed a view that rural disadvantage seems to be largely invisible in DEIS. It was felt that there is an apparent lack of awareness of poverty in rural schools and that the main focus on poverty relates to urban contexts. Some delegates were of the opinion that rural mixed schools would appear not to benefit from the increased weighting for boys under the General Allocation Model. The fluctuating income of rural families was noted, for example, in farming families⁶.

Additional comments on poverty and social inclusion

The concentration of services should be weighted more heavily in favour of traveller children in DEIS and non-DEIS schools.

The capitation system seems to work against schools in that the most disadvantaged children go to the most disadvantaged schools. DEIS schools are often seen as the least desirable and numbers are diminishing as a result. Delegates also questioned why it should be accepted that disadvantaged children go to disadvantaged schools.

⁶ The view was expressed by a respondent, in feedback after the conference, that there was a need for a future conference with a stronger focus on distinctively rural issues for DEIS.

The School Support Programme in the context of DEIS schools

There was a general consensus among delegates in respect of what worked well in the School Support Programme under DEIS. In particular the following aspects of DEIS were seen to be of great value to teachers working in the disadvantaged setting:

- CPD – it was delivered on site, lessons were modelled by a DEIS Cuiditheoir with the Cuiditheoir available to provide follow up support.
- The programmes provided (e.g. Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, 1st Steps) were excellent – well researched, and evidence based.
- Rural Coordinators worked very well. Their loss has left a void. Class teachers in small schools have little time to interact meaningfully with parents.
- Beneficial pupil-teacher ratio.
- Additional Funding.

By the same extension, delegates also indicated that there were some aspects of the DEIS support programme that needed to be improved upon. The following list is not exhaustive but highlights some of the main concerns voiced by delegates:

- Withdrawal of rural coordinators, leading to the scheme not reaching its full potential.
- Loss of teachers and posts of responsibility has meant loss of expertise, e.g in the case of a “Reading Recovery” co-ordinator who retires or goes on panel.
- Targeting individual children rather than targeting all children seen as a negative.

Delegates explored the criteria that should be applied to determine the success of DEIS. There was a view that the well-being of children was crucial and needed to be measured in some way. If schools managed to maintain attendance and engagement in learning they were deemed to be successful by many delegates. There was a consensus that there needs to be a greater focus on qualitative research, quantitative research seems to be overly relied upon and is not always fit for purpose in the context of DEIS schools.

Some delegates expressed the opinion that while all funding is welcome, there are some concerns about its source. Well known programmes such as ‘Young Ballymun’ and ‘Preparing for Life’ are welcome initiatives funded by philanthropic means. Concerns were raised by some delegates that this funding could cease at any stage and delegates recommended that there should be some contingency in place for the State to step in to fund such initiatives in the future. Teachers in DEIS schools expressed concern that there was no long term certainty around these worthwhile initiatives.

Other areas identified by delegates as crucial to improving DEIS

There was much lively debate and discussion at the conference on key issues faced by educators in the context of DEIS. Delegates identified areas where more improvements could be made and discussed the challenges that teachers and management must face in order to make improvements.

There was a consensus that better assessment of children’s needs before they enter Junior Infants would be beneficial. The benefits of better early assessment could be strengthened with coordinated multidisciplinary infrastructures in respect of any recommendations made. It was emphasised that these supports should be in place before a child enters primary school. Many

delegates observed that the quality of the relationships between agencies such as the HSE, Department of Education, and the NCSE need to be improved and better coordinated.

There was general agreement that there should be an increased focus on children's physical and emotional wellbeing particularly in relation to diversity, children in direct provision and children from the travelling community.

Delegates spoke of the constant battle in striking a balance between the care needs (social and emotional) and the education/learning needs of vulnerable children. Many felt that it can be difficult to implement a structured learning plan when many children have outstanding emotional needs that need to be met. A view was expressed that in relation to time and resources, oftentimes there simply aren't enough hours in the day left for effective teaching in DEIS schools.

It was noted that the reduced level of EAL supports has had a serious effect on some DEIS schools. Delegates identified particular challenges for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for migrant pupils. It was pointed out that DEIS criteria seemed to 'miss' EAL pupils under its last review. Many felt that GAM and EAL should be kept separate. Some delegates spoke of how standardised tests are not 'EAL friendly' and do not do enough to cater for the language needs of EAL pupils. One delegate spoke of the 'poverty of language' as a challenge faced by EAL pupils which should be addressed with proper support structures and an efficient EAL support system.

Each discussion group present at the conference was asked to identify three main points arising from their discussion points and one key question to put to the panel for a response. These questions and issues are outlined on the following pages.

Discussion Group - A

1. High teacher turnover in DEIS schools re needs to be addressed- DEIS allowance?
2. Therapies and psychological assessments need to be available on-site in the school
3. Assessment of DEIS interventions needs to go beyond standardised test results

Key Issue / Question

What would you suggest to address the issue of high teacher turnover in DEIS schools?

Discussion Group - B

1. Integration of psychological, therapeutic and educational supports with schools being a key in provision and access
2. Increase parenting supports, and communicate parental engagement in determination of DEIS success
3. Rural disadvantaged DEIS schools need to be sufficiently resourced

Key Issue / Question

Can we expect that the resources to support the implementation of the integrated delivery of services to children will be reinstated, maintained and further developed?

Discussion Group - C

1. DEIS system needs to be reviewed annually so that ongoing and new needs can be identified and responded to, in the case of children in need
2. Needs, such as mental health issues wellbeing should be included as criteria
3. Children living in situations of rental income supplement, single parentage, medical cards, EAL, ethnic minorities including traveller groups need to be consulted and considered

Key Issue / Question

How can the criteria that determines whether schools participate in DEIS be broadened to reflect the changes in Irish society, so that they can respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of varying types of schools?

Discussion Group - D

1. DEIS schools need greater resources overall
2. Rural DEIS is almost forgotten – does it even exist? LS/R travel between schools, poor allocation of time and resources
3. Knock-on effect to most vulnerable and disadvantaged children of cuts to services such as Barnardos therapy and counselling services and cuts to school completion programme

Key Issue / Question

Will there be greater weight for traveller children in DEIS schools? And also non-DEIS

Discussion Group - E

1. Funding being slowly withdrawn from DEIS
2. In-School management team depleted – lack of promoted teachers to lead programmes in DEIS schools
3. Need for multi-disciplinary schools in DEIS (HSCLC, Social workers, therapy professionals) working together, each with clearly defined roles and liaison officer from TUSLA to coordinate work

Key Issue / Question

Would autonomy for DEIS schools to decide for themselves how to allocate their additional funding and additional staffing enable schools to respond better to the school's own needs?

Discussion Group - F

1. Improve quality of meaningful relationships between schools / HSE and relevant statutory bodies
2. Increase focus on childrens emotional and physical well-being, especially in relation to diversity, direct provision and travellers
3. Balance between care needs and educational/learning needs extra personnel needed in schools for care needs. NB Build on what is already in place and develop on from there

Key Issue / Question

How can the assessment of childrens needs be improved to ensure that their holistic needs will be catered for appropriately – from day 1 in infant class.

Key Issue / Question #DEIS15

- A. What would you suggest to address the issue of high teacher turnover in DEIS schools?
- B. Can we expect that the resources to support the implementation of the integrated delivery of services to children will be reinstated, maintained and further developed?
- C. How can the criteria that determines whether schools participate in DEIS be broadened to reflect the changes in Irish society so that they can respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of varying types of schools?
- D. Will there be greater weight for traveller children in DEIS schools? And also non-DEIS
- E. Would autonomy for DEIS schools to decide for themselves how to allocate their additional funding and additional staffing, enable schools to respond better to the school's own needs?
- F. How can the assessment of childrens' needs be improved to ensure that their holistic needs will be catered for appropriately – from day 1 in infant class.

Summary of Issues

- High teacher turnover in DEIS schools needs to be addressed. Consideration should be given to a DEIS allowance.
- Therapies and psychological assessments need to be available on-site in the school.
- Assessment of DEIS interventions needs to go beyond standardised test results.
- Integration of psychological, therapeutic and educational supports with schools is a key factor in provision and access.
- Increasing parenting supports, and communicating parental engagement in determination of DEIS success.
- Rural disadvantaged DEIS schools need to be sufficiently resourced.
- DEIS system needs to be reviewed annually so that ongoing and new needs can be identified and responded to, in the case of children in need.
- Needs, such as mental health issues and wellbeing should be included as criteria.
- Children living in situations of rental income supplement, single parentage, medical cards, EAL, ethnic minorities including traveller groups need to be consulted and considered.
- DEIS schools need greater resources overall.
- Rural DEIS is almost forgotten – does it even exist? Learning Support/Resource Teachers travel between schools, poor allocation of time and resources.
- Knock-on effect to most vulnerable and disadvantaged children of cuts to services such as Barnardos therapy and counselling services and cuts to school completion programme.
- Funding being slowly withdrawn from DEIS.
- In-School management team depleted – lack of promoted teachers to lead programmes in DEIS schools.
- Need for multi-disciplinary schools in DEIS (HSCL, Social workers, therapy professionals) working together, each with clearly defined roles and liaison officer from T to coordinate work.
- Improve quality of meaningful relationships between schools / HSE and relevant statutory bodies.
- Increase focus on children's emotional and physical well-being, especially in relation to diversity, direct provision and travellers.
- Balance between care needs and educational/learning needs - extra personnel needed in schools for care needs. Build on what is already in place and develop on from there.

4

Final Plenary Session

Introduction

Each discussion group and workshop was invited to present a key question to the panel, who offered a response to the issues raised. The panel was chaired by Dr Paul Downes, Director of the Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and consisted of the following individuals:

- **Bernie McNally**, Assistant Secretary General in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
- **Caitriona O'Brien**, Principal Officer, Social Inclusion, Department of Education and Skills (DES)
- **Anne Colgan**, Centre for Effective Services (CES)
- **Pat Courtney**, Principal Teacher, North William Street, Dublin 1
- **Eibhlin Byrne**, Director of Educational Welfare, Tusla, and former Lord Mayor
- **Deirbhile Nic Craith**, Assistant General Secretary, INTO.

The chairperson indicated that all the points would go to the various Ministers and Civil Servants and a copy would go to all the groups so that all points would be addressed. The panel members introduced themselves.

Bernie McNally, DCYA

I am very delighted to be here. The review of DEIS is really important to us in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for a number of reasons. Clearly we work very closely with Tusla and the whole area of educational welfare, but this morning I am just going to focus on what we are doing for preschool children. In the budget this year we announced an extension of the free pre-school year. So for those of you who haven't heard about it, children who up to now can get one year pre-school, will now get, on average, about 2/3 of an additional year. Research from Growing Up in Ireland just published yesterday shows there is huge take-up of this pre-school year - 96% of children attend this pre-school year. But about 36% of people who are

from disadvantaged backgrounds say that they wouldn't have been able to afford to send their children to preschool were it not for the scheme. So this scheme is really important and we are looking to strengthen it. Obviously we have to do a load of work with the workforce - we have just got the workforce in the early years up to level five, so there is still a long way to go. 33% of preschools are run by people with level seven. We have a big quality agenda. I think that we will be contributing to the DEIS review in a number of ways, but I certainly think we would want there to be a little bit of focus on the preschool child and what we can contribute to it through an early-intervention perspective.

Caitriona O'Brien, DES

The review of DEIS is underway since mid-June this year following its launch by the Minister. There are a number of strands to the Review process. The most important element, stakeholder consultation, began with initial submissions invited from education partners already received and posted on the Department's website. My thanks to the INTO for its comprehensive input. Further engagement with education partners is planned during the Review process.

The review project is being led by the Department's Social Inclusion Unit and includes an internal Advisory Group and an Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) to review the DEIS School Support Programme. The IDG is a particularly important element of the review, reflecting the changed landscape where a number of key supports under the DEIS School Support Programme are provided by other Departments and Agencies.

External inputs to DEIS include Home School Community Liaison (HSCL), the School Completion Programme and the Educational Welfare Service which are now located in Tusla, the school meals scheme and supplementary allowances for families in the Department of Social Protection. The IDG brings together all of the providers of external services, including some of those we have heard about today to look how they might be better joined up to provide improved service provision in a new DEIS programme.

The third plank of the DEIS review is a Technical Working Group which is looking at the identification of schools in terms of educational disadvantage. As you know the last time around identification was based on a survey of schools. It happened in that way due to the lack of centrally held data. We now have access to much improved centrally-held data through POD and PPOD and Census data which will facilitate the development of a much more transparent, robust and responsive system of identification.

The key objective of the DEIS Review is to build on the experience of the programme to date to deliver an improved framework of supports to schools. At this stage we know there is a lot of very good practice in DEIS schools, and in related ancillary supports, and we know what works. It is a question of building on that to include good practice in other areas that will complement the work of schools in supporting children at risk of educational disadvantage.

Anne Colgan, CES

Building on the last point and listening to the discussion this morning, it seems to me that one of the key themes coming through is the opportunity that the new DEIS offers to revisit and renew our sense of the purpose and outcomes of DEIS for our time. And to revisit the question, 'what do we want DEIS to achieve for families and for children into the next decade'. So there is the question of whether this is a whole-child intervention building on resilience or health or children's wellbeing - what are the core educational outcomes. Is this an intentional anti-poverty strategy or an attempt to address child poverty? Because the answer to those questions of purpose and outcome will drive the answers of another set of questions about confirming what works. It will answer the questions that were put this morning by Pat in his first statement, which is, 'how will we know this is working' - in other words about evaluation and what data to gather. And it will also help us answer the question who should be at the table in terms of joined up thinking, both at the level of practice and at the level of policy. For me, that is one of the big themes and opportunities that the review offers to revisit and confirm that question of outcomes and purpose.

Eibhlin Byrne, Tusla

A colleague was perusing the paper yesterday looking down the league of tables for schools and achievement etc - like every middle class paper does so at a certain point. I took a quick look at the paper to see where my own alma mater had come and it still hasn't hit the 50%, but it had moved on from the days where 3% of us were able to get to university. When on days like this there were girls who were able to come into the class with paper inside their shoes because there were holes in the bottom of their shoes, there were the kids who got the free meals and then there were some of us who actually managed to get on in life despite all of that. And really that came down to the fact that our parents had the capacity to support us. They understood the importance of education and even though some of our parents, like mine, left school at 10, they understood that if we were going to get anywhere in life it was going to be about education. So for me, what DEIS is all about, is ensuring that children get the kind of supports that their parents, for whatever reason, cannot support. So what I want for DEIS this time round – is a really evidence-based programme where we think about a. the type of children that we are looking to support and b. the type of programmes that will actually work for them.

Most importantly, I want it to be child-centred so that we don't provide something for a child up to 10 or 11 and then drop them at 12 or 13 when really they probably need it most - so something that is child-centred and supports the child the whole way. It has to be something that is joined up. We have pots of money everywhere. We have pots of power everywhere. We need to join those up. It doesn't matter who leads on what but it has to be integrated for the children. In Tusla, we have responsibility for the educational welfare service - that is the educational welfare officers, the HSCL and SCP programme. We will certainly do our best to ensure that whatever programmes we have are both joined up within and joined up with everybody else. But most importantly at all, my memories of those kids getting free lunches sticks with me forever, so whatever DEIS programme has in it, has to be with dignity and empowerment for the parents to send the kids to school.

Discussion Group One

The group felt that our high teacher turnover in DEIS schools needs to be addressed. For example, working in a DEIS school is more stressful and more challenging. Therefore, would there be a possibility of a DEIS allowance similar to the working in London allowance? Also support for teachers around the whole notion of dealing with parents and difficult types of situations is needed.

Discussion Group Two (Sylvia Kazmierczak-Murray):

We discussed the importance of access to ancillary supports in schools, such as speech and language supports, parenting supports, and the integration of psychological and educational supports. In this context, our question is around the resources to provide these supports, but also to support the implementation of the development of the integrated delivery of those supports.

Discussion Group Three (Pat Collins):

There was a strong feeling that the DEIS system needed to be more responsive. An annual review would be needed as things are moving on so quickly and needs can change hugely and the system can't respond to that. It is stale, and issues such as well-being and mental health must be taken into consideration. We need an extension of the criteria so that people who are on income supplement, single parents and people from ethnic minorities - that their needs can be taken into consideration.

Reponses from Panel

Bernie McNally (DCYA): I think there might be people on the panel who may be better suited to answering those questions than I, but I might certainly consider the first two questions. I thought of work that we had done recently regarding disabilities in preschool and we have managed to develop a model. Working with the Department of Children, the Department of Education, the NCSE and the Department of Health – a very joined-up way to develop a model for these children that we hadn't been able to agree on in the past. In the past, one Department said that is your problem and it went from one area to another. And for the first time we got all these departments and services together - the HSE, Tusla, everybody on board to develop this model. Part of it you talked about - teachers being under major stress and needing support and high turnover. What we found in the preschool sector is that they need the support of experts. Sometimes they were saying that they needed psychologists. They didn't actually need psychologists - they needed just very expert people in their own profession in the early years. Part of this model we have developed to support children with disabilities isn't all about an extra pair of hands in the classroom, it is a seven level model and it is only a small part of it. A lot of the model is about investing in the workforce, upskilling them, both formal and informal training, making mentors available to them. When you mentioned speech and language therapists there, we did debate whether we should develop a new therapy agency who would provide therapeutic input into preschools, but after major discussion, we negotiated with the HSE that we will give additional resources to the HSE that would go into their interagency teams, but that they would very much prioritise preschools as it is really important for children to be able to mainstream and be prepared for entry into primary school. So we share your struggles, but I am hoping this model, which has been hugely welcomed by parents so far, that

when it is rolled out it really will be good for children, but also good for the professionals who are [giving] great services to these children.

Caitriona O'Brien (DES): On the question of an allowance for teachers in DEIS schools, this is an issue to be explored during the course of the Review. Current priority for the Department is on strengthening the capacity of teachers in DEIS schools by prioritising them for CPD to ensure that they are equipped to meet the particular challenges they encounter. There is also an increasing emphasis on leadership skills which are particularly important in DEIS schools.

In relation to DEIS needing to be more responsive, absolutely yes, and that is what is envisaged as one of the main features of the new DEIS identification process which is being developed. An assessment process using centrally held data which is regularly updated will have an improved currency of information about schools. Newly established schools will be able to apply immediately for assessment. As you know, the opening of a new school or amalgamation process takes whatever time it takes anyway, certainly the DEIS identification process wouldn't hold that up in any way.

The work of the Technical Group will include consideration of appropriate identification criteria. All available sources will be examined, including resources already in use by other public bodies such as the Census Small Area information in use by Pobal,

In relation to ancillary supports to schools, and I was part of that discussion group, the key issue seems to be how to ensure that children receive the services they need in a timely fashion. One of the key supports identified was speech and language therapy, where the children who are in most need are at risk of not receiving supports through not attending appointments. There are examples of very good practice in some DEIS schools where SLT professionals provide in-school services but it seems that this practice is not widespread for resource reasons. The scope for coordinating ancillary services in and around schools is something that will be explored by the DEIS Review's Inter Departmental Group. Tusla's Meitheal concept may also provide a solution to the issue of interagency working. From the group discussion it seems that there is not a great understanding of what Meitheal involves in the Tusla context, and particularly an understanding of what the role of schools will be.

Eibhlin Byrne (Tusla): Just to say about the criteria, I do think it is important that we use all the evidence we have got - and we have been gathering evidence from places around the country - because it is not just about the DEIS schools, but what supports are available in the areas where DEIS schools are. We also have to be very careful in situations that we don't all try to do things and that there are very clear roles. We, in the Education Welfare Service, for example, we have been working on the continuum of care for children within our services. So what is the role of HSCL? What is the role of the SCP? And what is the role of the educational welfare officer? We are trying to reduce the bureaucracy as the child moves from one person to the other and not all filling out ten different forms, because a large burden on all of our staff has been the amount of bureaucracy that has been involved in various things.

In terms of Meitheal, there has been a lot of concern about it. The basic concept is right. It is the idea of gathering as many services around a child as possible to ensure that there is joined-

up thinking of what the child needs. There has not been enough discussion and contacts with the education sector and I think that is something that we will have to prioritise in 2016 and we will lead on that from the Education Welfare side of the house. Basically, the idea is where a child reaches the stage that a number of interventions are required that somebody will take the lead. That simply means that they are the person who will gather the other services around. It will depend on the need of the child. So if the key problem for the child is a matter in education then somebody in the education field would be asked to take the lead on that. That doesn't mean that they are taking total responsibility for this child or this family. It is that they are simply leading this process to ensure that the right decisions are made for the child and that the decisions are actually made and don't drift off. I have worked in therapeutic services in the community - a group of professionals need to discuss a child, everybody gives their input and then go away and nothing changes for the child. And that can become very frustrating for the family, as we have all gone into homes where they have ten different appointments on a fridge, Monday it is so and so, Tuesday it is so and so, etc. What we need is one clear pathway for a family where they can get all services, and with that a whole school approach.

I absolutely agree if there were public health nurses, occupational therapists coming into schools that that is where you would best reach the child. In the meantime, we will have to look for ways of gathering professionals together and Meitheal is a beginning. It is in its very early stage and there are a lot of professional roles to be clarified, because when many groups of professionals come together they have their own codes of practice, their own professional ways of dealing with things and when you begin inter agency work it takes a long time to work it out. I worked with the differential response model in Dublin where I worked with the Daughters of Charity at the time. Where a family was referred to child protection, if the social work department decided that it really wasn't a level that child protection was needed then it really should go to us for therapeutic work first. Now for social workers to work with therapists and therapists to work with social workers, one wanted to do therapy and one wanted to do social work, it took a long time for all of us to be able to cross the professional no man's land to be able to understand the rules, regulations and principles by which each of us worked. And it is the same thing with something like Meitheal. It will take time for all of us to see where our professional role is in something, but if we can all just remember that the centre of this is the child. We need to find ways to come together and it will take time as professionals to develop that.

Anne Colgan (CES): Perhaps to pick up the question of an annual review that was asked by one of the groups, just to make the point that it is a real opportunity to think in terms of what kind of developmental and participative evaluation model that one might design for the DEIS programme moving forward so that there is a concerted attempt to capture the learning, and experience of the professionals, of the teachers, of other professionals and of the parents, and of the children. This learning can inform the thinking and the planning in the ongoing implementation of DEIS, so that the review is owned by everybody who is a stakeholder in the success of DEIS. That means engaging in systematic thinking about what do we mean by data, and what data needs to be collected, in order to inform the planning and design and evaluation. And data of course can be a dirty word, but when I talk about data, I am talking about not just test results, but also expertise and experience and that that knowledge is captured. The other point that I would like to make about that and connected to the review is that teachers and

others need the time and opportunities to share that learning - so that what is working in one place can be shared with somewhere else and what is not working can equally be shared. So I think an opportunity that the new DEIS offers is to do some fresh thinking about that whole notion of participative evaluation and knowledge sharing.

Pat Courtney (Principal): Just to add two points: one about salaries that was noted before, about the need for an allowance. I'm not sure how far we will get on that. At a national level there is the issue of post holders, retaining staff in DEIS schools where people previously used to leave school after a while. There is a huge amount of organisation around a DEIS school and people are volunteering and doing work and people need to have that acknowledged in their post holders - their A and B post holders. That is one point I would like to make that might help. The other point is about amalgamations. If you were in two six teacher schools - boys and girls - a six teacher school gets you a principal - and if you amalgamate the two DEIS schools you are down to one principal. If you amalgamate the schools with two school buildings - there is currently a block grant of €7,000 for your minor works so the two schools would get €14,000 and you get the amount for the numbers. If you amalgamate, you only get one block grant, so there are practical reasons that would impact on schools, although there may be very practical reasons to amalgamate and I'm not against that. If two DEIS schools amalgamate they are going to be severely impacted in the current system and the DES could do a lot about that by making sure that schools that amalgamate didn't lose.

Discussion Group 4 (Ruth Bourke)

We talked about DEIS schools and ethnic minorities, including Travellers. We felt that overall DEIS schools needed greater resources. We talked about rural DEIS as well which some [delegates] felt was almost forgotten. We also talked about the knock-on effect on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children of cuts to services such as Barnardos' counselling services and also cuts that have been experienced by the School Completion Programme over the past years as well. So our question is, 'will there be a greater weight for Traveller children in DEIS schools, for other ethnic minorities and also in non-DEIS schools as well'?

Discussion Group 5 (Luke Kilcoyne)

We talked about funding and issues – our key question is then, looking at the school support programme, 'would there be greater autonomy for DEIS schools to decide for themselves how to allocate their additional funding and additional staffing to respond to their own individual needs?'

Discussion Group 6 (Dympna Mulkerrins)

We discussed the whole topic of poverty and social exclusion. Our key question is, 'how can the assessment of children's needs be improved to ensure their holistic needs, that is their social, emotional, physical and learning needs, are catered for from day one in junior infants in all DEIS school communities without cutting back in other areas of education?'

Reponses from Panel

Eibhlin Byrne (Tusla): I think the key thing for any vulnerable groups is that the school doesn't operate in isolation. No school is going to be able to cater, whether it is for Traveller children or ethnic minorities, without being able to resource themselves through other services that are available in the community. Alleviation of any of the challenges that minority groups face is through working with, whether family resource centres in the area, whether it is identifying specialist groups, because a lot of the children who come [to Ireland] have language problems, particularly English as a foreign language. English as a foreign language is a key thing for children, and teachers who are trying to deal with a class of 20 children cannot address the needs of a child who is already struggling in English or whatever or not having English at home, though key to all of this is looking at the school as what it can provide and also linking with other resources in the community.

Pat Courtney (Principal): One thing that jumped out to me was the assessment of the children, and whether that could be done in junior infants rather than waiting for a term or more for reports, and then you find out later that the child has some difficulty that you didn't know about which has an impact. In terms of assessment, it is absolutely critical - I know it was mentioned earlier about other countries. We had one child from South Africa. He arrived in junior infants. He had an OT report, he had a psychological report, and he had a speech and language report. That has never happened to me before. It hasn't happened to me since. It is not fair to the children when we know they are struggling that they are not assessed, rather than wasting time and finding out much much later. The systems won't deliver, the current psychological system, they are not going to deliver that. The NEPS psychologist and the pathways won't allow [it]. I know what they say but the structure just can't do that.

Anne Colgan (CES): Perhaps just one point to add to what has been said about resources and that is to raise the question whether the mechanisms are good enough to enable schools to tap in well to whatever resources are there in the communities both at local level and county level. Schools don't have the time or the capacity to go searching for who is out there so it is important to bring the supports to the school gate and find good ways of ensuring that the community resources are connected in well to schools, particularly at county level., The local school may not have the capacity to tap into what is going on at wider county level like the drug task force or children and young people services. These supports are all operating in parallel with the work that schools are doing. The opportunity may be to look to implement good connections and links between what is already there as well as addressing the question as to what additional resources need to be there.

On the question of assessment of need, there would be others who would be far more expert in that area than myself. I would make one point. From years of being involved with disabilities' services and people with disabilities I know from listening to their dialogue over the years how much it mattered to them that their view of their needs is part of the assessment process, and that I think would apply equally to children and to families. On the question of autonomy, again just one point to make, that is the balance that might need to be struck between autonomy on one hand and good information and evidence about what works on the other hand. And I look across other countries and ask the question - be careful what you wish for - because sometimes

when funding is devolved there is a question about how that independence is balanced against other considerations.

Caitriona O'Brien (DES): In relation to NEPS supports for DEIS schools, this is also an area that will be looked at as part of the Review.

The point about making good connections and links between the range of services and supports to schools has been well made. This will be a key focus of the work of the Review's IDG. The important thing for the children and families who are receiving services is that there is sufficient inter-agency cooperation and working to ensure that services are delivered the most efficient and effective way possible. Clarity around roles and responsibilities, and service level agreements or protocols to reflect these, are also important.

On autonomy, the important thing to say is that, as you know, there is an increased focus on school autonomy, and we are moving more in that direction. It is important to note however, that increased autonomy requires increased accountability and this is something to be considered as part of the future monitoring and evaluation of the DEIS programme. For schools, it is important that the additional resources they receive under DEIS are linked to outputs and outcomes, both from an accounting point of view, but also to inform our learning from the programme.

Bernie McNally (DCYA): I'll be very brief - just two points on the school completion programme. We know that it was cut over the years and children and schools suffered as a result of it. The funding for it was protected in 2015 and it has been maintained again in 2016. We know that the ESRI produced a very good report and many of you contributed to that. It identified the huge importance and value of the programme. So Tusla - and Eibhlin can speak on this - do see the programme as a huge priority of the agency and it really links with other work they are doing for child welfare. I know that the results of that ESRI report are being acted on as we speak. Just to talk about assessment of needs, from day one in junior infants - again we are bringing it back, way back before that - we are saying if every child from a disadvantaged community is in preschool from the age of three - that should make sure that they have a good start. I know the Early Start programme is out there and has done a huge amount of work. The universal preschool is universal and out there in every community, as I said, 96% of children are availing of it. So we think that this is really going to help with the whole agenda.

On children with disabilities, we have moved away from being diagnosis led. We think there is a perverse incentive – 'if I have a child with some behavioural difficulties, I am incentivised to put a label on that child even at a very young age' - so the DES, HSE and NCSE are working together and we have agreed for these preschool children, we are not going to look at diagnosis at all. We are going to focus purely on their developmental stage and functional needs, and we will then build on resources that are required - be it speech and language needs, psychology or be it additional assistance in the classroom. In this incidence, we are giving the preschool money to let them buy in whatever service they need. We are not giving them that additional pair of hands. We are giving them an increased grant per child.

Workshop One: Geraldine Scanlon

We rolled through the presentation quite quickly as we were short of time. One of the comments, in talking to people afterwards, was particularly around the whole notion of bringing the service into the school, actually managing children with social and emotional behavioural difficulties and the whole notion of support. So while we know that the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) is operating with 100 schools at post-primary level the feeling on the ground is, when and if, will this move into primary level. Also will it be available to schools where they have needs identified in the allocation model?

Workshop Two: Sylvia Kazmierczak-Murray

Our question is, 'is the DES able, and the IDG strategy, to deliver multidisciplinary teams in and around each school and community'?

Workshop Three: Pat Collins

It is a statement: it is unacceptable that children, one in five children, come to school without a breakfast. Who is going to take responsibility for rectifying the situation and when?

Responses from Panel

Bernie McNally (DCYA): Again, there are other people on the panel who can talk about the school system, but with regard to bringing services into schools, I have to say that with preschools we decided that we have to bring services into preschools for many of the reasons I've outlined. But preschools are different. They are three hours a day. They are very different. We have negotiated with the HSE that where absolutely necessary the services do have to come into the preschool. We also have a national mentoring service. We have tripled the number of staff that we have working in it - be it from a small base. They will certainly work with the preschools to support them. It is about supporting the children but it is also about supporting the workforce and by investing in the workforce there is a bigger wider benefit to more children down the line.

Caitriona O'Brien (DES): In relation to the NBSS you are correct, the NBSS is available to 100 post-primary schools and there are also 40 Support Teacher posts in the primary system to provide behavioural supports. The increase in mental health and social and emotional behavioural issues amongst pupils is a recurring theme in our discussions with DEIS schools and will be an important element of our discussions within the DEIS review.

Regarding the multidisciplinary team story, there was a phrase that came up in the discussion group, describing services as being "*in and around schools*". We should have in schools what needs to be in schools, and have around schools what is appropriate to have around them - the essential point being that there is clarity about the roles and responsibilities of individual services are and how they work together to provide a service for the individual child.

The delivery of school meals is an example of this. The School Meals Scheme is funded directly to schools by the Department of Social Protection and priority is given to applications from DEIS schools. Delivery in individual schools and afterschool projects is undertaken, for the most part, by Tusla's School Completion Programme. The wider area of nutrition and healthy

eating is the responsibility of the DES through its remit in relation to the curriculum and school policies. These various responsibilities, and the actioning of them are brought together in a coherent way within Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, and through its Child Poverty Sub-Group which is co-chaired by DSP and the Children's Rights Alliance. The same Departmental and Agency personnel are engaging through the DEIS Review IDG and will consider the scope for improvements to ensure that children are not hungry in school.

Pat Courtney (Principal): Regarding the food issue, I wouldn't be happy with it. I don't mind who provides the food but they can't be hungry. They can't learn if they are hungry. We are running around with toast and milk and there is a cost. There are cleaning implications and there is a lot of trouble as it is taking away from other things that we could be doing, but you can't face into your day's work if you are hungry. So I would be delighted if other agencies made sure that the children weren't hungry, but the reality is that the children are hungry so we have to provide it, and if we are providing food safely then you have to have the kitchens and fridges and people who are qualified in order to prepare it and clean up afterwards to make it safe. I feel it is a cop out to say that we only provide money for the food and then schools have the obligations. Maybe we should say that we don't feel [we should]. The other option is that we don't and the children come in hungry but that doesn't make sense. You can't have children hungry, leaving aside the humanitarian side, you just can't learn if you are hungry. So the first thing you have to have is something to eat and then we carry on. If society or agencies sort it out, fine. But if they don't, then fund the schools. The other thing I would be very much for, and I have experience of this, is the support teacher in schools, especially in senior primary DEIS schools (much different to me). This resource is very useful in terms of meeting the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and the people who have worked there and who have seen it really value that. On the drop out issue, it is too late when children drop out. Children have disengaged way before they drop out. You know they disengage, so it is too late to wait till they go when they are showing acute signs at second level. It has to be dealt with earlier on.

Workshop 4: Ruth Bourke

In our session we were talking about Travellers and minorities. One school informed us that they had previously had disadvantage status which was lost under DEIS, but they now have a huge number of Travellers and international children and asked can they regain their status under the new DEIS programme?

Workshop 5: Luke Kilcoyne

In our group we were looking at the Northside Partnership with Noel Kelly. Our question is – 'do local area based approaches work better than national initiatives from the top down'?

Workshop 6: Dympna Mulkerrins

We had input on a model of a community-based coordinated approach to addressing disadvantage from Josephine Bleach. It is a project that is going on a number of years now in the inner city, the Docklands area. Our question is, 'could it be envisaged that funding could be made available for all DEIS schools, in relation to parental involvement and literacy and numeracy in preschool years?'

Responses from Panel

Eibhlin Byrne (Tusla): I absolutely agree that local delivery programmes are the best but that requires a number of things. It requires a local champion but is it fair to think that a child won't get a service in a particular area if there isn't a local champion? So you do need some national consistency to ensure whether the child is in the North, South, East or West of the country that they do actually get a service, so there should be some national input into it but there should also be some local leadership. In terms of the ethnic minorities, I think we need to be very aware that we are now a much more multi-cultural multi-ethnic society and we are going to have refugee children coming next year. I think we need to look at how to receive information from abroad as we currently do not accept assessments which we receive for children, so we are going to have to have a lot more thinking about ethnic minorities. I didn't get a chance earlier on about mental health to say that is probably our national disgrace because every time we have reviews of children who die in care or every time we look at reports from social workers they all point to the fact that mental health for our teens is a serious national issue. And we are not only having damaged teenagers but we are going to have damaged adults also.

Anne Colgan (CES): Local area-based approaches do work. It is not a question of choice between local area based approaches and having a policy framework with support from management for those initiatives. A joined up approach where, the national and local work hand in hand will deliver the best outcomes for the children.

Caitriona O'Brien (DES): Just a quick point on the area-based approach, absolutely, interventions trialled under this programme are of benefit and there are very good examples from them. The key point from the DES point of view, and in context of DEIS as well, is to embed the learning from those into the mainstream system so that the wider system is gaining the benefit. In terms of schools retaining, DEIS status, what the new identification process will do is take a fresh look at all schools.

Deirbhile Nic Craith (Assistant General Secretary, INTO)

As we are coming to the end of the conference, I want to say that the INTO sees this conference as building on our submission on DEIS, exploring the issues that were in our submission and even those issues that have arisen since our submission that would have come up in your discussion groups this morning and in the workshops. There are some system issues that obviously affect DEIS, but are there for all schools, such as in-school management and incentives for amalgamations that are on our agenda. We can see how we can progress those. There are very good things in DEIS and we have highlighted them in our submission. But there are things that we do need addressed and the criteria is one clear area. There are children that need support but who are not in the current DEIS schools. School profiles change over time and there needs to be a process as the Department has outlined, as Caitriona has said, where schools can join DEIS at different times whenever the new DEIS will be. We highlighted the need for additional funding, the capitation grant is just not high enough, the PTR issues in the DEIS schools, the need for professional development and support for the literacy and numeracy programmes and other programmes that schools use which are very beneficial for schools. We

highlighted also the issue of the support services, the external supports - that is psychological service, the therapy services for children, particularly for those who have mental health and social and emotional difficulties, but also the in-school supports such as the HSCL teams, the school completion programme, and early intervention. They are in our submission, but I'm delighted to hear that they are the issues that have been brought up again today and the INTO will bring those issues to the next stage of the consultation on DEIS.

Paul Downes (Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, DCU): We had hoped for questions from the audience but we have run out of time. If there are issues that you felt haven't been aired please do email me paul.downes@dcu.ie and we will document them officially in the records of the conference. Thank you all for attending.

Caitriona O'Brien (DES): Can I just say on behalf of the DES, thank you very much for your input today. This has been a very valuable exercise that reinforces many of the messages we have been getting already from DEIS schools. When we have some product from the review process, we will be coming back to you for further stakeholder consultation with yourselves and teachers at post-primary level and others as well. So thank you very much.

Emma Dineen (President, INTO)

I just want to thank the following people for their excellent contribution towards our discussion topic today namely *Review of DEIS: Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education*. They are Minister Aodhán O Riordáin, Minister of State with responsibility for New Communities, Culture and Equality who opened the conference; Carol Coulter who presented the keynote address; Pat Courtney, principal teacher; our workshop presenters Mary Keane, Fiona Kearney, Sinead Keenan, Hilary Harmon, Noel Kelly and Josephine Bleach; our panel participants Caitriona O'Brien, Anne Colgan, Eibhlin Byrne and Bernie McNally.

I would also like to thank Dáire Keogh, President, St. Patrick's College and Sheila Nunan, General Secretary, INTO for their contributions. A big thank you to INTO Head Office staff, Claire Garvey, Ann McConnell, Elaine Daly, Cara Kirwan, Joe O'Reilly and Seaghan Moriarty for the webcast.

Finally I would like to thank Deirbhile Nic Craith, Assistant General Secretary, INTO and Dr Paul Downes, Director of the Educational Disadvantage Centre for organising this conference and to all who attended it as delegates.

Appendix I - Clár

- 08.45am **Registration**
- 9.30am **Opening of Conference**
Minister Aodhán Ó Riordáin
Daire Keogh, President, St Patrick's College
Sheila Nunan, INTO General Secretary
- 09.50am **Social exclusion and child protection**
Carol Coulter, Director Childcare Law Reporting Project
- The Primary School Experience**
Pat Courtney, principal teacher
- 10.30am **Discussion Groups**
- 11.15am Tea / Coffee
- 11.30am **Workshops**
Teaching and supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
Multidisciplinary teams in and around schools
A national strategy for hunger prevention in schools
Ensuring inclusion: the challenges for Traveller and Roma children in education
Northside partnership
A community-based approach to addressing educational disadvantage
- 12.30pm **Panel Discussion**
Paul Downes, Director, Centre for Educational Disadvantage, St Patrick's College, DCU (Chairperson)
Pat Courtney, principal teacher
Eibhlin Byrne, Interim Director of Educational Welfare, Tusla
Caitriona O'Brien, Principal Officer, Social Inclusion, Department of Education and Skills
Bernie McNally, Assistant Secretary, Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
Anne Colgan, Centre for Effective Services
Deirbhile Nic Craith, Director of Education and Research, INTO
- 1.45pm Críoch

Appendix II – Workshops

Teaching and supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
 Mary Keane, National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS)

National Behaviour Support Service
'Promoting and Supporting Behaviour for Learning'

INTO/ Educational Disadvantage Centre
Review of DEIS
 Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Service

NBSS Mission Statement

'Promoting and Supporting Behaviour for Learning'

The NBSS promotes and supports positive behaviour for learning through the provision of a systematic continuum of support to school communities, grounded in evidence-based practice.

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Service

NBSS Guiding Principles

'Promoting and Supporting Behaviour for Learning'

- Schools can make a difference in young people's lives.
- A school-wide approach, founded on respectful relationships, is essential in promoting and supporting positive behaviours throughout the school community.
- Behaviour is intrinsically linked to teaching and learning.
- Inclusion is a core educational value.
- Good practice in schools is acknowledged and disseminated.

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Service

NBSS Model of Support draws extensively from:

- Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
(Sugai & Horner, 2002)
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
(Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006)
- Comprehensive, Integrated Three – Tier Model of Prevention (CI3T)
(Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009)

The integration of these frameworks offers opportunities to address the academic, social, emotional, behavioural and wellbeing needs of students effectively, with interventions at different levels of intensity and support.

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Service

NBSS Model of Support to Schools

ACADEMIC BEHAVIOURAL SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL POSITIVE HEALTH & WELLBEING

Intensive Individual Interventions (1-5%)
 - Individual Students
 - Assessment (formal/functional)
 - High Intensity

Targeted Group Interventions (5-10%)
 - Some students (at-risk)
 - Rapid response

Universal Interventions (80-90%)
 - All students
 - Preventive, proactive

Level 3 Support
 Intensive intervention for a small number of students

Level 2 Support
 Targeted interventions for groups of students

Level 1 Support
 School-wide behaviour support designed for all students

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Service

NBSS Level 1 School-wide Support

Expectations Rules Structures Practices Routines

Systems Policies Procedures

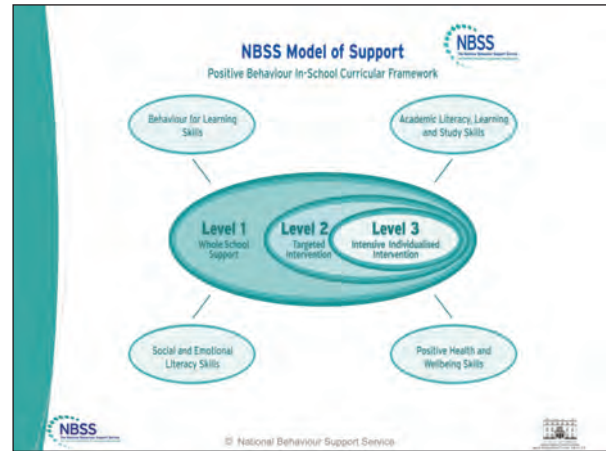
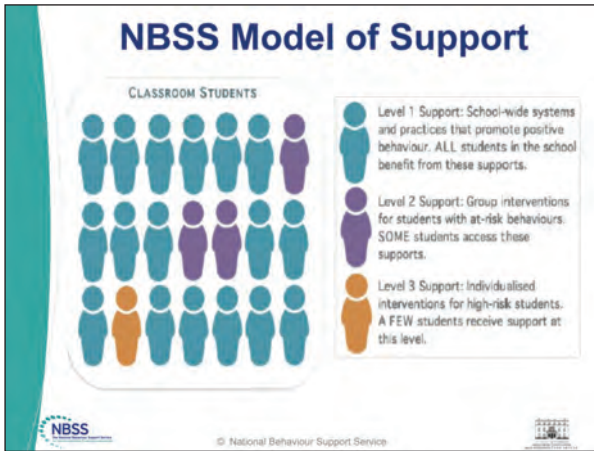
Vision Mission Guiding Principles

Acknowledgements, Encouragements and Rewards

Responses to Behaviour

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Service

Teaching and supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
 Mary Keane, National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS)



Individualised, Intensive Intervention : Level 3

Students who are offered level 3 support usually present with a variety of behaviours that challenge:-

- Difficult relationships with adults and peers
- Poor concentration and attention difficulties in most subjects
- Persistently at risk of suspension and sometimes expulsion
- The severity of their behaviour in classrooms not only hinders their own educational progress but may also impede that of their peers

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Difficulties which a pupil or young person is experiencing which acts as a barrier to their personal, social, cognitive and emotional development. These difficulties may be communicated through internalising and/or externalising behaviours. Relationships with self, others and community may be affected and the difficulties may interfere with the pupil's own personal and educational development or that of others.

NEPS, 2011

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Group of children within an educational setting who present with disturbing and/or disruptive behaviour that interferes with social functioning and academic engagement. Their behaviour may be termed 'acting out' (disruptive) or 'acting-in' (showing withdrawal and/or avoidance). Although not always the case, many come from socially deprived or disrupted family backgrounds.

Cooper, P et al: NCSE, 2011

John (10 yrs.)

VISIBLE

- Often missing materials such as copies, pens and books.
- Talks out of turn
- Disrupts lessons consistently by fidgeting, interrupting.
- Refuses to read aloud in class
- Has difficulty with class work and gives up easily.

INVISIBLE

- John presents with ADHD
- John has limited use of vocabulary and possible SLCN and a low reading age.
- John has anger management issues
- John is not motivated to learn or cooperate. SEBD.

Teaching and supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
 Mary Keane, National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS)

SEBD – Areas of Concentration for Schools

- School Culture and Climate – inclusion at system Level
- Adoption of a bio-psycho-social approach – system level
- Staff Knowledge/Understanding of Social Disadvantage and Family Dysfunction
- Staff ongoing and planned CPD (Teacher/SNA) – pupil complex needs and comorbidity
- Student Wellbeing (mental, emotional, physical) – social and curriculum access
- Social Skills (social and emotional literacy) – social and curriculum access
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs – social and curriculum access
- Literacy and Numeracy – social and curriculum access
- Behaviour for Learning Skills – social and curriculum access
- Self regulation and Sensory Integration – social and curriculum access
- Build and maintain positive relationships with parents – inclusion and participation

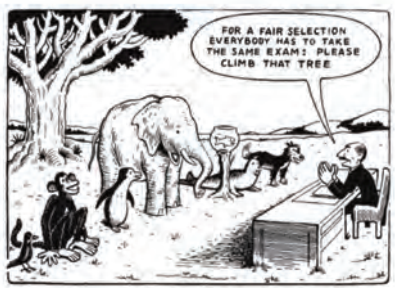
NBSS © National Behaviour Support Services

"If a child doesn't know how to read, *we teach.*"
"If a child doesn't know how to swim, *we teach.*"
"If a child doesn't know how to multiply, *we teach.*"
"If a child doesn't know how to behave, *we...*
...teach? ...punish?"

"Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"
 Tom Hener (NASDE President) | Counterpoint 1998, p.2

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Services

Personal Capacity



FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Services

School Culture and Climate Well-Being of a School Community

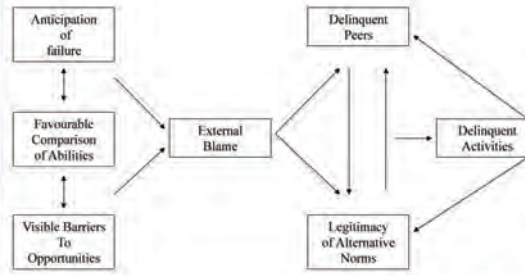
Among the core ten actions:

- Developing whole-school systems and structures to support the early identification of children experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties
- Developing and maintaining a safe, caring culture and climate within the school where a sense of belonging and connectedness is fostered
- Fostering a whole-school ethos that accepts and values diversity within the pupil and staff population
- Building positive relationships between teachers and children to promote participation, social interaction and pro-social behaviour

DES, Dept. of Health, HSE, NEPS, 2015

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Services

Staff Knowledge of Subculture Approaches – Example



Cloward, R., Ohlin, L. (1960)

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Services

Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACE) 1998 – 2011

This study defined ACE as:

- Childhood abuse and neglect,
- Growing up with domestic violence,
- Substance abuse,
- Mental illness in the home,
- Parental discord, or
- Crime

Felitti, 1998. WHO, 2006

NBSS © National Behaviour Support Services

Behaviours Linked to Disadvantage

- Laugh when disciplined (save face)
- Poorly organised (not taught at home)
- Angry responses (anger = fear)
- Rude to adults (lack of respect for authority)
- Argues with teachers (system is unfair/unjust)
- Cannot follow directions (little practice of procedural memory)
- Physically high (survival skills)
- Completes only part of task (tyranny of the moment)
- Hurts others (way of life, issues addressed negatively)
- Makes rude comments (reliance on casual)

Payne, R. 2009. *Understanding Poverty*

NBSS

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Common Addictive Family Dynamics/Roles

- Addict ('The Dependent')
- Chief Enabler ('The Co-Dependent')
- Family Hero ('The Responsible One')
- Placater ('The People-Pleaser')
- Scapegoat ('The Acting –Out One')
- Lost Child ('The Adjuster')
- Mascot ('The Jester')

Wegscheider-Cruse, S., Black, C., 2010

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Attachment Issues

- Attachment issues can arise from a lack of nurturing, chaotic home environment, cognitively or relationally impoverished environments, unpredictable stress, persistent fear, inappropriate parenting, persisting physical threats

Perry, B., 2004

- The quality of a child's attachment is predictive of the child's future social, psychological, behavioural and cognitive functioning

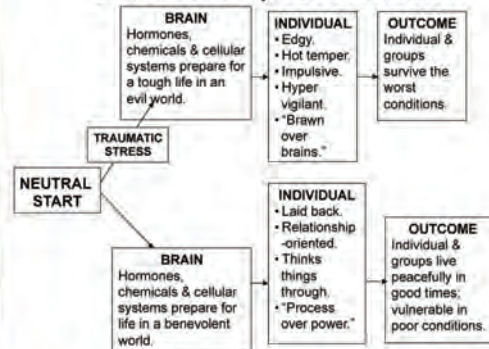
Mennem, F. and O'Keefe, M., 2005

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Brain Development Patterns



Adapted from the research of Martin Teicher, MD, Ph.D

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Childhood Resiliency

Childhood resiliency requires a shift in thinking from what is "wrong" with "problem" children who are casualties of negative/pathological factors,

to the study of what is "right" with children, what it is about them and their support environment that enables them to adapt, and in some cases thrive, despite the traumatic stressors in their lives.

(Rutter, 1990; Masten, Best and Garmezy, 1990; Wolin & Wolin, 1993)

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Prevalence – Comorbidity Examples

- 50-80% of Students with Behaviour Difficulties have increased chance of presenting with difficulties understanding language based instructions and expressing themselves. (Cohen *et al.*, 1993; Stringer & Lozano 2007; Bryan *et al.*, 2007).
- 60-95% of Students from areas of social disadvantage are at increased risk of presenting with difficulty understanding and using vocabulary, understanding instruction and/or explaining themselves through language. (NBSS document; Spencer, Clegg & Stackhouse, 2012).
- Students with Organisational Difficulties/ ADHD are at increased risk of not remembering information/processes which have been taught (Thompson, Morgan and Urquhart, 2003; O'Regan, 2006).

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Comorbidity Example - ADHD


How does it manifest in the Classroom?

Main Features:

- Inattentiveness – easily distracted, flits from task to task, slow to complete work, forgets instructions
- Impulsiveness – ‘shoot from the hip’ both verbally and physically
- Over-activity – restless, fidgety, difficulty remaining seated
- Difficulty taking turns

Other behaviours can also be identified:


- Emotional over-arousal – show extremities of the emotional spectrum
- Variability – dramatic mood swings and performance swings
- Poor co-ordination – motor clumsiness
- Disorganisation – books and notes, equipment gets lost
- Poor time management – Poor time keeping, procrastinate
- Gives up easily on tasks, even in group activities
- Difficult to motivate
- Difficulties with relationships



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Childhood Anxiety

- Anxiety constitutes one of the most prevalent forms of psychological distress in childhood and youth.
Educational Psychology, Albano, Chorpita & Barlow, 2003
- When rates of specific phobias are included, the overall rates of anxiety disorders increase to 18.8% among 11-13 year olds.
RCSI Report: Cannon, Coughlan, Clarke, Harley, Kelleher, 2013
- Anxiety is the most common psychological disorder in school-aged children and adolescents. Prevalence rates in Ireland estimate that 18.7% of children suffer from some form of mental health issue or psychological disorder, including anxiety severe enough to cause impairment.
Barnardos Report: Tomorrow's Child, 2008



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The 'FRIENDS' Programmes

The 'FRIENDS' programmes were developed by Professor Paula Barrett for children aged 4 years right through to adults. Each programme is similar in theoretical principles. However, each programme is age appropriate and has additional techniques for each stage of development.



Fun Friends (4 to 7 years)



Friends for Life (8 to 11 years)



My Friends Youth (12 to 15 years)

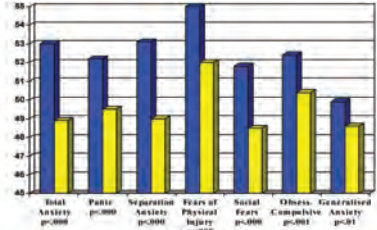


Adult Resilience - Strong not Tough (16+)




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Results of NBSS Research (2012)



Category	Total (Blue)	Sub-category (Yellow)	p-value
Total Anxiety	~53	~48	p<.000
Public Anxiety	~52	~49	p<.000
Separation Anxiety	~53	~48	p<.000
Fears of Physical Injury	~55	~52	p<.000
Social Fears	~52	~48	p<.000
Obsessive Compulsive Anxiety	~53	~50	p<.001
Grandiose Anxiety	~50	~47	p<.01



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Language and Communication are linked to Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Between 50-80% of young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have undetected speech, language or communication needs (Cohen et al. 1998, Bryan et al, 2007).

Specific Studies on incidence of SLCN:

- 74% of students with identified social, emotional and behavioural disorders (including ADHD) (Stringer & Lozano 2007).
- 66% of excluded males (Clegg et al, 2009).
- 46-67% of youth offenders (Bryan et al, 2007).




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Language in the Classroom

Your Classroom Language


- Language of the classroom is complex (Whitmore, 2000) with approximately 37% of instructions having multiple meanings

Teacher: I'm putting my foot down now.
Student: Where?

Teacher: This is where I draw the line!
Student: Where?



- 80-85% of classroom instruction is language based (Brent et al, 2001)

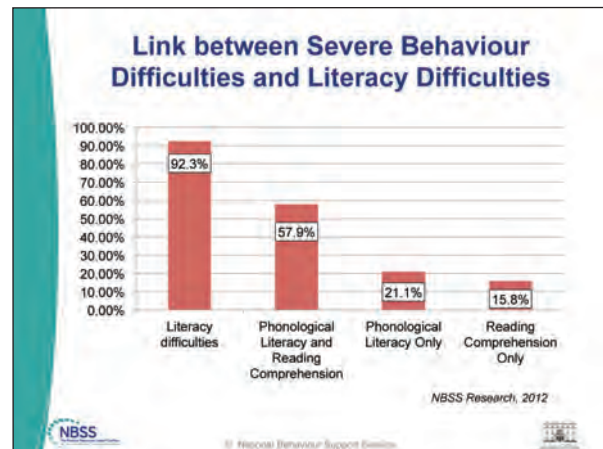
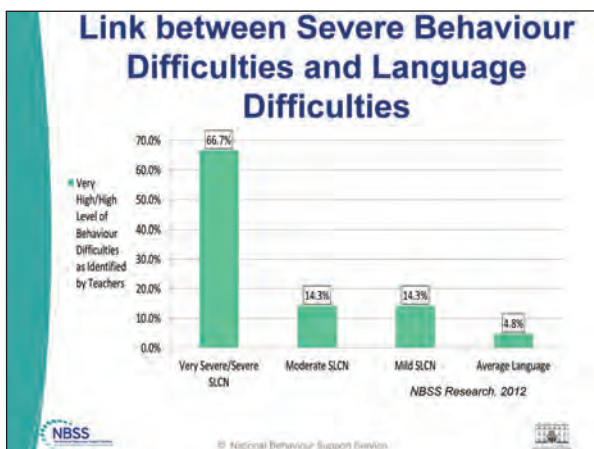
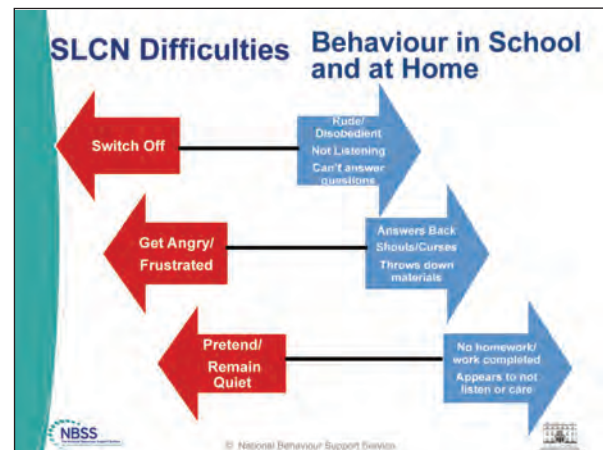
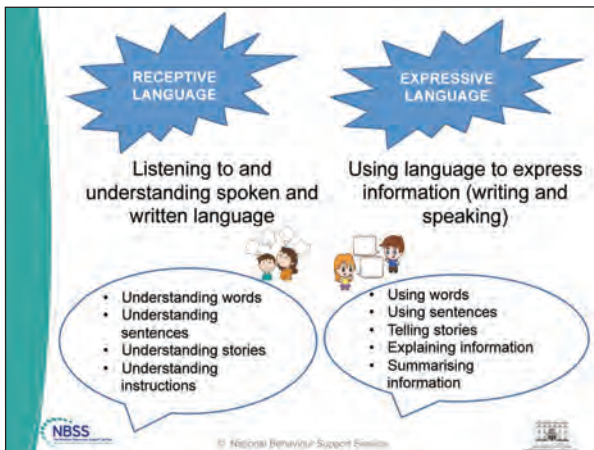
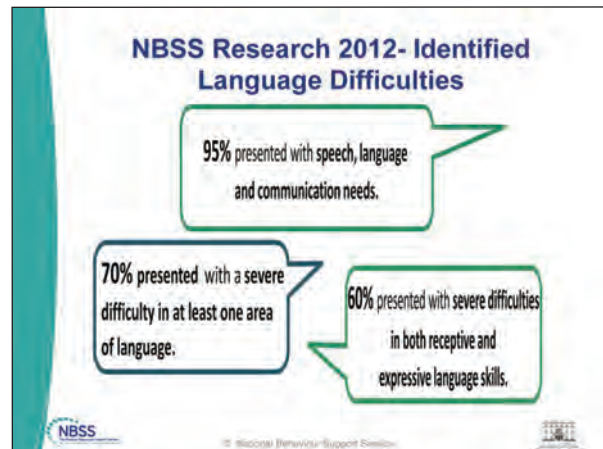


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Teaching and supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
 Mary Keane, National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS)

SLCN and Social Disadvantage

Restricted vocabulary	Limited use of complex words, though young people may often be aware of the importance of 'long words', linking them with intelligence and not 'fitting in' socially.
Poor narrative skills	Problems with longer stretches of spoken language such as explanations, even when simple sentence structure is adequate.
Inappropriate register	Difficulty moving from one style of language to another leading to appearing rude or inappropriate by, e.g. using an overly casual style of talking.



Teaching and supporting students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
 Mary Keane, National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS)

Examples of Literacy Interventions

Class/Year Group Interventions	Group and Individual Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridge to Vocabulary Programme Comprehension Strategy Instruction (CSI) Corrective Reading Decoding Intervention Flip for Comprehension NBSS Building Whole School Reading Communities NBSS Academic Vocabulary Strategies NBSS Comprehension Strategy Resources NBSS Language and Literacy Games NBSS Study and Learning Skills Resources NBSS Vocabulary and Comprehension Games NBSS Writing with Wow Words Orderd Rollercoaster Rapid Plus Reading Intervention SNP Literacy Programme Storymaker's Chest Story Cubes Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (VEP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerated Achievement Programme ARROW Programme Bridge to Vocabulary Programme Catch Up Literacy Reading Intervention Comprehension Strategy Instruction (CSI) Corrective Reading Decoding Intervention Flip for Comprehension Literacy Digital Games NBSS Academic Vocabulary Strategies NBSS Comprehension Strategy Resources NBSS Language and Literacy Games NBSS Vocabulary and Comprehension Games NBSS Study and Learning Skills Resources NBSS Writing with Wow Words Rapid Plus Reading Intervention SNP Literacy Programme Spotlight on Reading & Listening Comprehension Spell Write Right Programme Storymaker's Chest Story Cubes Talk by Talk Trugs Phonics Programme Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (VEP) Wordshark Wordsworth Programme

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EXAMPLE: Visual Voice Chart

Classroom Voice Levels

5	Out of Control Just way too loud	
4	Loud Crowd Too loud for most activities	
3	Formal Normal Regular speech Class participation	
2	Low Flow Partner or team work	
1	Spy Talk Whisper quietly to your neighbour	
0	Zero Noise Level Silence. No Talking Testing, Individual Work	

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Specific Learning Difficulties – Hidden Communication Needs

Words, Sounds, Memory and Sequencing

Attention, Concentration, Planning and Regulating

10% SLCN + other difficulties

Spatial Awareness Motor-Skills and Co-ordination

Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Interpretation in context Social significance

Language and Communication Needs

Dyslexia

Dyspraxia

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SLT in NBSS Model

Intensive Individualised Intervention
tailored to the needs of the student

Level 3 Support
Intensive interventions for a small number of students

Targeted Small Group Intervention
e.g. vocabulary development; narrative skills; social communication

Level 2 Support
Targeted interventions for groups of students

Whole Class Support
e.g. vocabulary enrichment programme; reading comprehension strategies

Level 1 Support
School-wide behaviour support designed for all students

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Social Skill Difficulties

Basic Skill Difficulty	Performance Difficulties - examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eye Contact Body Language Facial expression Posture Social distance Use of gesture Tone of voice Volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting conversations Asking to join in Offering invitations Asking for and offering help Following instructions Responding to negative feedback Saying 'no' and dealing with peer pressure Assertive responding Accepting a compliment Dealing with teasing and bullying Negotiation and conflict resolution

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Overall Feelings

STOP!

CALM DOWN

RELAX

GOOD

VERY HAPPY

ANGRY

SCARED

FRUSTRATED

HAPPY

CONTENT

SAD

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Key Steps to Effective Social Skills Interventions

- Choose skills that will enhance functionality
- Think about cultural context – pay attention to social skills needed in different contexts
- Build in self-awareness
- Joint target planning (shared learning outcomes)
- Duration and intensity
- Booster sessions
- Parents aware of skills being taught
- Be structured and consistent (monitor performance)



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Behaviour Interventions

'Children are described as having 'behavioural difficulties' or 'dysfunctional behaviour'. These ideas are not particularly helpful in terms of thinking about why a young person has chosen a particular way of communicating their distress, grief, anger, frustration and fear. Behaviour is rarely dysfunctional. It has a function for the child and that function is usually connected firstly with survival, and secondly with communication.

Understanding behaviour and assisting young people to find alternative ways of surviving in a world they experience as difficult and hostile, and communicating the nature of that experience to those around them, is at the root of any successful intervention or 'treatment'.

Rich, J. 2009



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Behaviours that Challenge

Misbehaviour of pre-adolescents : four short term goals:-

- Look for **Attention**
- Seek **Power**
- Look for **Revenge**
- Avoid tasks – **Avoidance of failure**

If these needs were met by the teacher's relationship with the student and teaching approach adopted, students would learn gradually to cooperate reasonably, without being penalized or rewarded, because they would feel that they are valuable contributors to the classroom.


Rudolf Dreikurs



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Research on Wait Time

- Typical teacher pauses, on average, between 0.7 and 1.4 seconds after his/her questions before continuing to talk or permitting a student to respond.
- When teachers perceive a student as being slow or unable to answer, this period of time is frequently less than .7 seconds. *Casteel and Stahl, 1973; Rowe 1972; Stahl 1990; Tobin 1987.*




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Encouraging Positive Behaviour

- Structure
- Predictability
- Consistency of approach
- Firm but fair management

→ RULES and ROUTINES




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Can the Student Understand and Verbalize the Rule/Routine?










What does the rule/routine:-


- Look like ?
- Act like ?
- Sound like ?
- Feel like ?



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What do school rules look like?

BE RESPONSIBLE	BE READY	BE RESPECTFUL
Be on Time 	Line up outside your Classroom 	Stay to the Right/Left 
Go Directly to your Next Class 	Be Prepared and on Time 	Keep Hands, Feet and Objects to Yourself 
Follow all Staff Requests/Directions 	Have your Jacket off and Journal in Hand 	Use Indoor Voices 



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Positive Behaviour Works Best When

Prevention creates more positive than negative consequences




Reinforcement (success) 4 : 1 Punishment (Failure)




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Notice and Affirm Rules and Routines

“Proactively catching children following the rules and praising them helps to reinforce successful behaviours and maintain a positive climate in the classroom and beyond”



(Hook and Vass, 2004)



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Sanctions/Consequences

Sanctions/Consequences should be:

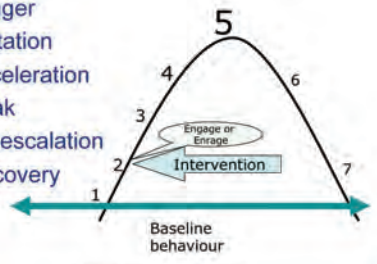
- Immediate and predictable
- Directed at the behaviour
- Fair
- Consistent
- Appropriate to meet individual needs
- Provide school with opportunities to make low level response to pupil behaviour - have a hierarchy appropriate to behaviour




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Staff CPD - Cycle of Acting Out

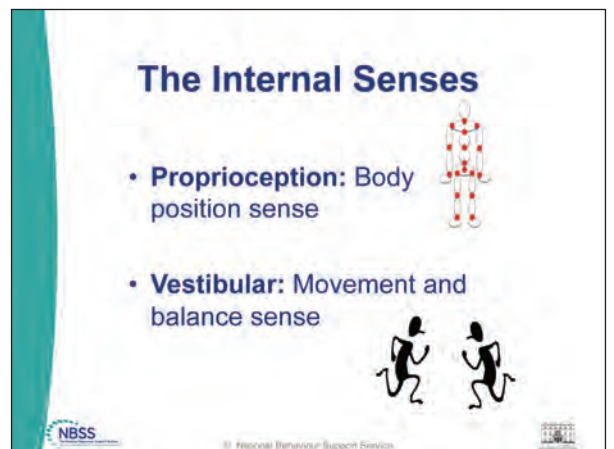
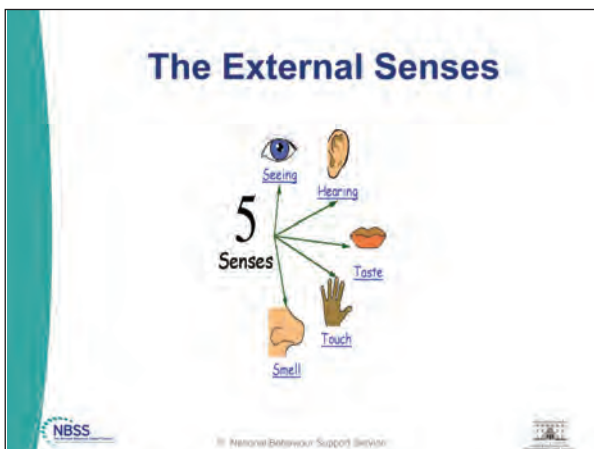
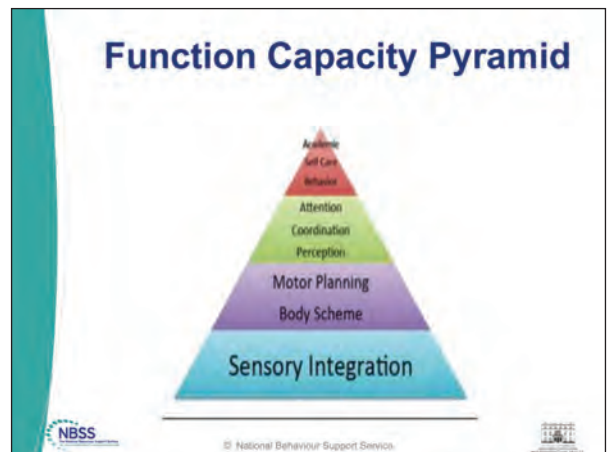
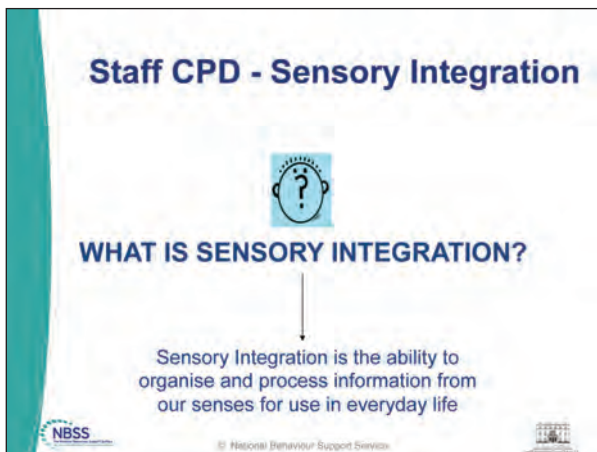
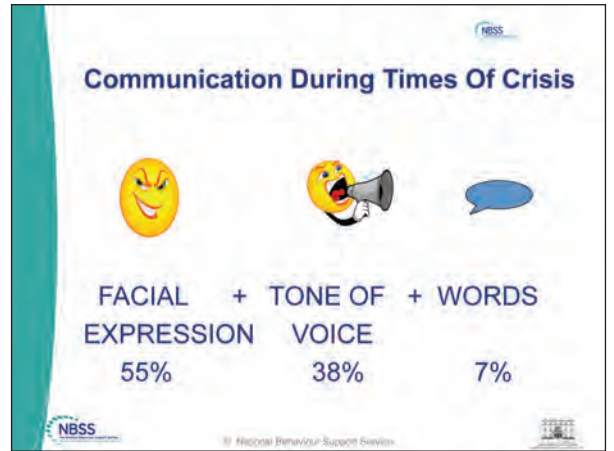
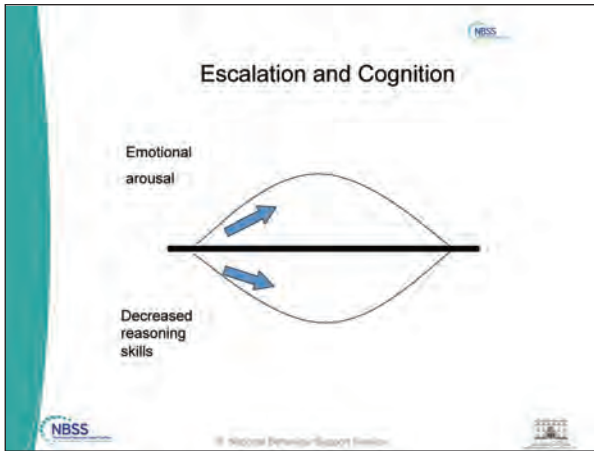
1. Calm
2. Trigger
3. Agitation
4. Acceleration
5. Peak
6. De-escalation
7. Recovery



Baseline behaviour




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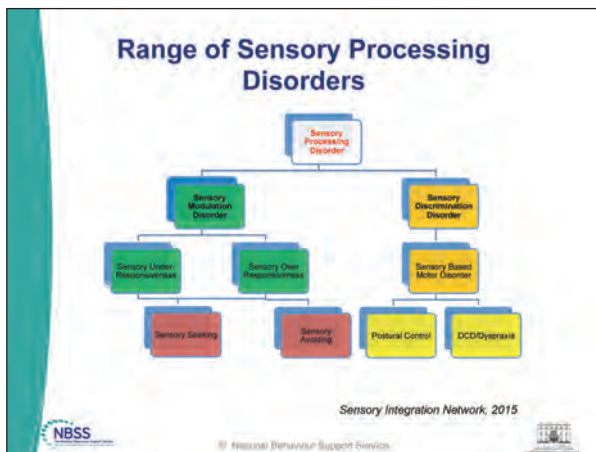
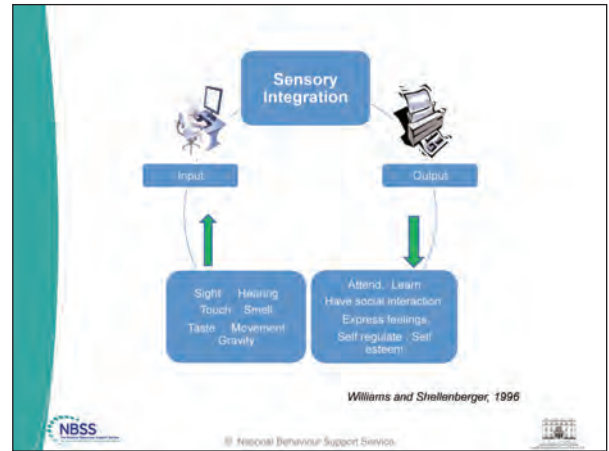


Sensory Modulation

- "The processing of sensory input in a manner that permits an appropriate environmental interaction." (Lane, et al. 2011)
- **Automatic response.**
 - If modulation is working well:
 - Enables attention to relevant
 - Filters out unimportant
 - If not working well:
 - Unresponsiveness
 - Craving excessive input
 - Overwhelmed and distressed




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Alert Programme

Students learn how to define and label how their "engine is running".




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Student Behaviour Plan

Level 3 Support: Student Behaviour Planning Document


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Monitor, Reinforce, Review

How do we know how things are working?



"HANG ON WHILE I FIND A PENCIL."

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FamiliBase

- FamiliBase is a merged organisation of Familiscope and The Base
- Work on the a merger commenced in October 2012 as a survival strategy for both organisations
- This culminated in the merger which was formalised on 30th March 2014

Familiscope-background

- URBAN Ballyfermot, the Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force, Ballyfermot Partnership Education programme and the then South West Area Health Board. Common needs identified as part of local development work 2002-2004.
- Statutory commitment at URBAN Board level i.e. DES, HSE, Local Government
- URBAN commissioned research piece 2003, Downes' report published 2004. Qualitative study with large focus on education personnel at all levels and the voices of children and adolescents.
- Familiscope established 2004-Emotional Supports/ Language Supports/ Outreach necessary for ESL prevention
- Child Welfare wrap around model commenced development in 2006

Context for Familiscope development

- Lack of access to/successful participation in education at all levels, a key indicator for intergenerational drug use, criminal activity, poverty, long term unemployment
- Remove the social, economic-related, emotional and psychological barriers to access & participation (in education and other support initiatives/services)
- Importance of child centred delivery
- Importance of supporting/up-skilling key adults in child's life
- Importance of challenging/thinking critically about current systems and structures—challenge deficit thinking around those unable to access/participate—maybe it's the system/structure with the deficit?



Some of the assumptions underlying the FamiliBase philosophy

- Inequalities in education are unjust and must be changed
- The school-family and school-community relationship is a cornerstone of addressing that inequality
- The school-family and school-community relationship does not always operate as it needs to, to do this;
- School can carry a dual role in perpetuating existing inequalities or in being a transformative mechanism depending on how school, services, families children and young people interact

Multidisciplinary teams in and around school Fiona Kearney, Familibase, Ballyfermot

Current Policy Context

Department of Education

- Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures
- High level Policy Statement on Supporting Parents and Families
- National Youth Strategy

TUSLA – Child and Family Agency

- Education Welfare
- Child Protection and Welfare
- Meitheal
- What Works in Family Support

HSE

- National Drugs Strategy/ National Substance Misuse Strategy
- Suicide Prevention Strategy

From Multiple Agencies to cohesive Multidisciplinary teams for Early School Leaving Prevention

- The Alliances for Inclusion Report (Edwards and Downes, 2013) reviewed the enabling conditions for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams and cross sectoral approaches for social exclusion prevention building on 16 examples from 10 European Countries
- Schools cannot work alone to disrupt intergenerational cycles of deprivation and tackle educational disadvantage. A combination of factors beyond schools limits educational opportunities and life chances.
- A policy focus is needed to go beyond multiple agencies, need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services, 'passing on bits of the child' and family (Edwards and Downes, 2013)
- The multifaceted nature of risk requires a multifaceted response

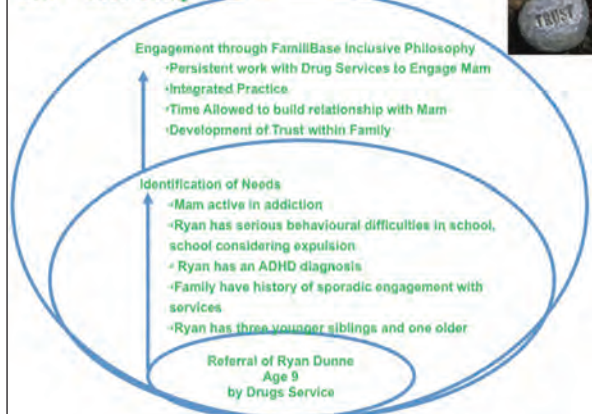
CWP Model of Practice



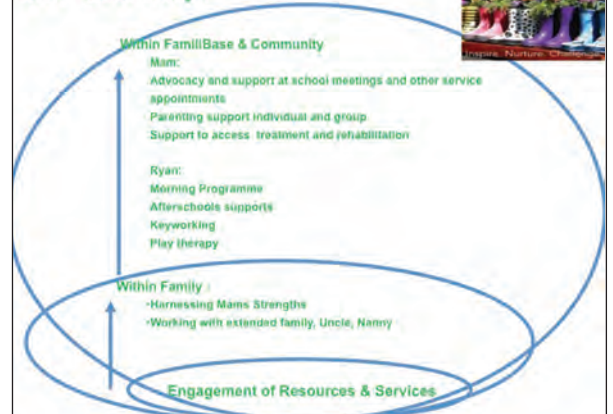
Familibase CWP System



CWP – Case Study 1



CWP – Case Study 1




CWP – Case Study 1

Review and Progression

- Ryan is now in 1st year of Secondary School
- Mam has accessed residential treatment
- Ryan is engaging well with Youth Work Programme in Familibase
- Mam and Ryan's relationship improved
- Mam completed two parenting programme
- Two younger siblings doing y well in school

Family ready to Progress from CWP



Demonstrating effectiveness...

Jan - June 2015

- 22 families and 68 children currently engaged on the Child Welfare Programme (CWP) Age ranges of the children are:
- 0-5yrs = 19; 6-11yrs = 18; 12-15yrs = 20; 16+yrs = 11
- All children and young people on the CWP have been retained in education, 4 young people completed Leaving Certificate, 2 progressing to further education
- 9 children and young people receiving counselling or play therapy
- All young people are supported by key workers to develop coping strategies to deal with the challenges of parental substance misuse
- 8 Parents completed a Parenting Programme
- 20 Parents currently accessing treatment and rehabilitation supports
- Of the 11 families receiving a social work intervention, the children of 10 of these families remain living at home

School Days Absent

Pre Familiscope Intervention	Pre Familiscope Intervention	Pre Familiscope Intervention	Pre Familiscope Intervention
2007-2008: 89	2006 -2007:121	2008 – 2009: 56	2006-2007: 72
Post Familiscope Intervention	Post Familiscope Intervention	Post Familiscope intervention	Post Familiscope intervention
2008- 2009: 36	2007- 2008: 38	2009 to Feb 2010: 3	2007 – 2008: 35
2009 to Feb 2010: 10	2008 – 2009: 42	2009 to Feb 2010: 9	2008-2009: 25
			2009 to Feb 2010: 10

Education element of FamiliBase/ relationship to Education

In general terms:

- Integral to all that we do
- Underpins all of the work
- FamiliBase, and Familiscope before it, is a product of the recognition for the need to integrate services and respond holistically, to the whole person and in some cases a whole family to ensure positive educational outcomes.
- Education is recognised as being a key predictor of positive life choices and chances

Education element of FamiliBase/ relationship to Education

More tangibly:

- Capacity to facilitate interventions which impact attendance figures
- Capacity to work with parents and to shift what can be a negative dynamic between parents and schools following a pattern of negative behaviours/negative experiences. This work can also be at the level of parental confidence.
- Capacity to work with children/young people/parents/teachers around behavioural management/emotional difficulties/early language skills/literacy development

Policy recommendations for DEIS 2

DEIS 2 TO DELIVER EQUALITY OF OUTCOME NOT EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

- An integrated and cohesive strategy & policy statement committing to moving beyond equality of opportunity measures towards measures promoting equality of outcome inclusive of all relevant policy areas e.g. education, health, housing, welfare, substance misuse

Policy recommendations for DEIS 2

COMMITMENT TO MEANINGFUL MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WRAP AROUND APPROACHES

- Acknowledgement of & commitment to roles and levels of expertise required for working with complex and chronic needs, family workers, speech and language therapists, counsellors, therapists. Support the implementation of a community based model of child-centred wrap around approaches to address complex issues involved in early school leaving e.g. child participation in school, parental involvement, mental health issues, language issues, substance misuse issues

Policy recommendations for DEIS 2

IDENTIFY & SPECIFY TUSLA ROLE IN DEIS 2 AND INTEGRATE STRATEGIES IN AN INTEGRATED POLICY STATEMENT

- Clarity & acknowledgement around the skill-set, expertise, scope and nature of those involved in Meitheal lead practitioner roles, family work, parenting, outreach, engagement of those most marginalised families

Policy recommendations for DEIS 2

TIME GIVEN BY DES FOR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR TEACHERS WORKING IN DEIS SCHOOLS & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE SPACES

e.g. Behaviour management approaches & philosophies like Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), equality of outcome training, creation of reflective spaces for teachers & their community partners to collaborate & reflect

Policy recommendations for DEIS 2

COMMITMENT & STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE EDUCATION APPROACHES INTO EDUCATION MEASUREMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

- Working to broaden what is valued & measured in the education system and to ensure learners with abilities outside of the traditional intelligence measurement are acknowledged as part of the systems of measurement





Healthy Food for All
 access | availability | affordability

INTO & Educational Disadvantage Centre

A National Strategy for Hunger Prevention in Schools

Sinead Keenan
 Project Co-ordinator

www.healthyfoodforall.com
 @hffaireland

Food Poverty

The inability to afford or access healthy food



Why?

- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Availability
- Awareness



What do we know about the affordability of healthy food?

- *Low-income households twice as likely to experience food poverty*
- *Low-income groups spend disproportionately more on food*
 - 1/4 of weekly spend on healthy basket (2015)
- *Impact of austerity – social welfare dependent households have experienced drop in income of between 5-8% since 2008 (VPSJ, 2014)*

1 in 8

people in Ireland are living in food poverty



1 in 5

Children go to school or to bed hungry because there is not enough food in the home (HBSC, 2012)



1 in 6

Children never eat breakfast on a weekday (HBSC, 2012)



1 in 5

Primary Principals observed an increase in children coming to school hungry (IPPN, 2013)



Obesity in Irish Children

1 in 4 9-year olds are overweight or obese (Growing Up in Ireland 2011)

Girls and children in lower social classes were more likely to be overweight or obese (Growing Up in Ireland 2011)

Impact of obesity:

- Respiratory, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and metabolic effects including increased chances of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes
- Poor self-image and poor quality of life

Impact of poor nutrition on children

Education – academic development, school performance, concentration, attendance and leaving school early without qualifications

Physical – health and well-being

Emotional – disruptive behaviour

Social – life skills

Schools as a setting to address Food Poverty



Positive effect on short-term hunger in children (Ni Mhurchú et al, 2013)

Positive impact on:

- punctuality at school (Foley, 2011)
- eating habits (Murphy et al., 2007)
- educational attainment (Children's Food Trust, 2008)

Fourth most effective intervention of the School Completion Programme (NEWB, 2009)

HFfA Resources




HFfA Pilot Programme of Breakfast Clubs



January 2013 – June 2015

- 2 DEIS Schools
- 2 non-DEIS Schools
- Small Grant €5,000
- Training Programme
- Technical Support
- 120 pupils

Pilot Programme for Breakfast Clubs



Children are a lot more settled once they come into class...I think it winds the kids down so they are ready to start their work (Teacher)

There have been a couple of things that have come out of what kids have said in breakfast club...a few home issues that have been brought to light (Breakfast Club Coordinator)

(they) are having their breakfast with 4th class children and this is brilliant for their confidence...as they are mixing with the older ones (Breakfast Club Coordinator)

"She is more likely to ask questions about food and understands the importance of a healthy breakfast." (Parent)

Challenges at School Level

- Adequate space and facilities
- Funding for food item only
- Administrative burden
- Lack of training and capacity
- Concerns re food waste
- Stigma
- Parental involvement
- Volunteer management

DEIS Review – consider the reasons why 100 DEIS schools are not availing of SMP

School Food Provision – A Fragmented Approach

- Dept of Social Protection – School Meals Programme (€42 million in 2016)
- Dept of Education & Skills – school infrastructure; links with curriculum
- Dept of Agriculture, Food & Marine – EU School Milk Scheme & Food Dudes
- Dept of Children & Youth Affairs – School Completion Programme
- Dept of Health – Healthy Eating Guidelines

Policy Context

- Healthy Ireland (DH 2013)
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (DCYA 2014)
- DEIS Strategy Review (DES 2015)

HFfA Policy Recommendations

National Food in Schools Forum


- National Food in Schools Strategy
 - Expand School Meals Programme
 - Improve school infrastructure to ensure appropriate facilities
 - Provide training and support for school staff
 - Link food provision with education curriculum

Focus on educational, health & social outcomes for children




Travellers in Ireland

- 36,224 Travellers in Ireland
- 4 – average family size
- 42 % of Travellers under the age of 15 (21% of the general population)
- Only 8 Travellers over the age of 85
- 73.3% of Travellers live in a house
- Suicide rate is 7 times higher than the general population.




Education

- 55% of Travellers had completed their education by the age of 15
- Only 13% of Traveller children complete secondary education in comparison with 92% of the general population.
- Traveller children along with immigrant children are more likely to experience bullying in school (State of the Nations Children, 2012)
- 62% of Travellers felt that they were discriminated against in school (AITHS, 2010)
- 115 Travellers had completed third level education in 2011 **less than 1%**



Roma

The term “**Roma**” used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, **including Travellers** and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as “Gypsies”.




Roma

- Estimated 10-12 million Roma live in Europe.
- Estimated 5,000 Roma in Ireland.
- Roma in Ireland come from different countries: Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland...
- Roma in Europe are a variety of different religions i.e. Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox.....





Roma Experience in Europe

- Coercive Sterilisations: Between 1971 and 1991 in Czechoslovakia, “reduction of the Roma population” through surgical sterilization. Estimated that more than 90,000 women from former Czechoslovakia became infertile as a consequence of such interventions.
- Anti-Roma speeches
- Segregated Education: In Slovakia, Roma constitute 60% of all students in special education and up to 80% of children in special classes in mainstream schools are Roma.
- Forced Evictions
- Unemployment
- Poverty



Challenges for Traveller and Roma pupils

- Low expectations – parents and teachers
- Bullying
- Isolation within the education system
- Distrust of the education system
- Parents capacity to support their children
- Insecure home environment





Billboard advertising My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding




Traveller children in DEIS

- The educational attainment of Travellers remains significantly lower than that of their settled peers in both reading and mathematics *(Report on the first Phase of Evaluation on DEIS, 2011)*
- 53% of Traveller pupils in 274 of the DEIS primary schools.
- 3 DEIS primary schools: 50% of their enrolment are Travellers.
- 21 DEIS schools where 20% of their enrolment are Travellers pupils.
- Approximately 50% of Travellers are NOT in DEIS schools




Why collect data on Travellers and Roma?

- To find out what works and what doesn't!
- Ensure equality of outcomes.
- Evidence Based Policy: Without data there is no evidence base to support the continuation of programmes or the introduction of targeted supports.
- Collecting data in the UK since 2003: *Pupils who are fearful and who have to deny their identity in the school setting are destined to under achieve.* *(The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People. Department for Children, schools and families. UK)*



Recommendations for DEIS

- A comprehensive review of the educational outcomes for Traveller pupils in DEIS schools.
- Expansion of targeted education supports for non DEIS schools with Traveller and Roma pupils.
- The inclusion of Traveller and Roma culture in the formal curriculum.
- Anti-racism and cultural awareness training for teachers.
- Positive action measures to increase the number of Travellers and Roma employed in schools as teachers, SNAs, administrative staff, etc.
- The collection and analysis of data on Roma pupils in DEIS schools




Embedding evidence based approaches into mainstream systems to improve child outcomes
 Noel Kelly, Northside Partnership

Embedding evidence based approaches into mainstream systems to improve child outcomes.




Preparing for Life - Background

- Preparing for Life is an early intervention/prevention programme established in 2007 to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Planned using a Bottom-up approach: Community designed initiative involving 28 community groups, service providers, & local representatives to develop tailored activities to improve school readiness
- Funded by Irish Government Department of Children and Youth Affairs & the Atlantic Philanthropies under the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme PEIP (2008-2013)
- 5 year experimental home visiting programme (actually became closer to a 7/8 year programme)



Why this approach?

- Research conducted in 2004 showed that over 50% of children starting school in our communities were not ready for school.
- Main areas of weakness were Language and Communication.**
- We see parents as the key architects of their children's development.
- Remediation programmes have been used for decades with minimal effect
- We believed that a **prevention and early intervention model** that supports families to achieve **better outcomes** was more likely to improve outcomes.



What is Preparing for Life?


- Experimental Home visiting programme designed to support parents in the areas of child development and parenting.
- Programme is delivered by skilled home visitors who meet parents either in their homes or other community settings.
- PFL has a set Curriculum we follow with all families and is supported by an Implementation Guide
- Being researched using a community based Random Control Trial



PFL Evaluation

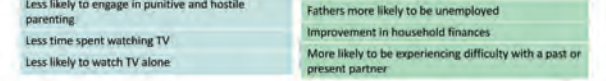
- Aim: Measure outcomes in the following domains**

CHILD HEALTH	CHILD DEVELOPMENT	PARENTING
MATERNAL HEALTH & WELLBEING	SOCIAL SUPPORT	HOME ENVIRONMENT
HOUSEHOLD FACTORS & SES	CHILDCARE & SERVICE USE	




Summary of 36 month results

CHILD DEVELOPMENT	MATERNAL HEALTH & WELLBEING
Stronger cognitive development and problem solving skills	Better scores on measures of depression and emotional wellbeing
Fewer externalising behaviour problems	Consumed less alcohol and reduced cigarette smoking
Less somatic complaints, sleep problems, and aggressive behaviour	
	SOCIAL SUPPORT
	Child maintenance paid regularly
CHILD HEALTH	HOME ENVIRONMENT
Less accidents and hospital visits	More likely to demonstrate an established family routine, safe environment, use of community supports, and acceptance of child behaviours
Less likely to have a diagnosed chronic illness	Exposed to less cigarette smoke
Healthy diet, meeting dietary guidelines	
PARENTING	HOUSEHOLD FACTORS & SES
Less likely to engage in punitive and hostile parenting	More stay-at-home mothers
Less time spent watching TV	Fathers more likely to be unemployed
Less likely to watch TV alone	Improvement in household finances
	More likely to be experiencing difficulty with a past or present partner




From Prevention and Early Intervention Programme to the Area Based Childhood Programme

PEIP → ABC



Area Based Childhood Programme

- ABC was announced in budget 2013
- Aims to build on evidence based good practice and learning from PEIP.
- Co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and Government
- 6 Government Departments involved led by Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Department of an Tánaiste
- 13 sites selected to participate




Preparing for Life Plan

- Our ABC plan supports the implementation of a set of approaches (all evidence based or evidence informed) to support better outcomes for children and families from Pre-birth to age 12 with a particular focus on language and communications.

These approaches involve:

- ▶ Parents and extended families
- ▶ Health staff – Maternity Hospitals, PHNs, SLTs etc.
- ▶ Early Years Settings
- ▶ Schools

Plan is to embed evidence based approaches into existing mainstream services



Key Features

- We have developed a plan that offers wrap around supports to parents & children from pregnancy to age 12 with a focus on addressing the primary areas of concern especially language & communications.
- We have aligned our actions to national policy areas
- We are supporting families, health professionals, early years professionals and teachers to adopt and implement evidence based & evidence informed approaches to improve child outcomes.
- We are providing on-site coaching to support implementation




Alignment with National Policy

Our Plan responds to the following national policy priorities:

- Improving Literacy Skills;
- Implementing the Aistear Curriculum Framework for 0-6 Year Olds;
- Improving Quality of Early Years Services;
- Improving Child Health and Combating Obesity.
- Implementation of the National Early Years Strategy

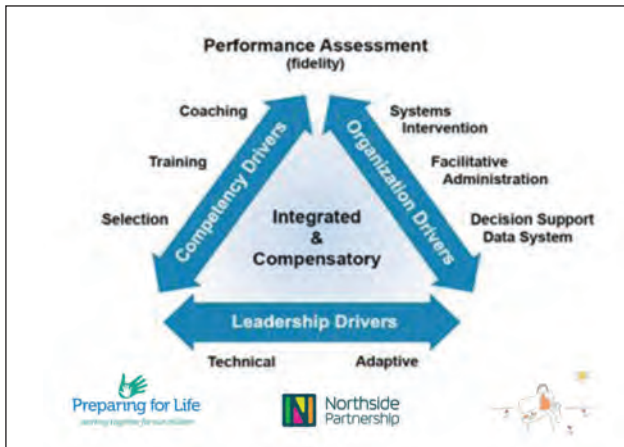
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Implementation What Works?



Embedding evidence based approaches into mainstream systems to improve child outcomes
 Noel Kelly, Northside Partnership



Mainstreaming

- We work with existing service providers to embed evidence based practices
- We have seconded health, early years and school staff to help implement our programmes
- We have embedded coaching as a key implementation driver.
- We are up-skilling existing staff so that the good practice will be sustained post ABC
- We are identifying and training leaders within organisations who will take responsibility for sustaining the programmes post ABC

Preparing for Life Northside Partnership

PFL – ABC INTERVENTIONS

Completion of Random Control Trial (RCT)	Delivering Ante-Natal Care and Education in the Community	Home Visiting Programme to support Child Development and Parenting
Early Years Practice Programme – Developing Quality through Curriculum Approaches and Practice Development	Schools Programme Literacy, Play and Self-Regulation	Triple-P Parenting Programme

Preparing for Life Northside Partnership

Pregnancy

Antenatal care and education is vital for good birth outcomes.

We are working with our partners the Rotunda Hospital and the HSE providing antenatal care and education services in local health and community settings.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

- Antenatal clinics
- Antenatal classes
- Baby Massage
- Bosom Buddies Group

Preparing for Life ANTENATAL CARE & EDUCATION

0 – 4 years: At Home

<p>Preparing for Life HOME VISITING</p> <p>Our family mentors work alongside parents from pregnancy to when the child starts school.</p> <p>We visit families in their homes and give them information on child development and parenting, with the aim of improving child outcomes including school readiness.</p> <p>WHAT WE PROVIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly home visits • Tip sheets 	<p>Preparing for Life PARENTING</p> <p>We offer the Triple P Positive Parenting Programme to all parents of children aged 2 – 12 living in our target area.</p> <p>WHAT WE PROVIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple P Seminar Series • Triple P Group Programme
---	---

0 – 4 years: In Early Childhood Education

Preparing for Life EARLY YEARS PRACTICE

We train and mentor early childhood educators, to deliver the best outcomes for children. Using a reflective practice approach, we support practitioners individually and in groups, to focus on children's needs and interests; to enhance learning and language opportunities and to facilitate their smooth transition to school.

WHAT WE PROVIDE


- Aistear /Siolta Practice Guide
- 'Language for Life'
- Leadership for Learning

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4 – 12 years: In School

Preparing for Life
SCHOOLS PROGRAMME



Our Schools Programme works to improve learning outcomes for children and to equip them with life skills that will help them to achieve their full potential.

We do this by providing on-site, customised professional development and mentoring for teachers in proven play, literacy and self-regulation programmes.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

- Write to Read
- Play to Learn
- Good Behaviour Game

Preparing for Life
SCHOOLS PROGRAMME



A Northside Partnership project, funded under the Area Based Childhood Programme 2013 - 2016



Preparing for Life Schools Programme

Professional development for teachers in three programmes:

- Write to Read
- Play to Learn
- PAX Good Behaviour Game.





Professional Development – Our Approach

- On-site, sustained coaching for teachers.
- Practising teachers with the required expertise are released to mentor their peers in other schools.
- Credibility of peer mentors and practical support they provide is crucial.





Write to Read

- Literacy model developed by Dr Eithne Kennedy of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.
- Encourages children to see themselves as readers, writers and thinkers.
- Supports teacher to deliver high quality literacy programmes that are holistic, evidence based and matched to children's particular needs.
- Teachers are supported to establish a daily 90 minute block of literacy instruction that includes a Writing Workshop, Reading Workshop and Word Work.

Write to Read Research

- Award winning research published by Dr Kennedy in 2011 on original pilot with 1st & 2nd class in a DEIS Band 1 school showed number of children reading at or below 10th percentile reduced by 75%, 20% of children improved to reading at the highest level (none above 70th percentile at start of study) and showed increased levels of motivation, engagement and participation.
- Currently the subject of an expanded piece of research in eight Dublin DEIS schools as well as further research into four schools engaged in Write to Read through Preparing for Life Schools Programme.



Write to Read Mentoring

Schools receive fortnightly visits from a Write to Read mentor.

Support provided includes:

- Provision of professional readings
- Video
- Powerpoint presentations
- Demonstration lessons
- Non-evaluative observations of teaching
- Regular opportunities for debate and reflection



Play to Learn

- Model that helps Junior and Senior Infants teachers to teach through play and implement the Aistear play based curriculum framework for 0 – 6 year olds.

- Helps the teacher to provide child-centred, contextualised learning that promotes the development of oral language and life skills.



Play to Learn Mentoring

- To date, 12 teachers in 3 schools have received professional development impacting on 226 pupils.
- Teachers receive fortnightly visits from a Play to Learn mentor released from a local school.
- Professional development combines in-class visits to individual teachers and group professional development in the last hour of the school day.
- Teacher manual developed.
- Cluster group brings infant teachers from all partner schools together once per term to share expertise and learning.



PAX Good Behaviour Game

- Classroom based game that helps teach children vital self-regulation skills in a fun way to help them both today and in later life.
- International research extending over 30 years has shown PAX GBG is one of the most effective evidence based school programmes, generating significant child outcomes in the areas of self-control, self-management and self-regulation.



PAX GBG – Irish Pilot

- 21 first and second class teachers took part in 12-week pilot in early 2015.
- Evaluation showed a 43% reduction in off-task behaviours across the 21 participating classrooms.
- Highly significant reductions in the incidence of hyperactivity and emotional symptoms for children and a highly significant increase in pro-social behaviours (SDQ).



PAX GBG – Irish Pilot

- Almost one third of children reported as displaying challenging behaviours at the start of the study were reported as showing behaviours within the normal range after 12 weeks.
- Qualitative feedback demonstrated the positivity generated by PAX GBG in classrooms.
- Classrooms have become calmer, children are taking positive control of their behaviour and teacher / pupil relationships have been positively impacted.



Embedding evidence based approaches into mainstream systems to improve child outcomes
Noel Kelly, Northside Partnership

PAX GBG Mentoring

- To date, 61 teachers trained in Dublin and Midlands schools.
- 2 days training followed by three in-class visits from a PAX GBG mentor.
- Mentors are recently retired teachers or practicing teachers released from partner schools.



Questions?


noel.kelly@nspartnership.ie

01-8771509

www.preparingforlife.ie



A community-based approach to addressing educational disadvantage
Josephine Bleach, NCIRL




Early Learning Initiative
National College of Ireland

Review of DEIS: Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education
A community-based approach to addressing educational disadvantage

5th December 2015

Supporting parents, communities and schools in the education of children



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Agenda

- Introduction
- Educational Disadvantage
- Early Learning Initiative
- Community Action Research
- Parent Child Home Programme
- Early Numeracy Programme
- Educational Guidance Programme




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The Education Act (1998 32 [9]) refers to educational disadvantage as *...the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools.*

Closely linked to the issue of poverty with a substantial volume of research, both national and international, indicating that individuals from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and communities are more likely to underachieve in the education system than their peers from higher income backgrounds

(UNICEF 2002; Combat Poverty Agency 2003; Oireachtas Report 2010, Growing Up in Ireland 2012).



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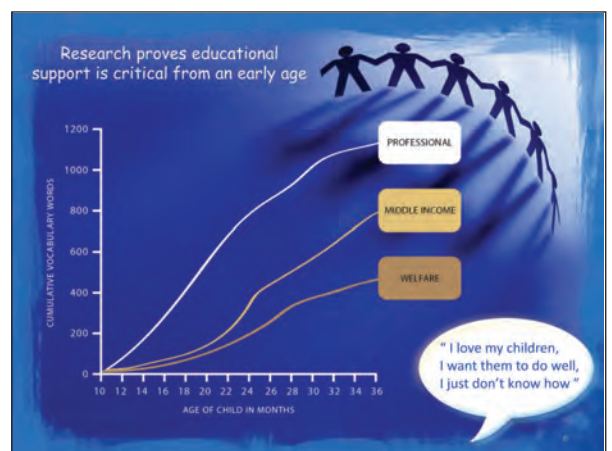


Available from www.liffeypress.ie



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Middle Class	Disadvantaged
Financial capital to supplement the work of the school and to develop their own skills as educators through privately funded parenting and other relevant courses.	May not have the financial and/or educational capital to supplement the work of the school or to develop their own skills
More educational and intellectual capital which they can use to guide their children's journey through the system and support their children's learning at home.	Not having had a career or gone through the second and third level systems, they have no real experience of what is required.
Access to 'teacher' and other professional friends who can advise and support them, when needed.	If nobody within their social network has gone to third level or is even employed, there is nobody they can turn to informally or discretely for information or support.
Have the confidence to talk to teachers as equals – Sense of entitlement re: education	Don't have the confidence and/or the formal 'school' language to speak to teachers
Literacy and IT skills to negotiate websites of interest as well as reading parenting books etc.	Low levels of literacy and IT skills may make it difficult for them to access information on-line.
Involve their children in structured activities, particularly the sort of cultural activities that are likely to equip them with the kinds of knowledge and competencies that advantage them within the educational system	Children more likely to be involved in 'fun' activities through Youth Clubs etc. Less likely to take their children to Museums, Plays or cultural events



A community-based approach to addressing educational disadvantage
Josephine Bleach, NCIRL

It's during the first three years of life that thinking structures are being built into the brain.

Child Hears	Typical Interaction	Open Questions Equal Discussion (WHY?) Pretend Play	Books in the Home	Time spent reading to the child	Child Speaks
10m words	One word direction with non-verbal signal – 'bathroom'	Stop children from exploring language or their world twice for every one time they encourage them	1	25 hrs	500 words
30m words	Identify stimulus – 'Your hands are dirty' Provide the meaning – 'We're going to eat' Suggest a strategy – 'So go wash your hands'	Encourage children to explore language and their world five times more than they stop it.	54	1,700 hrs	1,200 words

Home is the place where language, social skills, moral values and citizenship are taught
(Macbeth 1994; Wolfendale 2000)



The Home Learning Environment is a powerful influence on children's educational and social development
(Melhuish 2011; 2015)



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Parental Involvement in their Children's Education

Open, Caring, Respectful Relationships

Collaboration with community organisations including networking by families

Parental Involvement in the Home Curriculum	Parental Involvement in Services/Schools	Home-School Communication
The basic responsibilities of families, including creating a positive home learning environment	Parental involvement particularly as volunteers and audiences	The basic responsibilities of services towards families which primarily revolve around home-school communications. These include
Parental involvement in learning activities at home	Parental involvement in decision-making, governance and advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children's learning and progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Events and activities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policies and Procedures

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Early Learning Initiative
National College of Ireland


Our long-term vision is that ELI will lead the way in providing first class educational support programmes within local communities, thereby enabling children, young people and their families to develop the dispositions, skills and knowledge needed to achieve their educational, career and life goals.

Working in partnership with Government and local communities to support educational journeys and achievements

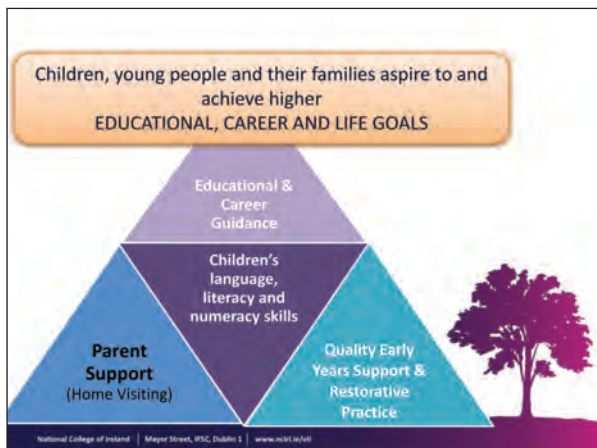
Address educational disadvantage and its impact on personal and career development

Provide a range of innovative support programmes for children and their parents from early years to third level

Uses community action research (Plan, Do, Review) to implement national policy and programmes



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Partnering with Corporate Leaders

The success of the ELI is underpinned by corporate support – financially and more importantly through management engagement and employee involvement.

The ELI is rooted in the Docklands community and requires the interest, commitment and participation of neighbouring corporate leaders



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A community-based approach to addressing educational disadvantage

Josephine Bleach, NCIRL

Impact

The ELI is helping to create a high-achieving, supportive and cohesive Docklands community. In 2007-2008, 448 people in the Docklands area took part in our programmes. **By 2015, we have increased this to 6,784**


Children involved in ELI's early years programmes are performing at levels expected of their age **unlike** children in similar disadvantaged areas

Educational **attainment** in English and Maths has **risen**. Students are scoring **above** the norms of other schools in similarly disadvantaged communities

Educational **aspirations** have **increased** with students aged 11-12 years of age scoring **above** the national norms

Parents are more engaged in their children's development

Learning is being perceived by children, young people and their extended families as enjoyable and something to be shared




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Community Action Research

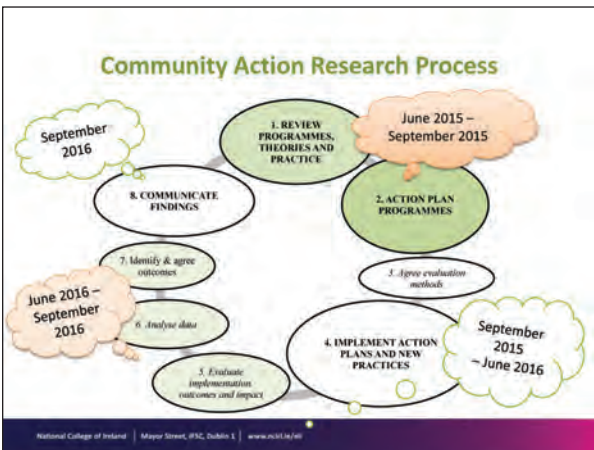
Create a learning community that works together to 'nurture and sustain a knowledge-creating system', based on valuing equally each other and the following three interacting domains of activity:

- ✓ **Research:** a discipline approach to discovery and understanding, with a commitment to share what is learned.
- ✓ **Capacity-building:** enhancing people's awareness and capabilities, individually and collectively, to produce results they truly care about.
- ✓ **Practice:** people working together to achieve practical outcomes.

(Senge and Scharmer 2001, 240)



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Partnership

(NCCA 2009 -Aistear)

Partnership involves parents, families and professionals **working together** to benefit children.

Each **recognises, respects and values** what they other does and says.

Partnership involves **responsibility on both sides**




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Review ABC/ELI Programmes

What are we happy with?
 What could we do better?
 What do we want to do in 2015-16?

Consider the following:

- Overall Project
- Structure and process
- Activities
- Participation
- Communication



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Programmes	Ready for	Parents & Children	Funding
Third Level Student Support (174 yrs)	Employment	10	ELI
Discover University (14-17 yrs)		93	
Tuition Support Programme (15-18 yrs)	Third Level	20	
Educational Guidance (10-13 yrs)		209	ABC & ELI
Financial Maths (8-10 yrs)	Second Level	126	
Achievement Awards (7-10 yrs)		272	
Literacy & Numeracy Challenges (7-11 yrs)		534	
Restorative Practice (6-18 years) - managing conflict		064	
Doodle Den (4-5 years) - literacy		634	ABC & ELI
Zoom Ahead with Books (4-7 yrs)		492	
Early Numeracy Project (0-6 yrs)		4762	
Early Years Professional Development	Primary School	257	
Storytelling sessions		84	
Parents Together Community Course		14	
Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) (18 mths - 3 yrs)	Pre-school	180	ABC & ELI
ABC 0-2 Years Programme		22	



Parent Child Home Programme

- Two year literacy and parenting programme that strengthens families and prepares children to succeed academically
- Twice weekly visits (46 visits per year), where the trained Home Visitors model oral language, reading and play for families and children in their twice weekly visits.
- The books and toys are gifts to the families to enable them to continue the activities in their own time and at their own pace.
- Between visits, Parents/Guardians are encouraged to spend time talking, reading and playing with their children each day
- Only one PCHP child per family as parents have learnt the skills to interact with all their children.

Learning is perceived as enjoyable and something to be shared

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Working with and for Children

Docklands (2007):
484 children and their families have taken part in PCHP - over 20,000 home visits have taken place. 70-80 families per year (funded by Ireland Funds, Dublin Port, McCann FitzGerald, Central Bank, Arthur Cox, Facebook, DCYA and other donors).

Canal Communities - Bluebell (2009):
75 children and their families have taken part in PCHP - over 6,000 home visits have taken place. 10 families per year. (funded by Canal Communities Partnership; Katherine Howard Foundation and HSE)

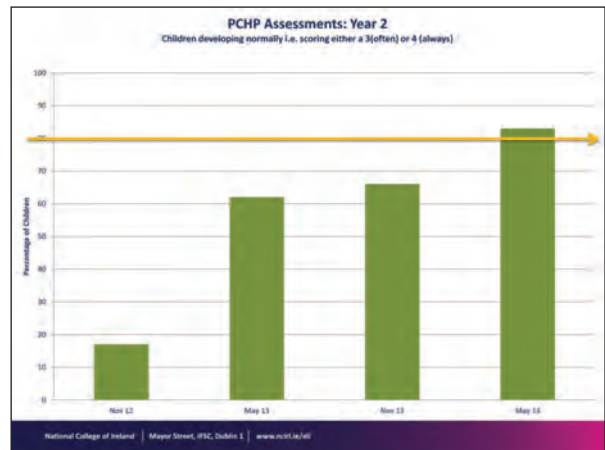
Pavee Point - Traveller Community in Finglas (2014):
10-15 children and their families - 360 home visits this year (funded by Katherine Howard Foundation and Ireland Funds)

North Inner City (2015):
60 additional children and their families (funded by DCYA, AP, ABC Programme; DIT/Daughters of Charity; basis.point)

Limerick (2015):
10-15 children and their families (funded by Northern Trust)

Galway (2015):
10-15 children and their families (funded by Galway Educational Centre; Sisters of Mercy; ESB)

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Impact

- ✓ At the 3 year developmental check, **Public Health Nurses** notice the gains made by children who have had PCHP and those who have not.
- ✓ **Speech therapists** see the improvement in the PCHP children on their waiting lists (2.5 yrs. wait) - the great majority of whom no longer need speech therapy.
- ✓ **Social workers** have asked for PCHP for their own children, having seen its impact on the children they are involved with.
- ✓ **Primary teachers** see PCHP children, often the **first of three generations**, enter primary school ready to succeed.
- ✓ Children are performing at levels expected of their age **unlike** children in similar disadvantaged areas.
- ✓ **Six years on** families are continuing to use the skills they learnt through PCHP. They and their children continue to read for fun - using the books and toys with their PCHP and subsequent children.

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What do the Parents say:

'It's a winner. He takes out them books. The wife would read to him most nights. I have seen the improvement'

'I now spend more time reading and interacting with my children. I never read to my older child and all he is interested in is his D.S. but my PCHP child loves his books'

'Watching my child reading and exploring colours, shapes, looking so happy, she wants us to read more to her. I never had that as a child. I have actually learnt myself from the books. I enjoy it too. I hope to get involved with the college when she goes to primary school'

'My reading has come on better and I am calm. I am a lot more relaxed and my child is the same with me. I love reading to him and we enjoy playing together. The Home Visitor is great in giving me tips and looks at all the different sides. I have said it to my family, friends and the intervention team'

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NEYAI Numeracy Curriculum Objectives (Taken from Aistear)

	Babies (0-18 months)	Toddlers (12 months – 3 years)	Young Children (2½ - 6 years)
Communication	Watches, listens and responds to adults when they use Mathematical language	Responds to and understands Mathematical language in everyday situations (p. 38)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop basic counting skills (1-10) Develop an understanding of the meaning and use of numbers in their environment Understands and uses positional language such as up, down, out, behind
Exploring and Thinking	Experience and begin to understand simple cause and effect Develop the concept of object permanence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare, sort, categorise and order things Develop a sense of time, shape, size, space and place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classify, sequence, sort, match, look for and create patterns and shapes Develop an understanding of concepts like measures (weight, height, volume, money, time) Use mathematical symbols to give and record information, to describe and make sense of their own and others experience Develop higher-order thinking skills such as problem-solving, predicting, analysing, questioning and justifying

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Themes for 2014-2017

	Year 1 2014-2015	Year 2 2015-2016	Year 3 2016-2017
Term 1	Positional Language	Sequence and Pattern	Money
Term 2	Counting	Time	Number
Term 3	Shapes	Measurement	Symbols in the Environment

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Early Numeracy Working Group

- Chosen for your interest in the project and in early numeracy as well as your ability to lead the project in their setting.
- Meet 4 times a year approx. (June, September and December 2011)
- Communicating between services and working group (open, honest, critical, responsible)
- Responsible for developing, planning and implementing the programme at front-line service delivery level using the community action research process

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Role of the Working Group

- Bring and share early numeracy expertise and experience from working with various age-groups
- Network with other settings
- Input re. Theme/ Focus of Curriculum Priority Week
- Input re. Resources, Activities etc.
- Communicate info. to their staff team
- Involve wider community

Co-ordinate curriculum priority week & related events in school/setting e.g. awareness of existing resources to complement c.p. wk activities

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Docklands Early Numeracy Activity Week- Young Children- Pre-schoolers/Reception/Junior Infants

Child's Name: _____

Positional / Directional Language
Using positional / directional language when playing, singing and talking with your child, will help them to learn these important early numeracy concepts. Try these activities each day with your child and don't forget the rhymes at the back of the card.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Parent's Objective	Child can identify the front and back of a chair.	Child can identify the front and back of a book.	Child can identify the front and back of a magnifying glass.	Child can identify the front and back of a frog.
Activities	Play the game 'Spot the Difference' with your child. Use the pictures of the chair and talk about what you are both doing using the positional/directional language.	Play the game 'Spot the Difference' with your child. Use the pictures of the book and talk about what you are both doing using the positional/directional language.	Play the game 'Spot the Difference' with your child. Use the pictures of the magnifying glass and talk about what you are both doing using the positional/directional language.	Play the game 'Spot the Difference' with your child. Use the pictures of the frog and talk about what you are both doing using the positional/directional language.
Do you think your child enjoyed each activity? Please tick a smiley face.	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊

Teachers, don't forget to have a visit too!



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Docklands Early Numeracy Activity Week - Pre-schoolers/Reception Class/Junior Infants
Words to use: sign, traffic, lights, lollipop man, map, shape, stop, straight, arrow, turn, right, left, follow, bus stop, rain, wind, sunny, toilets, chemist

Child's Name: _____

Symbol hunt!

Looking for and talking about symbols around you helps children's early numeracy. Try this activity each day with your child

<p>Monday</p>  <p>On your way home from school find a traffic light and draw it when you get home</p>	<p>Tuesday</p>  <p>On your way home from school find a cycle lane and draw it when you get home</p>
<p>Parents Signature _____</p> <p>Teacher can I have a sticker? <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Parents Signature _____</p> <p>Teacher can I have a sticker? <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Dear Parent: What do you think your child has learned from this activity?
New Language Starting to recognise symbols Other _____

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Docklands Early Numeracy Activity Week
Money - Key Vocabulary: Buy/sell, spend, coins, cent, how much, cost, price, cheap/expensive, change, too much/Too little
Infant Class Teachers - try an activity with the children every day this week, use rhythm & songs (inserted) as well as your own ideas to support and extend the activities.

Exploring, Thinking and Talking Time

Construction Play

Role Play

Outdoor Activities

Assessment: Does he/she begin to understand and play with money? Does he/she begin to use the language of money (more or less, how much, cost, euro)?

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Indicative Evidence

(Veerman and van Yperen 2007)

- ✓ 1,905 children (0-6 years) and their families involved
- ✓ Children's numeracy skills have improved and they are scoring to, if not above in some cases, national norms in Maths.

'The children really grasped the concept, reinforced at home and in school. Maths was great fun.'


- ✓ Parents are more involved in their children's learning (91% N=345)
- ✓ 93% (N=353) of parents would recommend the numeracy week/activities to a friend.



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Teachers' Perspectives – Numeracy Week

- The early numeracy week worked well as it involved the whole school. It was very well organised and created a communal numeracy vibe throughout the week which stimulated the children in the area of counting and naming numbers. Great to see parents enthused. It was an opportunity for parents, children & teachers to work together while having fun
- The children enjoyed bringing the cards home every day and were delighted every morning bringing it back in to show their picture they had drawn. They enjoyed finding different amounts of objects at home and counting them for their parents
- I enjoyed the maths priority games where the parents came in for 30 minutes and took a number station and played the activity with the small group of children. It was a celebration of the children's learning in maths for their parents to witness. The main thing was the children had fun while working with parents and teachers



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Parents' Perspectives – Numeracy Week

It helped me to understand simple things I can do at home with my child to help improve his numeracy skills. Helped me realize things I was not doing and wasn't aware I should be doing with my child to work on those skills


The three best things about the programme are: it's a great way to interact with your child, it's a good way for your child to learn, and the children enjoy learning through fun activities and games.

I really enjoyed being able to spend quality time with my child and watch her learning. I had forgotten about doing this type of stuff with my child.

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Educational Guidance

- Raise students educational and career expectations
- Develop children's problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills
- To increase parental knowledge and involvement in their children's education



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Partnering with Corporate Leaders

The success of the ELI is underpinned by corporate support – financially and more importantly through management engagement and employee involvement.

Our partners are:

- Demonstrating corporate social responsibility and sharing their time and skills
- Serving as potential educational and career role models for local children and young people
- Expanding the minds, hopes and ambitions of this – and future – generations
- Building a high-achieving, supporting and cohesive community in the areas in which we work



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Over 256 employees from ELI's corporate partners volunteered last year.
All enjoyed their experience of volunteering and would recommend the experience to a colleague. It gave them the opportunity to make a contribution to the community and wider society, while being a rewarding, thought-provoking and interesting experience.

Small contributions of time can make such a positive change to both those volunteering and to the community

First-hand knowledge that those in the corporate world are human, normal and approachable.

*Got to meet the REAL people
Learned more about the working world
It has helped me want to do something important with my life.*



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Indicative Evidence

(Veerman and van Yperen 2007)

- ✓ 134 children (0-6 years) and their families involved this year
- ✓ Children's educational aspirations are improving and they are scoring above national norms.

'It really got them thinking about third level education and what they needed to do in order to get them into the job they needed.'

- ✓ Learnt a lot from the project (95% N=195)
- ✓ Hope to go to college (85% N=174)
- ✓ Better prepared for second level (79% N=161)



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Student Feedback

- You have to be ready for the future - you have to be more confident and prepared – you have to work hard - you have lots of choices - there are lots of different jobs to work at.
- We got to meet the REAL people (corporate judges) and learnt what other people have to say about you - I have learned how to speak in public to people we didn't know and how to work on a project and present it!
- *I loved it and I'd love to do it again and I thought the judges were great.*
- *I learnt that you must study hard to have a good job and that anything is possible for the future*
- **It was one of the best days of my life.**







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Corporate Feedback

Great presentation skills - all team members greeted me with a hand shake and introduced themselves. It was very professional. Their enthusiasm was infectious and I was impressed with their use of tools such as survey monkey and google chrome. It was clear that the team put a lot of work in and wanted the opportunity to tell me about it. Well done!



The team had a very in-depth knowledge about their subject. They were very polite and I think they will succeed in whatever they do. They are a credit to their parents and teacher.



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Conclusions/ Recommendations

- Process of community action research provides evidence of effective implementation as well as enabling continuous improvement
- Aistear and the Primary School Curriculum works as curriculum frameworks for planning, implementation & evaluation
- Genuine community involvement in decision process is crucial (through Working Group and Consortium Meetings).
- Multiple methods for parents to engage with (workshops, home based activity cards, Facebook and Curriculum Priority events in ECCE Services, Schools, through PHNs, Home Visitors, After Schools and Libraries)
- Community wide focus fosters multi-sectoral working, involvement of parents, curriculum planning and better outcomes for children.



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Appendix III

Challenges for Early Career Teachers in DEIS Schools

Dr Gareth Burns

Article for information

Review of DEIS: Poverty and Social Inclusion in Education
Joint Conference: INTO and Education Disadvantage
Centre, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

December 2015

Introduction: The Focus on Literacy and Numeracy in DEIS

Fuelled by concerns around ‘international competitiveness’, Irish teachers are coming under increasing pressure to orient their practices towards satisfying the demands of ‘new’ accountabilities that are defined by their narrow focus on literacy and numeracy and standardised test scores (Conway & Murphy 2013; O’Donnell, 2014). Teachers working in DEIS schools, and especially those at the early stages of their careers, are particularly affected by pressures emanating from the rigorous testing regime that operates in these schools (Kitching, 2010).

Reflecting the legislative and policy framework, DEIS (DES, 2005) is exclusively concerned with changing the student and the school, rather than challenging inequalities that are rooted in the social structures of society. Recent evaluation reports on the DEIS programme highlight enhanced achievement in literacy, and to a lesser extent in numeracy, as measured in test scores (Shiel, Kavanagh, & Millar, 2014; Smyth, McCoy, & Kingston, 2015). The introduction of *The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020* (DES 2011) has precipitated an increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy attainment in DEIS schools.

In relation to DEIS schools, the intensity of focus on test scores and measurable outcomes only add to the already rigorous testing regime that the DEIS programme obliges participating schools to implement. Indeed, as Kitching (2010) notes, such rigorous testing is not required in other ‘advantaged’ schools. In terms of teaching and learning, there are many potential negative outcomes of a focus on standardised testing. According to Mac Ruairc (2009) these negative consequences include a ‘teach to test’ culture in schools (Anagnostopoulos, 2005) and the avoidance of risk taking and innovative practice (Williams & Ryan, 2000).

While promoting literacy and numeracy is an important aim of Irish educational policy, there is increasing concern that it is having an adverse effect on teachers’ ability to preserve the breath and richness of the primary curriculum. These concerns are heightened in light of the contradictory sentiment regarding the narrowing of the primary curriculum that is evident in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy:

While the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy maintains that ‘placing a strong focus in schools on the development and monitoring of students’ literacy and numeracy skills is not incompatible with a broad and balanced curriculum’ (DES, 2011, p. 44), it emphasises the need ‘to re-prioritise spending away from *desirable but ultimately less important* activities’ (DES, 2011, p. 15, emphasis added).

Ó Breacháin & O’Toole, 2013, p. 402

The failure to acknowledge, or indeed address socio-cultural practice in the approaches to literacy advocated by DEIS (Kitching, 2010) creates difficulties for teachers’ ability to employ methodologies that are ‘connected’ to working-class children’s life experiences (Lingard & Keddie, 2013). As consistently highlighted by the National Adult Literacy Agency, there are wider goals of literacy than simply employment and competitiveness, such as active citizenship, personal and social development, community empowerment and leadership, participation in society, as well as poverty reduction and social inclusion.

In response to this new environment, the majority of research on teachers’ work in DEIS schools has been quantitative research based on test results and measuring student achievement (e.g. Shiel et al., 2014; Smyth et al., 2015). Consequently, the voices of teachers have received little attention from researchers and policymakers. This paper attempts to address this research gap by giving full legitimacy to the lived experiences of teachers.

Focusing specifically on early career teachers (ECTs) in DEIS schools, this paper explores their daily practices and contextualises their perception of their ability to incorporate a social justice agenda into their understanding of their professional role and responsibilities. The PhD study (Burns, 2014) from which this paper draws on, defines ECTs as those with a minimum of three and a maximum of nine year's experience. The fact that the majority of those teaching in urban DEIS schools have been teaching for less than five years (McCoy, Quail, & Smyth, 2014), and in light of their role as educators working in communities that are experiencing intense social challenge, ECTs' explicit and tacit understandings of what they deem possible, practical and important in terms of their felt responsibilities and practices assumes critical importance. Drawing on data from a narrative life history study carried out with 18 ECTs working in DEIS schools (Burns, 2014), ECTs' understandings of their professional role and what shape this takes in their day-to-day practice are explored.

Teachers' Experiences of Sameness and Care

Through their participation in my research study on ECTs working in DEIS schools (Burns, 2014), participants were provided with an opportunity to critically reflect upon their own professional role, responsibilities and priorities; and to consider and discuss their own positionality in the social and policy context and its influence on their professional practices. Interviews were carried out with 18 ECTs who had started their teaching careers in urban primary DEIS schools. In order to shine light on the lived experiences of ECTs, their voices are articulated through quotes from participants who are given pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity. In order to explore the possible effects, if any, of contextual factors on teachers' practice, the study's participants were drawn relatively evenly from two urban DEIS 1 schools (Millplace N.S. and Limefield N.S.) located in the suburbs of a major city, and one DEIS 2 school (Tupper N.S.) located in a provincial town.

The study focused exclusively on participants' daily practices and contextualised their perception of their ability to incorporate a social justice agenda into their understanding of their professional role and responsibilities. Central to realising a vision of social justice is an educator's commitment to 'praxis' - a combination of both action and reflection which achieves a powerful and liberating force (Freire, 1996). A philosophy of praxis is based on the premise that people's previous experiences must be the starting point for new learning. Here participant commitment to a justice praxis that is 'connected' with students' life experiences (Lingard & Keddie, 2013) is explored in relation to the following four themes that emerged from the data:

- Promoting experiential and holistic learning, and developing students' critical thinking skills;
- A devolved, power sharing approach to classroom management;
- An ethic of care that is conscious of achieving the balance between supporting students, and making enough intellectual demands of them;
- Working with and valuing of diversity.

The findings reveal a high degree of support and care for students but not enough connectedness in their teaching methodologies to their students' worlds, or to a commitment to a democratic classroom management approach, or engagement with and a valuing of diversity.

The passionate and principled commitment of the study's participants to making a real and lasting difference in the lives of their students was a strong and consistent feature of their professional role. Intensified and exacerbated by students' experiences of living in communities that are coping with inter-generational poverty, the cohort as a whole were very conscious of what they saw as their heightened moral responsibility to respond to the care needs of their

students. Creating opportunities for their students to experience happiness in order to distract them from the perceived sadness that permeates some of their lives outside the confines of school, was a theme expanded upon by many participants, with Leona stating:

They shouldn't be coming in here crying because they don't want to come in to this place ... because there are some of those kids and they go home to horrible things, so that's what I want my classroom to be ultimately. I want it to be a happy place.

Becoming an advocate for children that don't have a voice is an aspect of their professional role that many teachers spoke passionately about, a passion which is evident in Anna's account of the close relationship she developed with a girl whom she describes as having "very low self-esteem and whose family are very disadvantaged". Anna attributes the success of her advocacy to the level of encouragement and support she gave her:

I think my relationship with her was very strong ... I said to her 'you can be anything you want to be' and I took an interest in her daily news, in her activities, and how she was getting on with her classmates; and I tried to stand up for her.

However, the pervasive influence of an accountability driven policy discourse that promotes functional, 'means to an end' connections with students that produce results and measurable outcomes (Kelchtermans, 2011) have in many cases consigned these affective practices largely to the realm of care rather than infusing the majority of participants' approach to the academic development of their students.

The Inequality of Sameness

The failure of most participants to recognise and develop *all* forms of intelligence and human capabilities, and to relate the curriculum to their students' worlds and legitimise locally produced knowledge, demonstrated a tendency to treat all students the same. This most benefits those with the requisite cultural capital that is bestowed upon them by their socialisation within the home and acts to further disadvantage the already disadvantaged in terms of such capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). While participants' strong commitment to their caring role should indeed be recognised, such articulations of care while necessary is however not sufficient in terms of the holistic development of the child (Lingard & Keddie, 2013). The shared consensus among the Millplace (DEIS 1) cohort that the academic development of their students is a secondary concern in light of the acuteness of their students' care needs lessens the focus on the implementation of 'intellectually demanding pedagogies' which require higher order thinking and substantive connections to the world beyond the classroom (Newmann & Associates, 1996). Frances' contribution reflects a shared clarity in relation to what the majority of the Millplace cohort perceive to be their students' primary needs, as she states that she would be satisfied if her students were "happy enough here and that they see school as a safe place, as a positive place". This concern with creating a safe and caring educational environment has an inverse correlation with many of the ECTs' concern about developing their students academically.

Context and Career-Stage Ideas around what ECTs deem Possible and Practical

The influence policies of accountability exerted at a personal and institutional level resulted in participants holding context and career-stage specific ideas around what was deemed both possible and practical. Consistent with the argument made in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES, 2011), many participants believed that if their students failed to grasp basic literacy and numeracy skills, they would be excluded from academic achievement (Ó Breacháin & O'Toole, 2013). There was a general consensus among participants that prioritising

the development of their students' literacy and numeracy skills at the expense of other subjects is a legitimate and justifiable trade off. Marta states:

There are the subjects that do get pushed to the back. Like definitely drama, and music, and SESE really do get shortened through the day I know they are important subjects but you do have to have priorities.

While some participants were critical of what they perceived to be the negative consequences of the increasing value being placed on standardised testing in their respective schools, they also felt professionally self-affirmed by positive test scores. This focus on test scores and measurable outcomes could also help to explain the absence of dialogue on the role participants could play in the development of their students' emotional literacy. The integration of literacy with the arts and SPHE was also notably absent from participants' considerations of their role in their students' literacy development.

Local conditions such as level of poverty, social exclusion and school culture impacted significantly upon the way ECTs engaged with ideas around raising the standard of literacy and numeracy. The heightened pressure to produce positive test scores was particularly felt by the DEIS 1 cohort as a whole, and most especially by those with less teaching and life experience. Hannah's sense of frustration at the Inspectorate's lack of appreciation of the challenges that teachers in DEIS schools face on a consistent basis when evaluating their progress in the area of literacy and numeracy, is an example of the strain such pressure places on teachers. Hannah states:

The Inspectorate should seriously get a grip. Come into our classes and look at what we are dealing with on a daily basis and then judge.

While one would expect that teachers working in the relatively more 'advantaged' DEIS 2 setting to be more responsive to pressure to 'raise the standard' (Devine, Fahie, & McGillycuddy, 2013), the tighter surveillance of test scores that surround DEIS 1 schools accounts for this apparent anomaly (Kitching, 2010). This felt pressure, and the migration of these concerns in some instances into 'test preparation' confirm anecdotal evidence that many teachers and principals are interpreting the recently imposed mandatory reporting of standardised test scores as particularly high stakes (Conway & Murphy, 2013). These findings also indicate that recent government attempts to cut funding to DEIS schools have heightened teachers' responsiveness to the structured, prescriptive literacy and numeracy programmes that are designed specifically to drive up standards.

In contrast, the more experienced DEIS 2 cohort was less consumed by the school and policy discourses around raising the standard of literacy and numeracy. The DEIS 2 cohort felt less disadvantaged by the setting they worked in, in terms of meeting the care and academic needs of their students. As a consequence, they experienced less pressure to choose between their academic and care roles, which allowed them to maintain a greater level of connectedness in their teaching with the constructivist, holistic, and child-centred ideals that underpin the Primary Curriculum.

The significance of participants' years of teaching experience on teacher practice is especially noteworthy in the findings. There was a greater prevalence of more structured and control oriented methodologies amongst the younger, more professionally inexperienced members of the DEIS 1 cohort. Shared understandings around the perceived need to enforce strict discipline amongst working class students dominated the DEIS 1 participants' understandings of their professional role. Cumulatively, these findings indicate that a reliance on traditional, teacher-centred teaching methodologies, and concerns about maintaining classroom discipline and catering for individual difference that were found to be prevalent amongst Irish primary

newly qualified teachers in their first year of teaching (Inspectorate of DES 2005a, 2005b; Killeavy & Murphy, 2006), continued to exercise the thoughts of these participants well into the early stage of their careers.

The inevitable tension that is created between the pressure to produce results and the parallel pressure to implement a curriculum that is ideologically at odds with the aforementioned performativity culture is palpable in the accounts of the less experienced (early career) teachers. The majority of the DEIS I cohort embraced their role in implementing the DEIS literacy and numeracy programmes which are seen as the antidote to the curriculum overload that many teachers find challenging. The professional confidence and pedagogical clarity that these programmes of instruction brought to teachers, many of whom may be unsure about the most effective way of teaching literacy and numeracy, is highlighted by Fiona:

I think teachers were totally at sea and we were constantly being told that literacy was so important and yet we thought what are we supposed to be doing? How do we do it on a day to day basis? Whereas now we have this literacy hour going in the morning and it timetabled, broken down into 15, 20 minute little chunks.

In return for implementing the programmes and the erosion of their professional autonomy that their complicity entailed, a structured and largely prescriptive road map was provided for those struggling to cope with the 'realities' of teaching.

Plotting an Alternative Trajectory: The Role of Professional and Life Experience

In contrast with those ECTs with less teaching experience, the more professionally experienced cohort managed to maintain a higher level of connectedness between their beliefs in education as a relationships based process, and their everyday practices. As a consequence, they adopted a more democratic approach to classroom management than their less experienced counterparts, and were less consumed by overemphasising their role in the fostering of literacy and numeracy. The majority of this cohort held special duties posts in their respective schools, and by successfully attending to the duties attached to their in-school management positions, these participants spoke with enthusiasm of organising whole school events that both students and teachers benefitted from. In this way, they were centrally involved in reaffirming the significance of relationships in the wider educational project.

Those participants that participated in masters' level studies in various educationally related areas were also identified as having a greater awareness of the workings of policy and how it impacts on teaching and learning. They also articulated a more robust interpretation of their professional responsibilities, manifested most vividly in their heightened willingness and confidence to work with and value diversity in their classrooms. Those participants that had taken alternative routes to becoming teachers also demonstrated a well-developed sense of political awareness and used this knowledge to inform positive practices in their schools. Cumulatively, these personally generated social, political and intellectual capitals have enabled participants with greater professional and life experience to appreciate the way in which policy and its political underpinnings influences and tries to shape the educational landscape. By re-imagining 'policy as problem', rather than 'policy as constraint' they have developed strategies of resistance to those aspects of policy that are in conflict with their 'core mission' as educators (Korthagen, 2012).

Working towards a Model of Social and Political Teacher Criticality

While the importance of teacher reflection is indisputable, the need to broaden and deepen the content of teacher reflection beyond the technical aspects of teaching that most often dominate has become an increasing concern (Kelchtermans, 2011; Korthagen, 2012). Given the evidence accumulated here, this concluding discussion suggests that it is through engagement with the

political, as well as the moral, ethical and emotional dimensions of teaching that teachers can continue to make a significant difference to students' lives (Kelchtermans, 2011). Supported by evidence from the data, the role the continuum of teacher education can play in initiating and sustaining a process of political and social criticality amongst student and practicing teachers is explored.

From unquestioning belief in the legitimacy of a competitive meritocratic system, to the pervasiveness of theses of deficit, and to a lesser extent fixed ability, the findings of my research into ECTs' experiences of working in DEIS schools (Burns, 2014) point clearly to the need for teacher educators to provide pre-service and practicing teachers with opportunities to examine these implicit cultural assumptions and the damaging effect they can have on students' experience of schooling. Lowered teacher expectations of students, and the resultant 'normalisation' of low student attainment in schools with high levels of poverty and social exclusion (Dunne & Gazeley, 2008) are two of the negative teacher effects that can be attributed to the entrenchment of these implicit cultural assumptions. This self-imposed achievement ceiling in relation to what they as educators can achieve, and the consequences this has for their students is consistent with a policy discourse that perceives inequality to be a given, and that the best society can do is try to ameliorate some of the worst effects of its existence rather than seeking to eliminate it (Baker, Lynch, Cantillon, & Walsh, 2004).

The development of social and political criticality is best done when situated and immersed in the lived experiences of communities experiencing intense social challenge (Apple, 2011). The findings of this study (Burns, 2014) support this assertion, as they clearly indicate the positive effect of teachers' interaction with working class communities during their youth, and subsequently during the course of their initial teacher education (ITE). These experiences helped participants to develop a positive attitude towards working in marginalised communities, and was articulated in their professional practice. A notable feature of the findings was the very distinct and positive contribution that participants from working-class backgrounds made in social justice terms. Their greater familiarity with, and knowledge of students' local communities enhanced their capacity to 'connect' with students on a personal level. Their felt desire to try and initiate more open and inclusive relations with working class parents also allowed them to resist to a large extent the boundary setting and professional protectionism that governed the majority of participants' relations with parents in the two DEIS I schools. These positive practices speak strongly to the need to develop a much firmer strategy on access to the teaching profession for people from marginalised communities (see Downes, 2014). In developing a model of social and political teacher criticality, what is also particularly salient in this study is the relationship between opportunities that participants had in ITE to critically reflect on these 'lived experiences', and their subsequent awareness and willingness to use these reflections to develop a culture of collaboration with students and parents. This alerts us to the importance of the nature of 'reflection' in teacher education, not only focusing on the technical concerns of the day which are neither irrelevant nor illegitimate (Kelchtermans, 2011), but also the need to shine a light on the moral purposes of the teacher (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

The recent reconceptualisation of the school placement experience offers exciting opportunities in this regard as it encourages student teachers to participate actively in school life, including supported engagement with parents and other professionals working in the community (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2013). However, a significant weakness of the new school placement programme is its failure to make school placements in marginalised communities an integral and mandatory part of the process.

The needs, feelings, emotions, concerns and motivations of teachers need to be positioned at the heart of professional reflection (Korthagen, 2004). While many participants demonstrated awareness of the socio-cultural and institutional impediments to some working-class students'

and parents' engagement with schools, few of them interrogated these political themes in terms of their relevance and connectedness to their own professional practice. In order to generate the emotional responsiveness that links reflection and action (O'Brien, 2011), which in turn creates transformative practices (Freire, 1996), there is a need to reaffirm the central role emotions play in teaching and learning, and the importance of teachers caring in a broad sense about their students' lives.

Final Thought

This research raises questions about the difficult terrain that teachers working in DEIS schools are asked to navigate. These teachers are being rewarded by a value system that on one hand mirrors 'broader social discourses of fast capitalism and self preservation' (Ryan, 2007), whilst on the other hand the profoundly moral and political activity of teaching in a community experiencing intense social challenge obligates them to make "value-laden choices, in the attempt to do justice to the pupil that has been entrusted to one's care and therefore one's responsibility" (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 118).

In light of the balancing act that is required to satisfy all elements of these conflicting and competing ideologies and responsibilities, I am drawn back to the question of whether it is reasonable to expect already overstretched teachers "to go the extra mile, to be professionally responsible rather than play by the rules" (Sugrue, 2011, p. 182). The demands the system places on teachers working in areas of poverty and social exclusion highlight the importance of teachers taking due consideration of their own personal, professional, and situated circumstances in terms of mapping out the boundaries of their professional responsibilities. However, the parallel moral, ethical, emotional, and political dimension to these considerations (Kelchtermans, 2011) (that may conflict with their own personal and professional [self] interests) means that there is an inherent uncertainty and risk associated with the way in which they make sense of, and consequently address these demands.

It is hoped that this study's findings can help strengthen the call made by the INTO (2015) in its 'DEIS consultation submission' for new conceptualisations of DEIS to incorporate and reaffirm the importance of education as a relational and caring concern. It is also envisaged that the concerns raised in this paper in relation to 'pre-packaged' literacy and numeracy programmes that fail to address socio-cultural practice, will help focus attention on the need to customise DEIS literacy and numeracy programmes to the particular school context. Encouraging and supporting teachers to pursue creative approaches to literacy development that integrate literacy with the arts and SPHE can also help to expand the horizons of literacy development beyond the technical and instrumental concerns of the day that dominated the participating ECTs' understandings of their role in the teaching of literacy. Raising teachers' awareness of the pivotal role students' emotional literacy plays in the creation and development of the dialogical classroom is another emergent issue that this research can help generate debate around. In this way, the provision of meaningful and cognitively challenging literacy and numeracy experiences that are connected to children's socio-cultural heritage, and which nourish children's sense of creativity, agency and autonomy can be (re) imagined. In terms of evaluating progress made by DEIS, the almost exclusive emphasis DEIS currently places on assessing literacy and numeracy gains through test scores and the narrowing effect this is having on teachers' practice, highlights the need to adopt a wider assessment of progress for future DEIS initiatives. Finally, it is also hoped that this study's findings can help provoke much needed debate toward assisting teachers to plot a route away from the professional marginalisation that a commitment to a holistic, child-centered teaching philosophy currently exposes them to, towards a path of resistance to the consensual 'deficit' understandings of working class communities that dominate the political and policy discourse.

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