

IRELAND'S YEARBOOK OF EDUCATION **2019–2020**

Editor **Dr Brian Mooney**

PUBLISHED BY
EDUCATION MATTERS

MANAGING EDITOR
Dr Brian Mooney

ISBN: 978-0-9956987-3-4

SPONSORED BY
Dublin City University – Irish Research Council
National University of Ireland – Trinity College Dublin
Maynooth University – University College Dublin – NUI Galway
University of Limerick – QQI – SOLAS

Copy-edited by Stan Carey
www.stancarey.com

Designed by Jeroen Bos
www.artvaark-design.ie

Printed in Ireland by
Walsh Colour Print
Castleisland, Co. Kerry

The views expressed in this Yearbook are many, varied and sometimes contradictory.
They are exclusively the views of our highly valued writers and do not necessarily
reflect the views of the Editor, of Education Matters, or of sponsors.



CONTENTS

- 9 **Foreword**
Joe McHugh TD
- 14 **Editorial**
Dr Brian Mooney

THEMES

- 23 **Education at the Heart of the University**
The Institute of Education at Dublin City University
Prof Brian Mac Craith
Anne Looney
- 28 **Towards an Integrated Tertiary Education System**
A Practitioner's Perspective
Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan
Dr Rory O'Sullivan
- 35 **The Art of Telling Compelling Stories**
It's all about language, structure, and the hook
Jim Carroll
- 40 **Redressing the Sustainability Paradox of Education**
Infusing education for sustainability in higher education programmes
Dr Charlotte Holland
- 46 **Professional Development Planning**
Bridging the gap between staff and institute needs
Ruth Ní Bheoláin
Dr Tony Murphy
- 54 **The Creative Youth Plan**
A Reaction to Change and a Catalyst for Change
Stephen Ryan
- 60 **Funding and HEI performance**
The relationship between resources and HEI performance
John Casey
Cormac O'Keeffe
Ray Griffin
- 68 **Inclusion or Containment?**
A reality for learners with autism in mainstream primary schools
Dr Carol-Ann O'Síoráin
Prof. Michael Shevlin
- 78 **Rethinking the Educational Ecosystem**
A Universal Design Approach
Dr Gerald Craddock
Dr Larry McNutt
- 85 **The Future of Irish Education**
The disruptive forces that will rock our system
Peter Cosgrove

EARLY CHILDHOOD

- 93 **Winds of Change?**
A tale of intended and unintended consequences
Mathias Urban
- 100 **Curriculum Planning for Babies and Toddlers**
Playful, emergent, and inquiry-based learning
Lorraine Farrell
- 105 **Nurturing a Creative Pedagogy**
Everyday creativity through a flow state
Milica Atanackovic
- 109 **Mo Scéal: Online Reporting Templates**
An initiative of the NCCA to help ease the transition from pre-school to primary
Mary Daly
- 113 **Early Childhood in the Global Village:**
Competent systems for sustainable development
Mathias Urban
Jennifer Guevara
- 119 **Workforce Development:**
Transforming Ireland's early learning and childcare system
Katherine Zappone
- 123 **Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion in Early Childhood**
A conceptual shift from needs to rights
Colette Murray
- 127 **Universal Design Guidelines for Early Earning and Care Settings**
Design for all
Máire Corbett
Tom Grey
Teresa Heeney
Prof. Emer Ring
Dr Lisha O'Sullivan

PRIMARY

- 135 **Sustainability of school leadership is the key to successful schools**
A year in review
Damian White
- 142 **Primary Curriculum Review**
Summary findings from parents on a future curriculum
Arlene Forster
Hal O'Neill
Claire Reidy
Dr Derek Grant

- 147 **Primary Curriculum Review (Phase 2)**
Curriculum consultation seminars
Arlene Forster
Hal O'Neill
Claire Reidy
Dr Derek Grant
- 152 **School Self-Evaluation**
The evolution of the process in the Irish school context
Dr Leo Kilroy
Bernadette Ní Ruairc
- 158 **Cosán – A Pathway for Professional Learning**
Tomás Ó Ruairc
- 164 **Using Online Testing to Assess Learner Progress and Help Teachers Improve Class and School Performance**
Prof. Diarmuid Hegarty
- 168 **Home Works: The Educational Needs of Children Experiencing Homelessness**
Grainne McKenna
Dr Ger Scanlon
- 173 **Managing Expectations**
The myths that perfectionism creates
Angela Lynch
- 176 **Sustainable Leadership**
A shared responsibility and a long-term vision
Dr Éadaoin McGovern
- 180 **Managing Challenging Relationships**
Unpacking Some of the realities and possible solutions
Joe O'Connell
- 183 **A Decade of School Leadership Research: Insights, Implications, Applications**
Gavin Murphy

SECOND LEVEL

- 193 **Second-Level Review**
Clive Byrne
- 200 **Junior Cycle Reform**
The Reality of the Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA)
Dr Pádraig Kirk
- 205 **Our Future Is at Stake**
Why the climate strikes matter
Ciara Fanning
- 210 **Senior Cycle Review**
Kieran Golden

- 215 **How Should Second-Level Schools Respond in an Era of Digital Learning?**
Ann Marcus-Quinn
Triona Hourigan
Selina McCoy
- 219 **Teachers' health not an option but an imperative:**
Developing an integrated occupational health system
Deirdre MacDonald
- 224 **Tackling Educational Disadvantage through Greater Creativity**
Martin Hawkes
- 228 **Leading Collaborative Professionalism**
An abridged version of a paper by Andy Hargreaves and Michael T. O'Connor which formed the basis for discussion at an education symposium in the Killeshin Hotel Portlaoise.
Andy Hargreaves
Michael T. O'Connor
- 233 **The Key Role of Collaborative Professionalism**
Notes on a talk by Andy Hargreaves
Derek West
- 237 **Grab the Guru While You Can**
Lessons on Learning from John Hattie
Derek West

FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

- 247 **Overview of FET in 2019**
Andrew Brownlee
- 250 **QQI – First Movers in an Integrated Tertiary Education System**
Dr Pádraig Walsh
- 254 **Towards a Competence Approach to Skill Formation in Ireland**
Dr Rory O'Sullivan
- 260 **Constructing an Evolving Teacher Identity in Further Education:**
Professional voices from the field
Anne Graham Cagney
- 268 **The Importance of Effective Career Guidance Tools and Information**
An independent review of offerings in the education and training system
Paul Keating
- 272 **Insights from the Youthreach Evaluation**
Selina McCoy
- 277 **The FET College of the Future**
What are the core elements of an FET college model?
Cecilia Munro

HIGHER EDUCATION

- 284 **Brian Mooney conferred with honorary Doctor of Education degree**
- 285 **Research, New Universities, and the Beausang Letter:**
An overview of higher education in Ireland in 2019
John Walshe
- 293 **Global Engagement Offers New Opportunities for Ireland**
Dr Douglas Proctor
- 297 **The UNSustainable Development Goals in Education**
Think Bigger: UCD's educational commitment to the SDGs
Prof Cecily Kelleher
Louise Griffin
- 302 **Global Sustainability Challenges**
The role of universities and student learning at NUI Galway
Michelle O'Dowd Lohan
Prof Frances Fahy
Prof Pól Ó Dochartaigh
- 308 **Balancing Breadth and Depth at Third Level**
Dr Kevin Mitchell
- 314 **Supporting and Stimulating Engagement between Higher Education and Enterprise**
Prof Irene Sheridan
- 318 **Establishing a Support Framework for Research Supervision**
The How and Why of Supporting Doctoral Research Supervisors
Dr Janet Carton
- 325 **Equality and Inclusion are Practices, Not End Goals:**
The national approach to gender equality in Irish higher education
Dr Gemma Irvine
- 331 **All Students Matter, Every Student Counts**
Student engagement, progression, and success – an institutional approach
Marese Bermingham

RESEARCH

- 339 **Overview of Research in 2019**
Peter Brown
- 344 **Research, Innovation, and the Technological University:**
A focus on the Munster regions
Niall Smith
- 348 **How to Make Artificial Intelligence Work for the Good of Humanity**
Jennifer Edmond

- 353 **Open Research**
Innovating in the Public Sector
Patricia Clarke
- 357 **Friendship at the Interface of Research and Policymaking**
Finding a common language
Charles Larkin
- 362 **Experts, Disagreement, and Trust**
When politics invites itself into your research
Prof. Maria Baghramian
- 367 **Digital Entrepreneurship and Gender**
Maura McAdam
- 372 **Growing Up in Ireland**
Insights on Inclusion in Irish Schools
Georgiana Mihut
Selina McCoy
- 376 **Educator Well-Being**
Ignoring systemic stress at our peril
Prof. Patricia Mannix McNamara
Niamh Hickey

OUR ADVERTISERS

- 132 **Pine Forest Art Centre**
- 162 **Innopharma Education**
- 200 **SUSI**
- 206 **ISTA Irish Science Teachers' Association**
- 236 **Léargas**
- 259 **OEM Apprenticeship**
- 268 **Accounting Technicians Ireland**
- 274 **IADT Institute of Art, Design & Technology**
- 304 **National University of Ireland**
- 328 **National College of Ireland**

FOREWORD



Joe McHugh TD
Minister for Education
and Skills

As a former teacher and youth worker, it would be fair to admit that when An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD rang me in October 2018 to offer me the role of Minister for Education and Skills it was a dream come true.

I believe that it is through education that we prepare our young people for the world of the future and the lives they will live, which in many ways will be hard for our generation to even conceive.

In the time I have spent in the Department of Education and Skills, I have had the opportunity to work with department staff and a range of education partners who, although they may differ on the details, are dedicated to making sure the Irish education system is second to none.

The education brief is wide and varied, but there are a few policy areas that I want to focus on in this article.

Irish

The journey with the language continues. I want to see an education system which focuses on teaching our unique and prized 3,000-year-old language in a way that young people will use it. It is about making it relevant. It is about showing young people how to communicate and converse in Irish.

A small step on that road is the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) project that I introduced for early years, primary, and post-primary schools. It sets the ground for young people to be taught subjects through Irish, with one of those being PE. Other subjects being worked on are Art, Maths, Science, Business, Geography, SPHE, and CSPE. There are many options. And I am confident it will help young people connect with Irish in a new and better way.

Our students also have to understand the legacy of our language – ár nOidhreacht. Irish is 3,000 years old. It dates back to Roman times. It was strong enough to survive the plundering of the Vikings and the penal laws, colonisation and An Gorta Mór, albeit badly weakened.

Building relationships	Tip sheet on <i>Joint transition activities for preschools and primary schools</i> as well as videos on preschools and schools collaborating.
Children's thoughts on moving to primary school	Videos of children talking about the transition from preschool to primary school.
Working with parents	Videos about helping parents with the transition.
Research	Research related to the transition from preschool to primary school.

Conclusion

NCCA's online publication of the *Mo Scéal* materials is timely given the publication of *First 5: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019–2028* (Government of Ireland, 2018), which has a strong focus on the transition from preschool to primary school. Going forward, as part of First 5, the NCCA will work closely with the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and relevant partners to develop guidance and pilot support processes for those focusing on this important transition.

REFERENCES

- Department of Education and Skills (DES) (2011) *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life*. Retrieved from: www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/lit_num_strategy_full.pdf.
- Government of Ireland (2018) *First 5: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019–2028*. Dublin: Government Publications.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2009) *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Dublin: NCCA.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2018a) *Preschool to Primary School Transition Initiative. Final Report*. www.ncca.ie/media/3367/transitionpreschoolprimary_reportfinalfeb.pdf.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2018b) *Mo Scéal: Preschool to Primary Transition*. www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/mo-scéal.
- O'Kane, M. (2016) *Transition from Preschool to Primary School: Research Report 19*. Report prepared for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. www.ncca.ie/en/file/early/ResearchReport19_LR.pdf.
- O'Kane, M. and Murphy, R. (2016a) *Transition from Preschool to Primary School: Audit of Policy in 14 Jurisdictions*. Report prepared for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. www.ncca.ie/en/file/early/National-Audit-Draft-10.pdf.
- O'Kane, M. and Murphy, R. (2016b) *Transition from Preschool to Primary School in Ireland: Audit of Transfer Documentation in Ireland*. Report prepared for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. www.ncca.ie/en/file/early/National-Audit-Draft-10.pdf.

“ At present there is no requirement for preschools and schools to use the *Mo Scéal* templates.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE:

Competent systems for sustainable development

A global consensus is emerging that early childhood services, and the policies to develop them, can only be sustainable and beneficial for all children and all families once we take public responsibility and start building a coherent 'competent system' of supports around them. This article looks at what that means in practice in Ireland, based on best current international thinking.



Mathias Urban

Desmond Chair of Early Childhood Education, and Director of the Early Childhood Research Centre, Dublin City University

According to an overused proverb of uncertain origin, it takes a village to raise a child. In our globalised times, the village extends to the entire planet. In 2018 the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) launched the ambitious *First 5: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and Their Families* (DCYA, 2018). The systemic perspective it adopts, while not explicitly stated, is very much in accordance with an emerging global consensus that early childhood services – and the policies to develop them – can only be sustainable and beneficial for all children and all families once we take public responsibility and start building a coherent 'competent system' of supports around them (Urban et al., 2012).

The authors of this article, based at the Early Childhood Research Centre (ECRC) at Dublin City University (DCU), together with an international team, work with global partners in policy, practice, and research to help bring about much-needed systems change.



Jennifer Guevara

Rising Talent Fellow of the Early Childhood Research Centre, Dublin City University

Every year, the governments of the world's leading economies gather to 'develop global policies to address today's most pressing challenges' – the mission of the annual G20 summits.¹ G20 coincides with the annual summit of T20, a global network of think tanks and research institutions that provide policy advice to the G20 governments.² Since 2018, when Argentina held the G20 presidency, education has been identified as a key tool for addressing the challenges facing humanity on a complex planet with an uncertain future. Arguably most, if not all, critical issues – economy, democracy, peace, and our species' collective survival – rest on the question of how we, as individuals and societies, educate our children and ourselves.

Education for all, too, is central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the global community aims to achieve by 2030,³ and it is enshrined as every child's right in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. But education does not start with children entering primary school. Children learn from the day they are born, and how they encounter and experience the world matters. This is why early childhood services, including services for the youngest children, ought to be so much more than a 'service', 'childcare', and a commodity for working parents.

I (MU) have the privilege to lead a group of international experts⁴ who developed the early childhood policy briefs for T20 that were presented to the G20 summit in Argentina in 2018 and in Japan in 2019.⁵ We are currently drafting the policy brief for the 2020 summit that will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in spring.

What do the policy briefs recommend?

The key message of the 2018 policy brief draws on a strong body of international research evidence showing that early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, provided they are of high quality, benefit children, families, and society as a whole. Achieving that level of quality, however, requires coordinated, long-term strategy and collaboration of actors across all aspects of the education and care system. It requires a shared vision, an action plan, proper public investment, a qualified and well-paid workforce, and professional and democratic accountability. Probably most of all it requires courageous political leadership and effective governance. Hence the title of the policy brief: *It takes more than a village. Effective early childhood development, education and care services require competent systems* (Urban et al., 2018).

A competent system? This is where the global policy debate becomes relevant to the reality of Irish early childhood education. We can no longer ignore the fact that how we educate and care for young children disregards their rights, is unaffordable for families, is financially not viable for early childhood educators and service providers, and – as the Economic and Social Research Institute has confirmed – is damaging to the economy.⁶

Without doubt the government, and especially the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone, are to be commended for their efforts to increase both the quality and funding of services. But as the minister rightly recognises, the sector has been neglected and critically underfunded for decades, and public expenditure lags far behind comparable countries in Europe and beyond. Measured in percentage of GDP, Ireland remains at the bottom of OECD countries and has a long way to go to even reach the OECD average of 0.8% GDP.

Analysis by our research team for the Department of Education and Skills in 2016 (Urban et al., 2017) points out that lack of funding is only one challenge facing the Irish ECEC sector. The lack of resources is exacerbated by systemic problems of governance at all levels of the early childhood system, by fragmentation and vested interests of groups competing for insufficient resources, and by over-reliance on a supposed ‘market’ in providing childcare and early childhood education. Our findings confirm what internal experts and international observers have consistently been reporting for years. The result is a dysfunctional system that, at a high cost for society, families, and the workforce, fails to provide best-quality care and education for all children.

Yes, we need substantial investment in early childhood education and care services in this country. But in order for more money to make a difference,

“ Achieving a high level of quality requires a shared vision, an action plan, proper public investment, a qualified and well-paid workforce, and professional and democratic accountability.

we need systemic change: change in how services are seen and run. There is a need for a broad, public, and democratic debate about what – and who – early childhood services are for. At DCU ECRC we enter this debate from a clear understanding that early childhood education⁷ and care is (a) the right of each and every child, (b) a public service for all families, and (c) a public good and public responsibility.

Early childhood development education and care: the future is what we build today

The title of the policy brief we developed for the T20 summit in Tokyo, Japan, in May 2019 takes inspiration from a quote from Paulo Freire’s book *Letters to Cristina* (Freire, 1996):

The future isn’t something hidden in a corner. The future is something we build in the present.

The text builds on the analysis and recommendations of the 2018 document and extends them to a necessary reconceptualisation of early childhood programmes and services in the light of a global sustainability crisis. The arguments we lay out in the policy brief are based on the recognition that, on a global scale, distinctions between approaches to early childhood programmes in the Global South and Global North are no longer tenable.

Broadly speaking, policymakers and international organisations have been promoting programmes for *early childhood development* (ECD) (focusing on health and nutrition) in countries in the Global South, and on *early childhood education and care* (ECEC) in countries in the Global North, representing different priorities for children in so-called developing and developed countries. But the distinction between ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ has become meaningless, and so has the artificial distinction between ECD and ECEC.

Even in the most affluent countries (e.g., in North America and Europe, including Ireland), children are growing up under what some, naively, used to call Third World conditions: persistent poverty, exclusion and inequality, violence, displacement and forced migration, hunger, and malnutrition (Social Justice Ireland, 2015). In both the Global South and the Global North, inequality *within* countries has become as damaging to children as inequality *between* countries. This, we argue, requires urgent reconceptualisation of what (and who) early childhood services are for, and what kind of services they should be providing.

Yesterday’s solutions still being posited

That early childhood has been given a prominent place in the 2030 SDGs (Goal 4) is a welcome recognition of its global importance. However, most of the initiatives have focused on increasing access to, and participation in, ECD/ECEC programmes, as spelled out in SDG 4. Increased access and enrolment figures alone are not a sufficient measure for meaningful participation in high-quality programmes that are effective in making a positive difference in children’s lives. Even when more children access

“ The sector (in Ireland) has been neglected and critically underfunded for decades, and public expenditure lags far behind comparable countries in Europe and beyond.

ECD/ECEC services, they enter and participate in very diverse and unequal programmes. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to questions of purpose and content of ECD/ECEC in the context of sustainability. ‘Yesterday’s solutions’ continue to be supported by policymakers and donors alike, and programmes still tend to focus on:

- deficiencies rather than the capabilities of children, families, and communities
- externally predetermined models and outcomes rather than culturally and locally appropriate approaches
- decontextualised and borrowed education practices and approaches (Reggio, Montessori, HighScope, Project Zero, etc.) rather than culturally appropriate and locally developed sustainable solutions
- narrowly defined ‘early learning’ curricula (literacy and numeracy), extending from countries in the Global North to the Global South
- narrow and unsustainable notions of ‘development’ – at individual, collective, country, and global levels – that originate in supremacist and colonialist thinking
- naïve extrapolation of today’s socioeconomic contexts into the future, including the assumption that, for instance, ‘digital’ and ‘AI’, are both the main challenges and the solutions to development and education. (adapted from Urban et al., 2019)

In order for more money to make a difference, we need systemic change; change in how services are seen and run.

The 2019 policy brief was adopted by the T20 summit in May 2019; its key recommendation is included in the final communiqué that was received by G20 heads of state. In it we summarise the task (and possibility!) at hand:

Reconceptualise ECD/ECEC in the context of existential global crises and develop a roadmap to integrated early childhood development, education, and care for sustainable development. The approach to the initiative should be three-pronged:

1. commitment to increasing access
2. commitment to ‘whole-systems’ approaches to developing, improving, resourcing, and governing early childhood programmes in order to achieve the sustainability of programmes and services
3. reconceptualise early childhood development, education, and care across G20 countries as societal, democratic realisation of early childhood as a common good and collective responsibility, and contribution to achieving sustainability on a global scale, i.e., in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. (Urban et al., 2019, p. 8)

- Build on support whole-systems approaches to ECD/ECEC (Competent Systems), in order to overcome persistent, wasteful, and ineffective fragmentation and silo mentality
- (Re)claim ECD/ECEC as public good and public responsibility – counter privatisation, corporatisation, and phase out for-profit programmes
- Extend the ECD/ECEC agenda from SDG4 to all 17 SDGs
- Initiate programme and policy review with a focus on content, values and ethics rather than access and enrolment only:
 - what should we be developing?
 - what should we be educating for to achieve sustainability on a finite planet?

- Goal 1: No poverty
- Goal 2: Zero hunger
- Goal 3: Good health & well-being
- Goal 4: Quality education
- Goal 5: Gender equality
- Goal 6: Clean water & sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable & clean energy
- Goal 8: Decent work & economic growth
- Goal 9: Industry, innovation & infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable cities & communities
- Goal 12: Responsible consumption & production
- Goal 13: Climate action
- Goal 14: Life below water
- Goal 15: Life on land
- Goal 16: Peace, justice & strong institutions
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Key policy recommendations

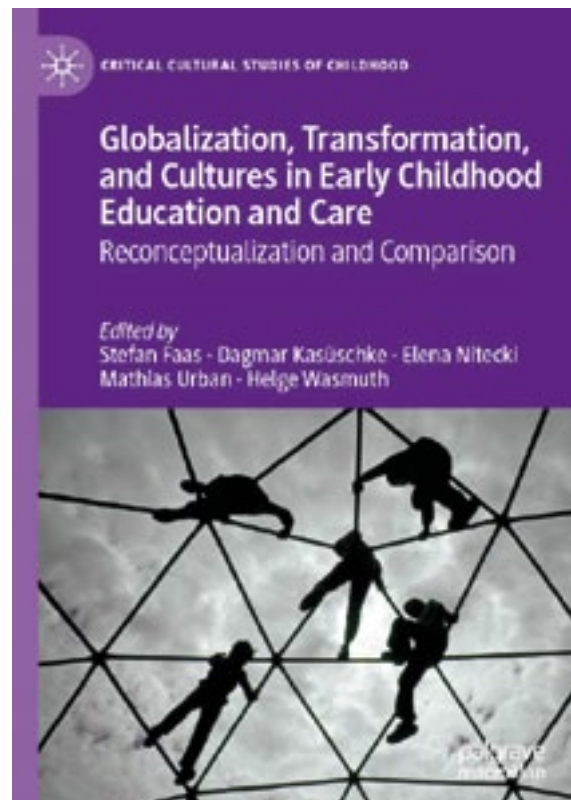
It is promising to see that the recommendations developed in a collaboration of experts from Latin America, Africa, and Europe are being adopted at global policy level. However, action will have to be taken locally and this requires leadership by national governments.

REFERENCES

- Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) (2018) *First 5. A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and Their Families 2019–2028*. Dublin: Government of Ireland.
- Freire, P. (1996) *Letters to Cristina: Reflections on My Life and Work* (tr. D. Macedo, Q. Macedo, and A. Oliveira). London; New York: Routledge.
- Social Justice Ireland (2015) *Poverty and Inequalities on the Rise. Just social models needed as the solution! A study of the impact of the crisis and austerity on people, with a special focus on Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain*. Brussels: Caritas Europa.
- Urban, M., Cardini, A., and Flórez Romero, R. (2018) *It Takes More Than a Village. Effective Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Services Require Competent Systems*. Buenos Aires. Retrieved from: <https://t20argentina.org/publicacion/it-takes-more-than-a-village-effective-early-childhood-development-education-and-care-services-require-competent-systems/>.
- Urban, M., Cardini, A., Guevara, J., Okengo, L., and Floréz Romero, R. (2019) ‘Early childhood development education and care: The future is what we build today’. In: Japan International Cooperation Agency (ed.) *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, pp. 41–54. Tokyo: Japan International Cooperation Agency.
- Urban, M., Robson, S., and Scacchi, V. (2017) Review of Occupational Role Profiles in Ireland in Early Childhood Education and Care. Dublin, Ireland. Retrieved from: www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Final-Review-of-Occupational-Role-Profiles-in-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care.pdf.
- Urban, M., Vandebroek, M., Van Laere, K., Lazzari, A., and Peeters, J. (2012) ‘Towards competent systems in early childhood education and care: Implications for policy and practice’, *European Journal of Education*, 47(4), 508–526. doi: 10.1111/ejed.12010

ENDNOTES

1. <https://g20.org>.
2. In parallel with the G20 summit, seven official 'engagement groups' develop policy recommendations on important issues such as business (B20), civil society (C20), women and economic development (W20), labour market (L20), youth (Y20), science (S20), and knowledge to shape global governance (T20).
3. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>.
4. Jennifer Guevara (Early Childhood Research Centre, DCU, Ireland), Alejandra Cardini (Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth [CIPPEC], Buenos Aires, Argentina), Rita Flórez Romero (Universidad Nacional de Colombia), and Lynette Okengo (African Early Childhood Network [AfECN], Nairobi, Kenya).
5. The DCYA contributed to the travel expenses for delivery of the policy brief to the 2018 T20 summit.
6. www.esri.ie/publications/maternal-employment-and-the-cost-of-childcare-in-ireland.
7. We refer to 'education' in the broadest sense as a holistic concept that transcends the often narrow understandings of children being taught to acquire formal skills, e.g., early literacy and numeracy and general 'school readiness' that prevail in English-language contexts. Education, in our view, is Bildung (the unfolding of a person's full potential) as much as it is Educação (Freire's practice of liberation and emancipation).



Globalization, Transformation, and Cultures in Early Childhood Education and Care

Reconceptualization and Comparison

Editors

Stefan Faas
Dagmar Kasüschke
Elena Nitecki
Mathias Urban
Helge Wasmuth

Published in 2019 by Palgrave
Macmillan

"In a world that is being intensely transformed by the strong waves of globalization, this kind of cross-cultural comparative work is critical as it allows for more inclusive and balanced perspectives on the lives of young children. This excellent collection of chapters will be of vital interest to all concerned with early childhood education and development across cultural contexts."

— Amita Gupta,
Professor of Early Childhood Education,
City University of New York, USA.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Transforming Ireland's early learning and childcare system

The government's *First 5* strategy identifies over 150 actions across the domains that affect young children's lives, including ambitious and far-reaching actions related to the early learning and school-age childcare sector. In this article the Minister summarises the challenges facing the sector and the actions planned and currently being taken to meet them.



Katherine Zappone
Minister for Children
and Youth Affairs

Maria Montessori, one of the most influential early childhood educators, once said: 'Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society.' Montessori dedicated her life to finding a better way to teach young children so that they would fully develop their skills and reach their full potential. In similar ways, many of our early years practitioners working in the sector today are dedicating their lives, their energy, and their enthusiasm to children's development, and by doing so are creating a better future for us all.

We still face challenges in ensuring that those working in the sector get the recognition they deserve for the important work they do. But these are challenges we are seeking to address in all the ways we possibly can. It is critical to improve conditions in the sector, given the importance for child outcomes of recruiting and retaining qualified staff and upskilling the current dedicated workforce. There is a need to recognise the true value of the work carried out by early learning and care and school-age childcare professionals every day, the work that is changing lives, transforming communities, and making our society better, one child at a time.

Addressing these challenges is a priority for me, as I know what a positive difference those who work in the sector can make to children's lives and how valuable their work is. As you know, my Department is not the employer of early learning and care and school-age childcare staff – in that it does not pay the wages of staff and cannot set wage levels or determine working conditions for the staff. However, I am doing all that is in my power to improve wages and working conditions in the sector. I have repeatedly called for the sector to pursue a Sectoral Employment Order, which offers a viable mechanism to establish appropriate wage levels. My Department will readily cooperate with such a process if and when it is under way.

In 2017 I established a sustainability fund for the early learning and care and school-age childcare sector to assist high-quality services that were experiencing financial difficulties to transition themselves to a sustainable footing. This is part of a range of supports to services. In Budget 2020 I have increased the funding available under this fund to €2.2m and have asked that the use of the fund now be extended to support the sector in the event that the Labour Court introduces a Sectoral Employment Order in a sustainable way for the providers.