Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Sheila Nunan
INTO General Secretary

Maynooth Education Forum: June 20, 2013

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

Themes

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

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

Policy Context (1)

- 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

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

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

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

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

into

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

Aistear

Creatchuraclam na Luath-Óige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

Aistear Themes

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

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

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 didactive teaching (OECD)
- Insufficient CPD

Primary Education
6 - 12

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