

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Sheila Nunan
INTO General Secretary

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Themes

- Policy to Practice
- Education and the Common Good
- Standards and Accountability
- Valuing Children
- Structures

Policy Context (I)

- 1884 No child under 3
- 1934 No child under 4
- 1969 Rutland Street Project
- 1981 Government attempt to raise school age to 4 1/2 – “hiss factor”
- 1994 Early Start
- Preschools for Travellers/DEIS

Policy Context (2)

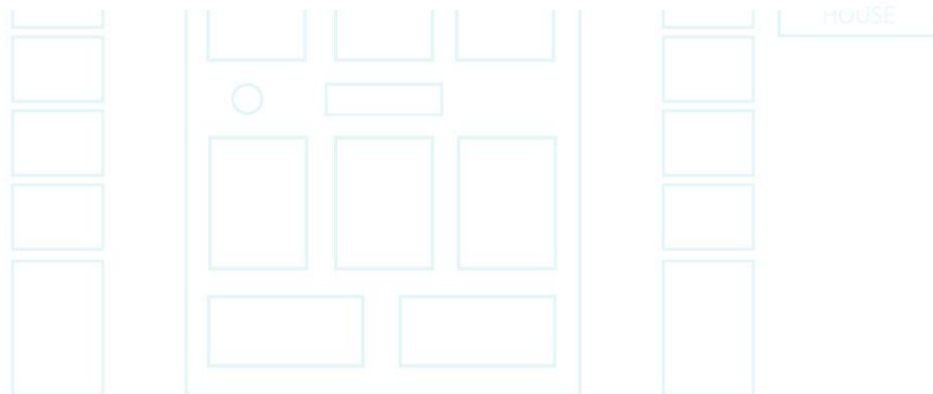
- White Paper - 1999
- OECD Review ECE - 2004
- NESF Report – 2005
- CECDE – 2002-2008
- Early Years Policy Unit – DES
- NCCA – AISTEAR 2009 (0-6)
- Atlantic Philanthropies Projects
- Free Universal Pre-school Year 2010
- Appointment of Minister for Children & Youth Affairs

Context of ECE in Ireland

- Compulsory Schooling 6-16
- Primary Schools 4-12
- Junior & Senior Infant Classrooms 4-6 year olds
- Early Start – Intervention Programme for 3 year old disadvantaged children in Primary School
- Universal Free Pre-school for all 3-4 year olds (Since January 2010)
- Provision for children under 4 in private, community and voluntary sector

Aistear

Creathuraclam na Luath-Óige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework



Aistear Themes

- Well-being
- Identity and belonging
- Communicating
- Exploring and thinking

Issues

- **Internal**
 - Environment of Infant classes
 - Challenge to practice in Infant classes
 - Class size, classroom support and resources
 - CPD
- **External**
 - Growth in Non-School Sector
 - Workforce Development Plan
 - Increasing number of Graduates in ECCE
 - Free Pre-school Scheme

**Early Childhood
Education**

0 - 6

- Variable quality
- Private and community sector
- Cost to parents
- Regulated / health
- Workforce development strategy
- Free Pre-school 3 yr olds

**Infant classes in
primary schools**

4 - 6

- Universal / Free
- Curriculum
- Primary school ratios and classroom conditions
- Too much didactic teaching (OECD)
- Insufficient CPD

Primary Education

6 - 12

- Curriculum
- Qualified teachers
- Evaluated (DES)
- State funded
- Well regarded