

Marino Institute of Education

**What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners
when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?**

Thesis

By

Ann Donnelly

Supervisor: Fintan McCutcheon

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of the degree of
Master in Education Studies (Early Childhood Education)**

Date: 4th June 2019

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

‘It is a bit embarrassing to have been concerned with the human problem all one's life and find at the end that one has no more to offer by way of advice than 'try to be a little kinder.’ – Aldous Huxley

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Fintan McCutcheon for whom I owe a great deal. He approached this learning experience with an openness and an energy to explore the topic further. His feedback and insights were invaluable and he was extremely generous with the time he gave. Without him I would not have got to where I am now and for this I will always be grateful.

I would like to extend my thanks to the two eight participants that facilitated this study. They proved critical to this research and I feel enriched from the insights and experiences. Without these opportunities I would not have acquired the same learning about such an important phenomenon that needs to be documented and further discussed and questioned.

I would like to send my sincere thanks to Joan Kiely, the coordinator of the Master's programme. Joan has helped and inspired me from day one on this course and has always been there to help whenever it was needed. I would like to thank my class in Marino Institute of Education and in particular Katie, I could not imagine this journey without her.

I would also like to thank Pam Meehan, Angela Corr and Sinead Matson. Pam showed me what a good early years' service looked like and has set the bar so high. Angela has been on this journey with me from the beginning and has always gone above and beyond to help me in any way she can. Sinead inspires, motivates, energizes and

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

challenges me to think harder. She has given me a love for my work and someone who I will always seek her opinions on topics in this field. I look forward to a future trip to India together.

I would like to thank my family for their unending support along the way. To my parents, Noel and Patricia for their unwavering support through this journey (and always). Mom you had a resolution to every problem and provided constant humor along the way. To my brother Brian for being so much more than my critical friend, you were a guide and selfless with your time when I needed a chat.

Finally to my supporter in all endeavours, thank you Feo for this one in particular.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Table of Contents

Table of Tables	8
Abstract	9
Acronyms	11
Glossary of Terms	12
Chapter One Introduction	15
1.1 Introduction	15
1.2 Personal Motivation and Rationale for the Study	15
1.3 Aims and Key Question of the Research Study	16
1.4 Population Migration.....	16
1.5 Direct Provision.....	17
1.5.1 Children in Direct Provision.....	19
1.6 Theoretical Framework	20
1.7 Outline of Chapters	21
Chapter Two Literature Review	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.2 Changes in Population Demographics	22
2.3 Immigrant family profiles	24
2.4 Direct Provision in Ireland	25
2.5 Diversity and equality	28
2.6 The Rights of the Child in the Early Childhood Education Setting	33
2.7 Early childhood education for children who are seeking asylum	38
2.7.1 The role of the ECEC Practitioner in early childhood education.....	38
2.7.2 HighScope as an education curriculum	40
2.8 Language barriers for ECEC practitioners	41
2.9 Theory on Human Development	45
2.10 Conclusion.....	47
Chapter Three Methodology	48
3.1 Introduction	48
3.2 Research Question	48
3.3 Research Context.....	48
3.3.1 Background of Preschools.....	48
3.3.2 ECEC Practitioners' Profiles.....	51
3.3.3 Gatekeepers	53

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

3.4 Research Design	53
3.5 Research Methodology	54
3.6 Theoretical Framework	56
3.7 Ethical Considerations	59
3.8 Data Handling and Storage	63
3.9 Positionality of the Reader	64
3.10 Mode of Data Analysis	65
3.11 Challenges and Limitations	66
3.12 Conclusion	67
Chapter Four Data Analysis and Findings	69
4. 1 Introduction	69
4.2 Managing cultural and religious diversity	69
4.2.1 Recognizing cultural differences	69
4.2.2 Religious Issues	71
4.2.3 Conclusion	73
4.3 ECEC practitioners' involvement with parents	73
4.3.1 Parent-teacher relationships	73
4.3.2 Parenting practices	75
4.3.3 Parental psycho-emotional issues	77
4.3.4 Conclusion	80
4.4 Negotiating behaviour in the early years' setting	81
4.4.1 Separation Anxiety	81
4.4.2 The child's self-regulation and conflict resolution	83
4.4.3 Conclusion	85
4.5 Negotiating language barriers	86
4.5.1 Different approaches and opinions	87
4.5.2 Conclusion	88
4.6 ECEC practitioners' understandings of Direct Provision	89
4.6.1 ECEC practitioners' understandings of Direct Provision	89
4.6.2 Conclusion	91
Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations	93
5.1 Introduction	93
5.2 Conclusions	93
5.3 Recommendations	98
Reference List	102

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Appendix 1 122

Appendix 2 124

Appendix 3 126

Table of Tables

Table 1: ECEC Practitioners’ Profiles..... 52

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Abstract

The importance of the role of the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) practitioner in the life of the child is understood and acknowledged (Hayes, O'Toole and Halpenny, 2017). This study focused on discovering the challenges Early Childhood Educators face when teaching children who are living in Direct Provision. The Bronfenbrenner bioecological theory was used as the theoretical framework as it provided a context to demonstrate the significance of this relationship.

The world is currently experiencing the greatest displacement of people on a global level as confirmed by recent records (Hill, 2018). This pattern of immigration is reflected in the Irish population as there has been a significant shift in population demographics in this country in the past ten years (Lally, 2019). The Irish government has responded to the demand for accommodation by introducing a system described as Direct Provision (Reception and Integration Agency, 2010a). Figures indicate that in July 2018, 1,485 children seeking asylum were living in Direct Provision (Irish Refugee Council, 2018).

The study design included qualitative research and eight ECEC practitioners who are teaching children who live in Direct Provision were interviewed. The research found that the ECEC practitioners acknowledged the differences and demonstrated respect for the children's culture and religious identities. They recognized the importance of the parent-teacher relationships in relation to the child's development. They addressed challenges presented to them in relation to language and behaviour issues. However,

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

their perceptions of DP did not demonstrate an awareness of the negative impact on the children by living in the DP setting.

The study concluded by making recommendations to support the ECEC practitioners in their teaching practices which will ultimately benefit the children who are coming to them for guidance and education.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Acronyms

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CECDE	Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DP	Direct Provision
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ESAI	Educational Studies Association of Ireland
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HSE	Health Service Executive
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MIE	Marino Institute of Education
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NESSE	Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RIA	Reception and Integration Agency
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Glossary of Terms

Asylum Seeker	An immigrant who has applied for refugee status on the basis that they have had to leave their country of birth because of fear of losing their liberty and/or their lives.
Bioecological Theory	The bioecological theory of development was formulated by UrieBronfenbrenner and posits that human development is a transactional process in which an individual's development is influenced by his or her interactions with various aspects and spheres of their environment.
Chronosystem	Bioecological concept. A level of context within Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory; the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life-course of the person.
Direct Provision	Asylum Seekers must live in Direct Provision Centres which are provided and funded by the Government. The accommodation includes hotels, hostels and purpose built reception centres. Meals are provided and an allowance of €38.80 per week per adult and €29.80 per week per child.
Exosystem	Bioecological concept. A level of context within Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory; links between those systems of which the child has direct experience, and those settings which the child may never enter but which may nevertheless affect what happens to them.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Immigrant	An immigrant is someone who enters and stays in a country other than the country where they were born on a temporary or permanent basis.
Macrosystem	Bioecological concept. A level of context within Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model; the wider pattern of ideology and organisation of social institutions common to a particular social class or culture to which a person belongs
Mesosystem	Bioecological concept. A level of context within Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model; the level taking account of interconnections and relations between two or more settings, such as school, peer group and family, and acknowledging their impact on the individual. In short, the meso-system is a system of two or more micro-systems.
Microsystem	Bioecological concept. A level of context within Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model; the level of which the individual person has direct experience on a regular basis.
Pobal	Pobal is a not-for-profit company that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU. We are an intermediary that works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Refugee

A Refugee is defined in section 2 of the International Protection Act 2015 as "a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it...."

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the rationale and motivation for choosing this area of research. It describes the aims and details the research question posed. It presents relevant background in relation to population changes and Direct Provision. It introduces Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory as the theoretical framework for this enquiry and finally, it gives an outline of the following chapters.

1.2 Personal Motivation and Rationale for the Study

The author's interest in this area began during the Psychology Module of the Master in Education Studies (Early Childhood Education) programme when the question was posed: 'How does a child's learning and development change in response to a different cultural environment?'. It was decided to review the literature and establish what were the experiences of ECEC practitioners within Irish settings who were teaching children with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. One study carried out in the Ballyhaunis Community Preschool provided a detailed account of how the services have responded to providing an educational system for children from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Moran, Garrity, McGregor & Devaney, 2016). Some children attending the preschool were living in the Direct Provision centre and it was considered that these children faced additional difficulties because of the hardships experienced in this environment. It became evident that this area remained greatly under-explored and there was a dearth of research on the topic. This distinct lack of adequate research on the area spoke to Kilkelly's (2007) argument that there is a lack of advocacy for this

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

extremely vulnerable population and their right to education. This led the author to explore this area further in the hopes of adding to research in this area and helping to develop best practice for delivering early childhood education to children living in DP.

1.3 Aims and Key Question of the Research Study

The aim of this study was to examine what are the challenges for ECEC practitioners when teaching and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision (DP). This key question guided the study throughout this process from the early stages of completing desk research, until the final draft was edited. The question was interrogated and answers were sought in the chapters that follow.

1.4 Population Migration

The world is currently undergoing the highest levels of human migration on record (Hill, 2018). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018), as of June 2018, 68.5 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide. 25.4 million were refugees and 3.1 million were asylum-seekers.

In recent decades, Ireland has experienced an unprecedented increase in immigration, as well as asylum applicants. The explosion of inward migration is confirmed upon examination of the figures of asylum applicants in recent years. In 1992, 39 people applied for asylum in Ireland (Quinn, 2009). This figure continued to rise until its peak in 2002 with 11,634 applicants (Lally, 2019). This constitutes an almost 30,000% increase in the number of asylum applicants over the course of one decade. Although

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

the figures peaked in 2002, they continue to greatly exceed the figures of the early 1990s with more than 3,500 asylum claims made in 2018 (Lally, 2019).

1.5 Direct Provision

It is unsurprising, therefore, that the State was ill-equipped to receive and effectively integrate asylum-seekers and refugees into the Irish society. The system that was put in place to accommodate asylum-seekers was called Direct Provision (DP). It was established in 2000 and is under the auspices of the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) which is a body of the Department of Justice and Equality. According to RIA's website, they seek to meet "the basic needs of food and shelter for asylum seekers directly while their claims for refugee status are being processed rather than through full cash payments" (Reception and Integration Agency, 2010a). However, these centres have been criticised widely for denying asylum seekers fundamental rights and basic dignity (Reception and Integration Agency, 2010a).

Asylum seekers that are housed in these centres are explicitly denied a right to privacy. Many of the centres are former hotels or hostels, and residents are forced to share bleak, overcrowded and often unhygienic conditions with strangers from different cultures for their entire stay. Families of five or more are housed in single hotel rooms (O'Brien & O'Shea, 2014).

DP residents are excluded from the social welfare system, but they are provided with a weekly allowance of €29.80 for children and €38.80 for adults (Citizens Information, 2019). This is an extremely limited budget as it must cover travel costs, any additional

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

food, some medical expenses, toiletries, school-related expenses, phone credit, among many other things.

Furthermore, although children living in DP are free to attend preschool, primary and secondary school, once residents of DP complete their Leaving Certificate examinations, there is a virtual cap on progressing to third level education as asylum seekers are prevented from receiving any state support for university (Reception and Integration Agency, 2010b). This is another way in which the system of DP is constructed to isolate, de-skill and institutionalise current asylum seekers, and it ultimately acts as a deterrent for other people in need to seek asylum in Ireland.

In addition, these conditions are difficult to endure but they are compounded by the length of time to which residents are often subjected in the system of DP. Originally, DP had been created and implemented as an emergency solution to the significant increase in asylum applicants throughout the late 1990s and 2000s. It was envisaged as a short-term solution where asylum seekers would wait for no more than six months for their claim to be heard and a decision to be returned to them (Lentin, 2016).

However, these original plans for DP are far from the reality today. The average length of time spent in DP is four years (Lentin, 2016). These lengthy stays and indeterminate waiting can have severe effects on residents of DP and Lentin (2016, p.22) argues that they lead to residents becoming “deskilled, bored, depressed, destitute and institutionalised”.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

1.5.1 Children in Direct Provision

There are many children living in DP. Figures have shown that more than one third of the inhabitants in DP are children (Arnold, 2012). Although children living in DP have more of an opportunity to integrate with Irish society than their adult counterparts, they still experience many challenges. They face oppression and discrimination through the racism and poverty that is inherent to the system. They have particular challenges with respect to a lack of advocacy to represent their problems and worries in relation to housing, healthcare and education (Kilkelly, 2007). As Luibheid (2013, p. 94) notes, many children in DP are subject to malnutrition, which can lead to “health problems related to diet among children (or) weight loss by babies”. Furthermore, Luibheid argues that they are prevented from living lives similar to children not living in DP. They cannot seek out entertainment, they cannot afford to socialise with other children or afford presents for a child’s birthday party. They cannot afford medicine that is not covered by the medical card nor can they afford clothes or shoes without an “exceptional needs payment” (Luibheid, 2013, p. 95). This extreme poverty that children of DP are forced to live within greatly restricts and inhibits them and undoubtedly further isolates them from Irish society.

Moreover, this oppressive system compounds certain issues that would have arisen among children through the process of mass migration. As Van Os (2018) argues, the process of mass migration can have particular negative impacts on children, such as mental health issues including post-traumatic stress syndrome, separation anxiety, despair, melancholy and many other psychological disorders.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The importance of the role of the ECEC practitioner in the life of the child is now acknowledged and recognized (Hayes, O'Toole and Halpenny, 2017). Bronfenbrenner's seminal work on the bioecological theory led to a better understanding of the issues that influence discrimination and deprivation and how they affect human development. He provided a theoretical framework so one could look beyond the child to the context in which they were progressing and the relationships involved. His Process-Person-Context-Time proposal explains why being informed on matters related to diversity and inclusion are essential to comprehend the child's behaviour, ideas, attitudes and development outcomes (Hayes et al., 2017). Bronfenbrenner defined his bioecological theory as "an evolving theoretical system for the scientific study of human development over time" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 793). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) advised that the educators should work towards providing the best possible environment for the child to facilitate his/her development. He cautioned that if this is not achieved the child will be denied the opportunity to reach their full potential. He emphasized that the educator's approach in terms of guidance of the child's education can influence significantly their future.

It was considered that the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory was appropriate to this study as the ECEC practitioners' responses to the challenges are key to the child's development.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

1.7 Outline of Chapters

In Chapter 2, the main theories, concepts and themes in relation to early childhood education in DP are investigated by reviewing the body of literature that already exists. This includes an examination of changes in population demographics and the immigrant family profiles. It also includes review of the rights of the child in the early childhood education setting, early childhood education for children who are seeking asylum and the Theory of Human Development as postulated by Bronfenbrenner.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology for this study is explained. This includes a justification for the research methods which were employed, the research design, ethical considerations, data analysis, as well as the challenges and limitations encountered.

In Chapter 4, the findings of the research are detailed and analysed. The findings are clustered into five themes; managing cultural and religious identity; ECEC practitioner's involvement with parents; navigating behaviour in the early years setting; negotiating language barriers; and ECEC practitioners' understanding of Direct Provision.

Finally, in the conclusion, the thesis arguments are summarized and recommendations are laid out.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, changes in the population's demographics will be reviewed with specific reference to how these changes have impacted on Irish society. The importance of the relationship between the parent and the ECEC practitioner will be discussed. The issues faced by ECEC practitioners with reference to the different cultural and religious backgrounds will be addressed. The Direct Provision System will be depicted including the impact this setting has on the families living in these centres. The rights of the child will be evaluated with reference to early childhood education. Early childhood education for children who are seeking asylum will be appraised including language barriers. The Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development will be used as a framework for theory in relation to the relationships between ECEC practitioners and children living in DP.

2.2 Changes in population demographics

More than 258 million people were living outside their country of origin in 2017. These figures indicate that the numbers are increasing in the past decade and it is projected that by 2050, the numbers will have reached in excess of 405 million (Hill, 2018).

Children are included in this movement of people and they may move with their families or on their own (Van Os, 2018). This passage can involve many traumatic experiences resulting in mental health issues for the children including post-traumatic

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

stress syndrome, separation anxiety, despair, melancholy and many other psychological disorders (Van Os, 2018).

In 2017, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that 12 million children under the age of eight are displaced (Britto et al., 2017). These people movement trends have been replicated in Ireland. Since 2000 in Ireland, significant change has occurred in terms of the level of immigration from countries that did not traditionally belong to the Irish diaspora (Devine, 2006). This was a reflection of the changes in migration patterns in Europe and the wider world. The speed of the social change in Ireland is linked to the unparalleled economic boom which occurred in Ireland in the earlier noughties. In addition, the turbulent state in Europe caused by the Syrian immigrant tragedy, the global terrorism caused by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other international disasters have resulted in discrimination, bigotry and racism in many local communities (Osler, 2016). Ireland has changed radically from a Catholic, conservative and predominantly white society to an increasingly diverse pluralistic nation (Kennedy, 2001).

These changes have led to a significant increase in the numbers of immigrant children attending Irish schools in the past ten to fifteen years (Taguma, Kim, Wurzburg and Kelly, 2009). These events have caused many schools to struggle with the challenges presented by the new milieu in which they have now found themselves (Devine, 2006).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

2.3 Immigrant family profiles

The immigrant families in Ireland are a heterogeneous group of people. By 2007, immigrants were 11% of the Irish population, which was a dramatic increase of 60% over ten years. The configuration of Ireland's immigrant population is extremely diverse as noted by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) who reported that non-Irish nationals represented 188 countries and the majority of these people came from non-English speaking countries (Taguma et al., 2009).

There are now three types of immigrant families living in Ireland. The first group are those who have come to the country for work-related reasons mainly from the European Union. This group can be described as legal immigrants and are employed and may be living independently without the support of the Social Welfare System. The second group are refugees who have lived in DP on arrival but have been granted asylum and are now living in the community. This group may or may not be dependent on Social Welfare assistance. The third group are the asylum seeking families who are seeking residency rights. This community are living in DP and are dependent on the state on an economic basis until adjudication has been made, related to further their rights and residency (Taguma et al., 2009). Children from all these groups face similar identity issues but this study will focus on the challenges educators face teaching children who are living in DP.

It is acknowledged that developing relationships between parents and the educators play a key role in supporting the refugee children in the school setting (Dumcius, Siarova,

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Nicaise, Huttoca and Balcaite, 2012). Good quality early childhood education improves parent's lives by providing support and sharing the educator role of their children (Moran et al., 2016). Examining the relationship between the ECEC practitioners and the parents is a key part of this study.

2.4 Direct Provision in Ireland

The Irish Government approved the system described as DP in 1999. The purpose of this system was to provide basic accommodation with nutritional needs for asylum seeking families. By doing this, it removed the state's responsibility to provide supplementary welfare allowances (White, 2011). The families staying in DP are all at different stages in relation to their application for residency in Ireland. Invariably, they have suffered psychologically and emotionally from their past and current circumstances (Foreman, Ní Raghallaigh, Feeley, and Moyo, 2016).

Applicants are placed in temporary lodgings for 14 days in the Dublin area and are then transferred to any one of 75 different locations. Many of the accommodation sites are on the periphery of the towns and the asylum seekers are left with a sense of segregation and isolation. Some individuals are living in sub-standard accommodation and their rights to privacy is removed as they have to share accommodation with many other strangers. The people must eat their meals in communal facilities at designated times. They have no opportunity to eat food of their preferences or culture (White, 2011).

Figures have shown that more than one third of the inhabitants in DP are children (Arnold, 2012). Research has indicated that the people (including children) living in

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

DP, suffer from excessive tedium, material deprivation, social marginalization, feelings of depression, fear, fretfulness, vulnerability and powerlessness (White, 2011).

In addition, in these settings, there are seldom play areas for the children and they are not able to invite their friends to visit. This has a knock-on effect on the child's life as it eliminates the opportunities to socialize with the local children (Kane, 2008). The families have no social life or engagement with the local people where they are living. The ability to make any of their own decisions is taken away from them (White, 2011).

In a research study carried out in 2001, Fanning, Veale, and O'Connor found that the children who live in DP are living below the 20% poverty line. They established that policies on social exclusion have found that children living below the 60% poverty line are disadvantaged and underprivileged. They considered that the government's allowances to the families living in accommodation centres goes against the State's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified by Ireland in 1992. It is also in contravention to obligations as stated in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy which was released in 1997 and the National Children's Strategy which was released in 2011.

The Irish Refugee Council (2013) supported by the public at large has criticised this form of provision with particular reference to the effects on children being exposed to this type of institutional poverty and exclusion. Moreo states that the use of DP Centres in the current modes operandum contravenes basic human rights to "housing, food, work family life, education and health" (Lentin and Moreo, 2012, p163).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

McMahon (2015) investigated the living conditions in DP and the findings resulted in some upgrades in the conditions. He concluded that the DP centres impacted significantly on children who were born or who are spending their formative years in these centres. Further research has demonstrated that there is a requirement to place a dedicated focus on the basic necessities of the refugee families (McGregor, Dalikeni, Devaney, Moran, and Garrity, 2019).

Moreover, in 2018, the Government opted to permit a restricted right to work for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are now able to apply for any job with the exception of the Defence Forces, the Garda Síochána and the Civil Service (Bardon and Pollak, 2018). The change in policy resulted from a Supreme Court ruling in May 2017 that found the total ban on work that had been in place for twenty years to be unconstitutional (Bardon and Pollak, 2018).

Thornton (2015) posited that there are many adverse consequences for the young child living in DP and it is agreed that the voice of these children has not been heard as outlined below.

‘The government hides it (Direct Provision) so well that people don’t know. It’s such a tragic form of a life. We don’t get new toothbrushes or linen or soap. We want to stand on our own two feet. We want a better life, not a worse one. Ask the Minister to try live where we live and see if she survives for a week. It’s not good enough. Would she like her family to be in that situation? Why don’t we deserve the same as her children?’.

(Thornton, 2015, p.124)

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

To support the children living in DP, the Ombudsman for Children has introduced the option for children in DP to make complaints (Ombudsman for Children's Office, 2017).

In addition, parents living in DP has stated that the preschool setting has given the child a sense of normality and has helped language development and reading skills (Moran et al., 2016).

2.5 Diversity and equality

Refugee children and their parents have to confront huge obstacles and problems in their daily lives. This includes adapting to cultural, religious and language differences (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2015). Research has indicated that the child's social, emotional and intellectual development benefits significantly in an environment which promotes a positive reception for cultural and social differences (Garrity, Moran, McGregor and Devaney, 2017).

In the past few decades, research on early childhood has been changing and evolving depending on the child's social, cultural, economic, gender, religious and geographical background (Woodhead, 2006).

It has been recognised that not only is there an increasing diversity in the global setting but that there is also an increasing acknowledgement of this diversity. Pupils from different social, cultural and religious minority communities experience problems and struggles in appreciating and respecting their own customs and traditions. It is advocated that the educator has a duty to support and acknowledge each child's cultural

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

identity in order to recognize rather than suppress the child's identity (Waldron and Ruane 2010)

Furthermore, the European Commission has advised that member states 'reduce inequality at a young age by investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC)'. They have also supported states to 'revise and strengthen the professional profile of all teaching professions and prepare teachers for social diversity' (cited in Peeters and Sharmahd, 2014, p.413).

Irish attitudes to the changes in the class demographics are mixed ranging from welcoming diversity, to resentful acceptance because of necessity, to absolute opposition and racism (Devine, 2006). How the schools respond to these changes in social settings has significant implications as it will influence society to adjustment to a more multicultural society. This will result in respect and acceptance of ethnic and cultural differences into everyday life (Devine, 2006).

The French social theorist, Jean Michel Foucault examined the relationship between power and knowledge in modern society (Dean, 1994). He considers that power rests with those who govern, rule and regulate. His principle ideologies on cultural identity have significant implications related to the viewpoint taken by the Irish in terms of immigration (Devine, 2006).

The government decision to introduce Direct Provision centres for the accommodation of families who are seeking asylum has resulted in the isolation of this community from

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

the accepted society (Devine, 2006). Communities outside the ethnic normality may be considered different resulting in exclusion from the heart of the society and being pushed out to the margins of the community (Devine, 2006).

Thus individual groups may have a sense of belonging or alternatively may feel they are 'other' as defined by Foucault (Devine, 2006, p.50). Bryan's analysis of Intercultural Education in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), 2005), found repeated advocacy of a unique Irish 'us' which resulted in segregating refugees as 'others' (Bryan, 2009, p.306).

In addition, it has been found that curriculum subject matter, teaching procedures and practices are all influential and have the potential to empower or disempower depending on the approach taken by the educators in the classroom (Adams and Bell, 2016). There may be far-reaching consequences for the children seeking a refugee status if they are rejected by their school community peers (Adams and Bell, 2016).

Subject matter in schools and how and to whom it is taught to is governed by political and social influences and has consequences on par with educational endeavors. There are many debates on how ethnic and cultural diversity should be managed in schools.

The assimilation model proposes that multiculturalism should be considered as an added extra to the current curriculum (Devine, 2011). At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who suggest that ethnic diversity should be embedded into the curriculum and consider that the current multi-cultural education separates the minorities by highlighting differences and labelling them as outsiders (May, 2009).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

In Ireland, the theory and practices related to anti-bias principles are clearly outlined in the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter for ECCE issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) (2016). The Anti-bias approach sees the child from an early age as an active contributor who learns about the local customs, practices and biases through socialisation. With the support of the educationalists and their guardians, the child may come to understand the negative actions they experience through discrimination and may challenge these stances taken by others around them (Murray and Urban, 2012).

The guiding principle of Síolta is that equality must be an intrinsic part of quality ECEC (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). It is considered essential that the services must recognize the individual, cultural and linguistic identity of the children. In Standard 14 – Identity and Belonging, Síolta highlights the importance of advocating a strong sense of fitting in and personal and group identity among the child's peers and community (Murray and Urban, 2012).

One of the guiding principles of Aistear is equality and diversity. The objective of Aistear is to nurture parity of esteem and to acknowledge that diversity (NCCA, 2009). The objective is to promote the idea of equality so that all children will experience equal opportunities with the hope of developing to their full potential. The concept related to diversity is to comprehend and respect individual and group distinctions and to celebrate these differences rather than ignoring or denouncing them (Murray and Urban, 2012). However, while Síolta and Aistear have diversity and equality as some of the guiding principles, their application is not mandatory for the Early Childhood

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Education Settings (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). A recent survey of teachers found that their knowledge of Siolta was 50% and Aistear was 44% (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). As these are important tools to direct practitioners in relation to the importance of the child's cultural and social identity, this knowledge deficit may have significant consequence in terms of the cultural competence of the teaching community (McGregor et al., 2019).

The National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010 (Department of Health and Children, 2006) endeavours to protect children who are seeking asylum from social marginalisation or negative typecasting while attending preschool. An important aim of this strategy is to encourage practitioners to reflect on the application of equality and diversity. It places particular emphasis on promoting positive opinions in relation to young children with different ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds (Moran, Garrity, McGregor & Devaney, 2016).

Moreover, in June 2016, Minister of Children and Youth Affairs, Ms Catherine Zappone, launched the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education. This included the Early Childhood Care and Educational National Inclusion Charter. The charter states that embracing diversity, equality and inclusion provides the potential to be a source of essential learning for children. It considers that ECEC practitioners, who constructively evaluate their own attitudes and practices deliver a more inclusive environment (DCYA, 2016).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

2.6 The Rights of the Child in the Early Childhood Education Setting

Waldron and Ruane state that “human rights belongs to everyone as a member of the human race, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, political convictions or religious persuasion, social standing, gender or age” (2010, p.68).

Furthermore, Osler (2016) confirms this view and considers that human rights are a concern within all groups, organisations, civilisations and countries. She considers that human rights matters apply in every setting including the daily lives of the child and the educator in the classroom. She considers that the right to education is a basic requirement of learning to live in harmony in a multi-cultural society. Importantly, she states that human rights provide additional security to those who are ostracised in the community. She argues that education for social justice is an intrinsic obligation of the educators in the school setting.

Improving the quality of the child’s life has become a national and international priority. The development of a much stronger rights-based consideration to policy advancement has focussed attention on the young child’s basic entitlements in terms of education, care and health (Woodhead, 2006).

Early childhood policy advancement has been influenced since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The UNCRC is legally binding to Ireland as it is a signatory of the Convention. Article 27 states that the child has the right to an acceptable standard of living which is necessary for the development of the child.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Article 28 and 29 affirms that the right to education is given to all children (UNCRC, 1989).

In the 1990s, Ireland engaged in an increase in policy development relating to children and childhood (Hayes, 2002). Hayes advocated that both children and society in Ireland would benefit if the development of policies changed from a welfare model to a rights-based model. It was considered that if children are recognised as a specific social group, then it follows that their diversity would be respected. The rights-based approach would guarantee that the best interests of the child are treated as paramount in all matters including their diversity (Hayes, 2002).

The Department of Education and Science (1999) published a White Paper “Ready to Learn”, which included a study of ECEC in the Irish Setting. The paper outlined future policies in relation to preschool education as it was recognised that current public programmes were neither adequate or cohesive.

In 2000, the Irish National Children’s Strategy was produced. This was significant as it was associated with the beginning of a move towards giving consideration to children’s rights in policy development and enactment in compliance with the United Nations Convention recommendations (Hayes, 2002).

In addition, the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) was formed by the Minister for Education and Science in October 2002, with a mandate to develop ECEC in Ireland. The purpose of this decision was to address the objectives of the White Paper on Early Childhood Education, ‘Ready to Learn’ (Fallon, 2005). The CECDE addressed the rights of the child in early childhood education with the

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

publication of Siolta, the National Quality Framework in 2006. One of the objectives is to define and encourage quality of practice in ECEC settings for children from birth to six years. Recognising the individual, cultural and language identity of the child is an intrinsic part of equality (Murray and Urban, 2012). Aistear - The Early Childhood Framework published in 2009 further addressed the rights of all children and compliments the Siolta standards (Murray and Urban, 2012).

In 2010, the DCYA launched the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme.

Funding was made available for each child to attend a local preschool service for the year prior to entering Primary School. This scheme provides the child with their first experience of their social and educational journey outside their home (DCYA, 2009).

In addition, in 2018, Ireland expanded the free preschool scheme to two years for children aged from two years and eight months (Holland, 2017). The increasing support by the Irish Government for ECEC has kept pace with developments in other Western Countries. Pobal (2018) reported that there were 202,633 children utilizing ECEC settings between 2017 and 2018. This access to free preschool education is giving all children the same rights in terms of educational opportunities.

It has been confirmed that if admission to preschool is free, there is a high uptake and attendance from all children both native and immigrant alike (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) & European Union (EU) 2015). The OECD & EU (2015) report found that students who attend preschool have better

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

literacy results at aged 15 compared to those who did not come from the same socio-economic setting.

However, Osler and Starkey (2010) have observed that the protection and growth of a person's identity is one of the essential rights within the educational system but that it is the one that is most easily contravened. This can happen at a micro-level in the preschool setting if for instance, in daily interactions the ECEC practitioner does not pronounce the refugee child's name correctly. They cautioned that children should not be marginalised because of their diversity but should be valued and included in all aspects of the teaching experience (Osler and Starkey, 2010).

Waldron and Ruane (2010) found that many teachers are unfamiliar with the human rights instruments in relation to the UNCRC and much work needs to be done to ensure that the child's rights are protected in the classroom.

Furthermore, it has been advocated that all educationalists have a duty to inform themselves of the child's human rights. Studies have indicated the need for training in human rights education and that ECEC practitioners should be provided with the tools to implement these rights appropriately. It has been found that the extent to which children can apply their rights is likely to have a significant influence on their educational experience (Osler and Starkey, 2010).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Osler (2016) contends that if teachers do not have a knowledge and comprehension of the child's rights with particular reference to their rights in the educational context, then the concept of achieving justice and reconciliation will be significantly affected.

It is acknowledged that children's rights while living in DP are currently being violated particularly with the length of time the child is living in such an environment (Arnold, 2012). Some of these children may have been infants when they arrived into the setting and indeed some of them may have been born after arrival into this accommodation (Arnold, 2012). The knock-on effect of this is that these young children are spending their formative developmental years living in this institutional environment (Arnold, 2012). The child seeking asylum is not entitled to child benefit which is a violation of the socio-economic rights of the child (Children's Rights Alliance and Law Centre for Children and Young People, 2015). The system is not working in compliance with Ireland's requirements as defined by the UNCRC (Children's Rights Alliance and Law Centre for Children and Young People, 2015). It has been recommended that the Irish immigration and protection law should be revised to include the interests of the child in terms of their social, cultural, economic, political and civil rights in Ireland (Children's Rights Alliance and Law Centre for Children and Young People, 2015).

In contrast to the infringement of rights in the DP model, research has confirmed that where a school has an ethos of equality for all children, the school environment becomes a safe and inspiring setting (Sirius Network, 2014). It is advised that ECEC practitioners have a duty to be pro-actively involved in working towards providing an equitable education for all children within their setting. It is acknowledged that good-

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

quality ECEC services enhances the academic and social achievements for children (Moran et al., 2016).

2.7 Early childhood education for children who are seeking asylum

2.7.1 The role of the ECEC Practitioner in early childhood education

Policy makers and authorities in the field of early childhood agree that the most critical and significant time in a child's development is in the early years (Woodhead, 2006). Education is essentially about enlightenment but it is the nature of the instruction, who decides what shape it will take and how it is experienced that scaffolds the child's individuality and learning encounter (Devine, 2013). It has been stated that schools can be considered as social 'spacings' that include compelling emotional, psychological and social elements (Devine, 2013, p. 286).

There is a growing body of evidence that the ultimate outcome for the child in relation to education is dependent on well-educated and well-informed educationalists (Peeters and Sharmahd, 2014). It has been seen that refugee children experience little or no disadvantage in terms of academic achievements if the preschool has an appropriate quality curriculum, (Bernardi and Boado, 2013). It is advocated that ECEC practitioners must value the individuality and cultural identity of all children and provide them the opportunity to develop their full capability as learners within an inclusive ethos (DCYA, 2016). It is also advised that ECEC practitioners must take an anti-bias approach, working in partnership with families and children through reflective practice

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

and in consultation with them (Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training (NESSE), 2008; DCYA, 2016).

In Irish society, schools are rooted in the changing social settings and are frequently placed at the coalface of managing the changing environment. Educators' views on cultural identity and diversity reflect the opinions and values present in the society in general (Devine, 2006). Teacher's ideas related to various immigrant cultures cannot be separated from their own background in terms of being Irish, white, middle-class professionals (Devine, 2006). These characteristics may not have relevance in relation to the requirements of children who possess none of these attributes. However, research has shown that Irish teachers in general have demonstrated compassionate responses to the challenges of education in this changing society which is connected to the past history of Irish emigration and the dominant Christian culture of caring and hospitality (Devine, 2006).

In addition, it has been found that some of the identity issues for refugee children may be addressed by employing some teachers with immigrant backgrounds into the school setting. Increasing the diversity in terms of the educators results in a reduction in the social and cultural differences between the immigrant and local children (Sirius Network, 2014).

The role that educators play in implementing governmental policies is critical as they influence the introduction and implementation of these policies effectively or ineffectively as the case may be (Devine, 2006). Unfortunately, few Irish schools have

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

a defined policy on the management of ethnic diversity. Teachers in general do not have the knowledge or the understanding how to expand the curriculum to include the relevant aspects of cultural identity (Devine, 2006). It has been found that educators inform their practice on an individual basis depending on their own wishes to learn and adopt new initiatives. This ad-hoc approach has resulted in inconsistent practices and standards in the educational setting (Devine, 2006). At a macro level, the Health Service Executive (HSE) Intercultural Guide (2009) and the Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook (HSE, 2011) have focussed to a certain extent on the acknowledgement of cultural differences. However, at the exosystem level, the Intercultural Health Strategy (2007-2012) has had little influence as there is a lack of training tools for ECEC practitioners to facilitate implementation (Cairde, 2015).

2.7.2 HighScope as an education curriculum

Literature review of HighScope as an educational curriculum was considered appropriate as it was the educational programme followed by the ECEC participants included in this study. HighScope is an educational model founded in 1962 by David Weikart, in the United States (French, 2012). This teaching strategy was established to prevent school failure for preschool children and started in the Perry Elementary School in Chicago. The objective of the approach is to improve the child's opportunities in life by the introduction of high-standard teaching programmes. This thinking originated from detailed research on cognitive development and brain function. The essential basis of the HighScope programme is that there should be active involvement by the child in the learning process and the fundamental issue is that this is achieved through the forum

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

of play (French, 2012). It is considered that this will result in the total development of the child in relation to their potential abilities in their academic and social life. Children are given the opportunities to consider, describe and communicate to the teachers what they are doing. The children include new information into existing knowledge and then seek help from others in their activities. The teacher scaffolds the child's suggestions and plans, stimulates logical thinking, finding solutions to problems and encourages creativity. Research has indicated that the child's academic achievements are improved through parental engagement and encouragement. Highscope provides a forum for parental involvement with the educators to progress the child's education and understanding. Parent-teacher relationships can be developed and improved. Opportunities for enhancing the child's learning experiences can be shared by the parents and the teachers (Schweinhart et al., 2004).

It is acknowledged that the introduction of high standard preschool programmes for young children living in poverty helps their academic and social development and results in long-term positive outcomes for the child (National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), 2005).

2.8 Language barriers for ECEC practitioners

Command of the English language is one of the most frequent barriers related to communication facing the educationalists when the refugee child comes into the Early Years' Setting (Janta and Harte, 2016). Children starting school without the ability to speak the country's native language are at a distinct disadvantage compared to their

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

peers and their learning is compromised and delayed until they are able to communicate in the local language (Janta and Harte, 2016).

Children with refugee status must learn the native language in order to integrate successfully with their peers and achieve academic progress. It has been found that the optimum time for a child to learn a second language is in early childhood (Cummins, 2000; NESSE, 2008).

Aistear has recognised the value of language, as one of the four main themes is communication (NCCA, 2009). This theme has been included as it provides the means of imparting of one's own opinions, views, beliefs and feelings with others in many different ways and for many different reasons. The use of language is considered one of the foremost means of communication (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012). Aistear emphasises how significant it is for the educators to encourage children to be successful communicators and that they must listen to what they have to say (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

In Ireland, the majority of children who are learning a second language have age appropriate ability in their first language and are able to make demands, describe incidents and articulate their emotions (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012). It is essential that they continue to learn their first language as this may be the principle way they have for reasoning, making connections and bond with their family members or primary carers and communicating their feelings (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

If a child becomes fluent in the new language and does not retain his/her first language, there may be several negative outcomes. Communication of social and cultural traditions may be compromised if the parents are not able to converse in the new language (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

Providing children with chances to use their own language helps them to develop their literacy and language skills. It has been found that this is essential for their intellectual development (Murray and Urban, 2012). If a child has to stop using their native language, it may adversely affect the child's language learning ability and also their self-confidence (Murray and Urban, 2012). If the child's own language is not valued, the consequence for the child results in being filled with doubts about him/herself and also about their families (Murray and Urban, 2012). If the native children are not taught that the immigrant's language has a value and importance, they may be critical of the foreign language as they hear it because it will be considered different. The child who is seeking asylum does not want to be in this position as he/she wishes to integrate and be part of the local group and may stop using his first language (Murray and Urban, 2012).

Speaking in a strange language without explanation from the teachers may result in the child being ostracised by his/her peers (Murray and Urban, 2012). In the Irish setting, frequently the teacher will focus on teaching the child the new language and this approach is taken as a result of parental pressure as they want their children to integrate into the new setting. It is essential that ECEC practitioners understand the necessity for keeping the child's native language as well as the English language (Murray and Urban, 2012).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

A study completed in Donegal pre-schools examined the views and opinions on ECEC practitioners on the challenges facing immigrants who required teaching of English as an Additional Language (EAL). The findings indicated that specialised education is required to improve the educator's abilities and understanding in terms of communicating with these multi-lingual children (Baissangourov, 2008).

Bilingual education has been debated in a xenophobia context in many countries.

Cummins (2000) has addressed comments made by the famous American historian, Arthur Schlesinger Jr who infamously stated

“Bilingualism shuts doors. It nourishes self-ghettoization and ghettoization nourishes antagonism...using some language other than English dooms people to second-class citizenship monolingual education opens doors to the larger world”.

(cited in Cummins, 2000, p.6)

Cummins contends that far from closing doors, bilingualism has shown to be connected to better verbal, intellectual and rational development when both languages are being used by the child. He argues that Schlesinger's opinions are in keeping with theorists who describe 'we' with a sense of belonging and 'other' who are associated with a sense of alienation. This thinking is in line with those who are in a position of power in society. In the educational setting, this thinking can influence the policy and practices related to language teaching (Cummins, 2000).

It is understandable that most children who are only starting to learn English in the Early Childhood setting will start with a 'silent period' (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012, p.6). In this period, the child is trying to assimilate patterns of speech and they are focused on

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

paying attention to the sounds and meanings of the second language. It is important that the educationalists do not confuse this phase as a developmental delay which may result in pathological identification i.e. that the child has a speech impediment. In these instances, it is far more likely that the child is in a confused state due to a traumatic experience and the perceived delay is part of the normal process when a child is learning a second language (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012). In these situations, it is essential to observe that the asylum seeking child continues to connect with their peers and teachers using signals, motions, nods and facial expressions (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

Teachers can help children through the learning process for the second language using different scaffolding strategies. Moving on from something that is known to the child to a new subject is described as dynamic scaffolding and this approach helps the child to improve and advance in terms of language ability (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

2.9 Theory on Human Development

Bronfenbrenner explored the significance of cultural context in the child's early cognitive and affective development (Stewart, 2011). His ground-breaking work in 1979, titled "The Ecology of Human Development" resulted in significant influences in the area of developmental psychology. He postulated that the ecology model demonstrates the role of the environment in influencing human development throughout the life-time of the individual (Stewart, 2011). He considered that the human being does not thrive in seclusion rather that the person's development is dependant and influenced by the cultural systems which are an integral part of their lives.

Bronfenbrenner felt that the individual and the ecosystem are in a shared relationship

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

where the human is influenced and influences the environment (Stewart, 2011). He subsequently made a well-defined distinction between environment and process and it is now described as the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). He stressed that the person-context interrelationships are an essential part of the theory. His theory was in a state of constant development and by the mid-1990's his framework was fine-tuned to focus on the Process-Person-Context-Time theory. He explained that process could include relationships such as those between the home and the school, person factors could include social and cultural background including language and context can be the support systems in place for the child (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield and Karnik, 2009).

He described five different systems that were all interconnected with the child in the centre of these systems and being influenced by all of them. The child's home and his/her preschool could be placed in the microsystem, which is the system closest to the child. The relationship between the child's home and school can be placed in the next system, the mesosystem. The exosystem is linked to the approval of resources for the preschool. The macrosystem, which can be applied in relation to the ideologies and policies related to Irish society. It is considered that there is inadequate acknowledgement and prominence placed on cultural diversity in policy and legislation (McGregor et al., 2019). Finally, the chronosystem focuses on how the environment changes over time. This system can fit into the time families are living in DP centres, as families are living in these centres for many years (Kane 2008).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the published data in relation to the changes in population demographics both in the global and Irish setting. It has examined the different family profiles now living in Ireland and has investigated the diversity and equality issues that have now to be addressed by the ECEC practitioners. The history of the DP Model has been presented and an assessment of the potential consequences of living in such a centre has been considered. The human rights of the child in terms of his/her early childhood education has been discussed. The difficulties for the ECEC educators in relation to negotiating language barriers have been described. Finally, Bronfenbrenner bioecological theory as a theoretical framework has been explained in relation to the child's development. In the next chapter, the methods of research used in the thesis will be explained and a further elaboration of the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory will be completed.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Chapter Three Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research context is described including a narrative of the locations, participants and gatekeepers. A rationale for the evaluation of the information with reference to the Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory of development (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) is provided. The research design, methodology strategies, ethical factors, data handling and storage management are considered. The positionality of the researcher is discussed. The process of thematic analysis of the data is explained and the challenges and the limitations are addressed.

3.2 Research Question

This study investigates challenges experienced by ECEC practitioners who are educating and caring for children who are living in DP. The question will be evaluated from the perspective of the ECEC practitioner and will examine issues related to social, cultural and religious diversity of children living in DP.

3.3 Research Context

3.3.1 Background of Preschools

Setting A was opened in 2000. This preschool is located in a DP centre in the east of the country, in a rural setting twelve kilometres from the local town. The centre is surrounded by railings, isolated from the local community and there is little or no integration with the wider society. Visitor access to the centre is through security gates

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

and there is a security man in attendance in a cabin. Sign-in and sign out on entrance and exit was required for visitors coming in to the compound.

The preschool is attended solely by children who are living in DP and access is not available to children who are living in the local community. The preschool is within a large building which also has a gym and a food hall. The preschool has a library, a sensory room and three classrooms. There is an outdoor area but this was not in use at the time of the interviews because of health and safety reasons. It is a sessional service.

There are fifty-four children attending the preschool in total and there is a waiting list of three to four children. Three groups attend in the morning and another three in the afternoon. The morning groups are going to school in September and the groups that attend in the afternoon are younger. There is between eight and ten children in each class in the morning and afternoon classes. These small class sizes are not a result of staff ratios but due to the space available in rooms.

The preschool follows the HighScope curriculum. There are ten staff working there including the manager. In this setting, there were children who were attending who were from Algeria, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sudan, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Angola, Ivory Coast, Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Kosovo, Albania, Georgia, Spain, India, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Mauritius, Nepal, Mongolia, and Venezuela. The setting caters for children between the age of two years and eight months to five years.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Setting B has been in operation since 2007. This setting is located in the centre of a rural town in the west of the country. This town can be described as a diverse town as there are many different nationalities living in the community. The preschool is outside the Direct Provision centre and the children leave the compound to attend the preschool. This setting is integrated into the local community and there is very little segregation from the rest of the town. There are gates at the entrance of the DP centre but they are opened all day and closed at night. There was a security man in attendance in an office who monitors visitor access. Children from the DP centre and children from the local community attend the same preschool.

The preschool is operated within a prefab facility, with one classroom and a sensory room. The children have access to a playground. The service provided is sessional. Twenty-two children attend in the morning and twenty-two children in the afternoon. When the school was opened initially, the mix in the preschool was 80% children who were living in DP and 20% children who were living in the local community. Now however, there is a complete change in the demographics and there are 6 children from DP out of 44 in attendance in the preschool. The reason for this change is that parents living in DP have the option now to send their children to full-time care in other centres as an alternative and are doing so.

The preschool follows the HighScope curriculum. There are 6 staff working here including the manager. In Setting B the nationalities listed included Portuguese, Polish, Lithuanian, Croatian, Czech, Syrian, Pakistani, African, Slovakian and other Eastern

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

European ethnic groups. The setting caters for children between the age of two years and eight months to five years.

3.3.2 ECEC Practitioners' Profiles

There were eight ECEC practitioners selected for the interview process. There was one manager and three further ECEC practitioners included from each of the settings.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Table 1: ECEC Practitioners' Profiles

Pseudonym	Setting	Qualification	Years in ECEC	Years in current post
Kate	Setting A	Equivalent to a Level 6 as per the DCYA. General Nurse, Degree in Psychology, Master in Health and Promotion	16 years	16 years
Candice	Setting A	Level 6 completed in Early Childhood Education and in the process of completing her Level 8 in Early Childhood Studies through Chevron	15 years	13 years
Vanessa	Setting A	Level 8 in Early Childhood Education completed in Dundalk IT. Masters in Family Support Studies commenced in September 2018	9 years	2 years
Sophie	Setting A	Level 6 completed through Chevron	6 years	6 years
Hilary	Setting B	Level 8 in Early Childhood Education completed in NUIG. Masters in Family Support Studies first year completed	32 years	12 years
Eman	Setting B	Level 6 in Early Childhood Education completed in the process of completing Level 7 in Early Childhood Education	6 years	6 years
Amy	Setting B	Level 6 in Early Childhood Education completed and Level 7 in Psychology completed through NUI Maynooth	10 years	3 years
Muna	Setting B	Level 6 in Early Childhood Education completed	8 years	4 years

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

3.3.3 Gatekeepers

Initially, a direct approach was taken in terms of recruitment of the participants. The preschool managers at individual centres were cold-called and the researcher explained the objective of the study. This worked well for Setting A. The manager agreed to be involved in the research and selected three further ECEC practitioners. However, subsequently no further candidates were sourced using this approach. A personal introduction to the manager of Setting B was required before succeeding in gaining access to further interviewees. The manager volunteered to be part of the study and selected three candidates.

The researcher informed the managers that the data compiled would be kept confidential and the interviewees would be anonymised. A consent form and a copy of the interview questions were sent to the participants so that they would be aware of the content pre-interview. A copy of the consent form and the questionnaire are available in the appendices (Appendix 1 & 2).

3.4 Research Design

The research approach for this study was qualitative research. It was considered that qualitative research would provide the most valuable insight i.e. thought-provoking interviews with teachers and managers in the early childhood education settings (Cao Thanh and Thi Le Thanh, 2015). The interview style chosen was informal. It was theorised that after reviewing the responses of interviewees, insight could be gained and so could ‘fuzzy generalisations’ (Bassey, 1999, p12).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

An interpretivist paradigm was chosen because this type of research centres on accounts of conversations and discussions rather than figures and statistics.

“Interpretivism is a trend of research approach, and it prefers using qualitative methods for data collection. There is a tight connection between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology as one is a methodological approach and one is a means in collecting data”

(Cao Thanh and Thi Le Thanh, 2015, P.26).

Researchers who use these methods seek experiences, understandings and perceptions of individuals through investigation and interview. This facilitates the investigator to realise the true reality rather than rely on numbers or statistics (Cao Thanh and Thi Le Thanh, 2015).

The value of using the interpretivist paradigm lies in its approach to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a particular subject rather than making sweeping statements about the world in general (Denscombe, 2017). The interpretivist paradigm also accepts that there may be many different accounts and justifications for individuals taking particular actions (Denscombe, 2017). This is important to this research study because as a researcher it was important to learn the significances and implications of individual’s opinions and implications of what they may reveal as part of an interview process. Universal truths were not sought (D. Albon & P. Mukherji, 2010).

3.5 Research Methodology

An interview was composed including carefully chosen questions to ensure that the challenges being explored were investigated.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Semi-structured interview technique was employed as a research method because it provided a relaxed conversational setting. The objective was to put the interviewee at ease thus allowing for the possibility of opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences to emerge. This is important because it provided the potential to glean true realities of the ECEC practitioners' experiences (Albon and Mukherji, 2015).

There were many reasons why semi-structured interviews were selected for the data collection. Burgess states interviews are a "conversation with a purpose" (1984, p.102). This style of interview allowed the questions and the topics that were explored to be flexible and change depending on the data garnered during the process. It was considered that this was the appropriate format design for a subject, which does not have great deal of published first-hand data.

Oakley (1981) postulates, one of the main advantages of qualitative research through interview is that it allows for an interaction and exchange of ideas between the researcher and the participant. Unlike, quantitative research, which is a one-way system of review, qualitative research allows for a two-way system of inter-action in terms of communication and both parties can exchange thoughts and opinions. This approach worked as further information in relation to the challenges facing the ECEC practitioners was developed as the interviews progressed.

In addition, gleaning the opinions of the participants is an essential component coming from qualitative interviews and allowing the candidates to stray from the set questions offers the opportunity to provide rich data (Bryman, 2012). The interviews were the

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

principle source of information so it was intended to gain the deepest and most meaningful material and evidence possible.

Desktop research was carried out to investigate policy, media interviews and reports. These were used to inform current thinking and practices in relation to the relevant themes covered in the literature review. It is recognised that there are advantages and disadvantages related to this form of research. Data can be accessed quickly and easily, it can be wide-ranging, it can facilitate comparisons and contrasts of data and it can provide the answer the research question. However, the data may not be accurate, it may be outdated, incomplete, irrelevant, biased and unreliable (Yan, 2012).

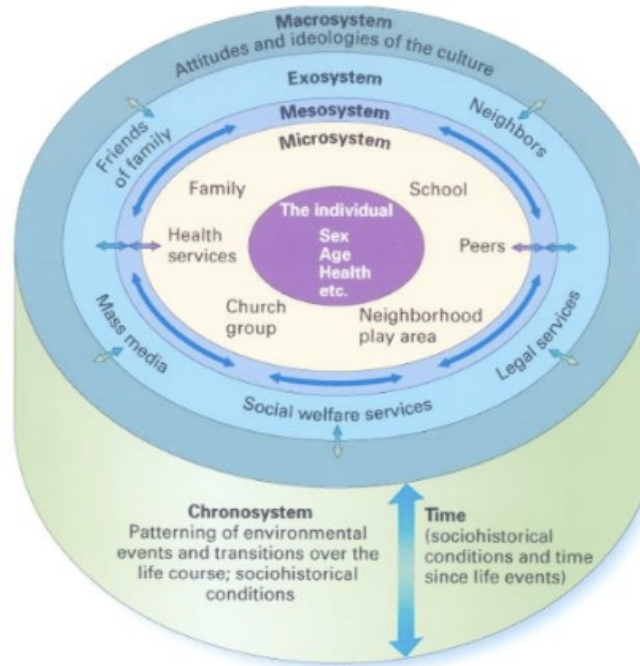
3.6 Theoretical Framework

The Bronfenbrenner bioecological theory was chosen as the theoretical framework. It was considered appropriate for this study because it provides a theory that allows for a sound interpretation of the child and the practitioners as they interact with each layer of the system. Bronfenbrenner stated that the child's advancement is dependent on the joint relationship between the child and those people who have a direct relationship with the child (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006). The ECEC practitioners in this study have a regular contact with the children living in Direct Provision and therefore have an influential role in the child's educational and social development.

Bronfenbrenner used the bioecological theory to explain how the intrinsic characteristics of the child and his environment interrelate to shape how he/she will develop in society. He considered that the development is influenced by the different

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

systems in the child's environment and also by the interrelationship between these systems.



Bronfenbrenner's model included five environmental systems with the child at the centre, starting with the child's family and then including other systems such as school, community, society, government and time (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006).

The microsystem comprises of the interactions the child experiences on a daily basis with reference to the school setting and the interaction with the teachers (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006). The refugee child in the settings being examined may not have all the supports in place which they need for their on-going development.

¹ Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological system, (Santrock, 2007)

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

The mesosystem includes the linkages between two settings where the child is an active participant e.g. family and school (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006). A mesosystem is formed when the child moves into a new environment. In the context of the study, the mesosystem includes the relationships between the family living in DP and the ECEC practitioners in the preschool where the child attends.

The exosystem includes settings that indirectly affect the child e.g. school boards may approve programmes and services relevant to the refugee's child's development.

Demographics have indicated that there is an increasing number of children from different cultural settings attending early childhood education and many of the children require EAL (McGregor et al., 2019). Decisions made related to resource approval for EAL support are related to the exosystem. Another example include the Intercultural Health Strategy (2007-2012) which has had limited realization as there was no models of teaching to show how the theory translated into practice (Cairde, 2015). *Síolta*, *Aistear* and the Diversity and Equality Charter have focussed on the importance of practice in relation to identity and belonging. However, successful outcomes in terms of achievements in the education of personnel in the new and demanding environment has been very limited, as previously mentioned (Department of Education and Skills, 2016).

Ideologies and policies related to Irish society apply in the macrosystem. The government decision to approve the introduction of the DP centres applies to the macrosystem of the child. It is considered that there is inadequate acknowledgement and prominence placed on cultural diversity in policy and legislation in Ireland (McGregor et al., 2019).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

The chronosystem relates to the reactions to experiences which may change over time (Stewart, 2011). This has a particular relevance to children seeking asylum as their reactions to the changes in their lives may be very different depending on their age. The impact on the child of a traumatic experience may appear to have little or no effect when they are a young child but may impact significantly in subsequent years (O'Toole, 2016).

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory has provided a context for the study into the psychosocial and educational needs of children who have come from war-torn countries, fled persecution or suffered human rights violations. One of the biggest change for the refugee child is the move to a new country. This change can have a bigger impact for children living in DP. The DP centres have been seriously criticised because of the inferior standard of housing and inadequate resources provided to the families who seek asylum (McMahon, 2015). As the young child's development is considerably affected by environment, there can be a fundamental impact on the child's progress living in DP (Stewart, 2011). Their physical and mental development can also be affected negatively. One must examine the overall bioecological theory which provides an over-arching framework and highlights what systems need to be involved and what steps need to be taken to provide short and long term supports for the children (Stewart, 2011).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were evaluated at the outset. Ethical approval from Marino Institute of Education (MIE) was achieved and the research was deemed low-risk as

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

there was no interaction directly with children or their families. The MIE Ethics Policy includes a commitment to carry out all quality research in compliance with recognised ethical principles (2018). This includes protection of the participants in terms of their rights and requests. It also recommends an evaluation of the potential value of the research and an agreement to complete robust research. In conclusion, it expects the researcher to be truthful at all times to those who are engaged in the research and to those who should be notified of the findings (MIE, 2018).

The research was focussed on the people who interact with the children seeking asylum on a daily basis as it was not possible to have access to this vulnerable group. Ethical reflection was carried out before, during and after all the data was collected and analysed.

To avoid any misunderstanding related to the purpose of the thesis, a statement of purpose was prepared and sent to the manager of both centres. Discussions were held with the preschool managers and ECEC practitioners to explain the purpose of the research. It was emphasised that their engagement throughout the process would be appreciated. It was also explained that the engagement was completely voluntary.

The guidelines in relation to informed consent as proposed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) were followed. Informed consent was gained by individual signed agreements from each participant at the start of the process. All those engaged in the study were reassured that confidentiality would be respected throughout the experience. All interviewees were told that they could seek clarification from the

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

interviewer throughout the interview. All interviewees were informed that they could discuss any concerns with their manager, before and during the process. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the process at any stage if they wished to do so. In accordance with BERA (2018) the participants were told that the source of the information would be anonymous and the interviewees would not be identified.

The Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2018) state that the researcher has a responsibility to balance optimising the advantages and minimising any potential disadvantages to the participants, while at the same time dealing with difficult subjects need to be explored. It is also stated that the researcher must understand that some benefits to the participants could be compromised if the outcome could be justified. In this study, a risks benefit analysis was carried out and consideration was given to what was worth including in the study while confronting challenging subjects and balancing this to avoid compromising the participants' reputation.

As per BERA's ethical guidelines it is stated that that the researcher must complete a duty of care to the participants and consider carefully all questions used in the survey in order to identify possible risks and to minimise disquiet or uneasiness that could arise (2018). The researcher used measured language and did not react or criticise participants in relation the responses given.

Power relationships were another ethical issue that required consideration. The Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research state that the researcher must consider how their actions will affect others (BERA, 2018). During interviews, the participants may have

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

felt that the researcher was in a position of power or authority. They may have felt intimidated as if they were facing an exam and would not be able to answer the questions. They may have felt unease and concern particularly in relation to the confidentiality of the information given. This issue was addressed by the researcher before the interviews commenced. They were reassured their answers would be considered valid responses, that the process was entirely voluntary, that they could stop at any stage of the process and that all information would be stored in a confidential manner.

There is potential that research fatigue has occurred particularly in Setting B as the manager had to select participants because there were no voluntary participants. Research fatigue puts a pressure on participants who do not want to participate but feel obliged to do so (Way, 2013). The manager informed the researcher that none of the ECEC practitioners were enthusiastic about being involved. The researcher informed the participants of how much their engagement was appreciated but that they should not feel under any pressure to be involved, if they did not wish to do so.

It is stated that that if the conduct of the participant is likely to be unfavourable or detrimental to the individual or to others, the researcher has a duty to consider disclosure (BERA, 2018). In this study, the researcher was aware of the responsibilities in relation to such a disclosure and what was the correct protocol to follow if a participant did make a harmful disclosure, including informing the participant of the intent and reason for making the disclosure.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

As per BERA ethical guidelines it is stated that the safety and wellbeing of the researcher involved in qualitative research is part of the researcher's obligations (2018). The researcher was aware that there was a possibility that traumatizing information could be included in the responses and knew where to access appropriate supports if required.

3.8 Data Handling and Storage

The Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research state that the rights of the participants in relation to confidentiality and anonymity should be maintained at all times (BERA, 2018). The participants were informed that all information given would be kept confidential and that their identity would be protected by using pseudonyms.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) describes how personal data must be collected, handled and stored (European Commission, 2019). The regulations of the data protection apply irrespective of whether the data is stored in paper copy, electronically or in any other format. In order to comply with the legal requirement in relation to GDPR, personal information must be collected fairly, stored safely and not disclosed unlawfully. Data collected for the purpose of this thesis was done in accordance with the Data Protection Acts and GDPR Regulations.

There were two recording devices used to record each interview and both devices are password protected. The recordings of the interviews were typed on a laptop which is also password protected. All data was stored securely using a firewall and encrypted as per Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and the only personnel who will have access to

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

the findings are the course supervisor and the examiners at MIE (Data Protection Commision, 2003).

After a period of thirteen months, post data collection, all paper records will be shredded and Adobe software has been downloaded to delete and muddle all relevant electronic records. All emails that were included in the research process will also be deleted.

3.9 Positionality of the Researcher

It is virtually impossible to consider that the investigator can be totally impartial, as their own perceptions will have been influenced by their experience and involvement in the subject under review. Therefore, the researcher must be keenly aware of the possibility of their own prejudices influencing findings and conclusions and constantly question their own biases (Mills and Birks, 2014).

A research diary was used to record thoughts and ideas. This helped when analysing the data and also to question prejudices and preconceptions. In addition, it also helped to jog memories and added context to particular aspects of the discourse included in the interviews. The researcher was aware that the source of information available to date in relation to DP was from the media and all this coverage was extremely negative. The researcher had to enter the setting recognizing that preconceived ideas had been formed and focussing on receiving all responses with an open mind.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

In order to prevent the possibility of bias related to the interpretation of the data which could diminish the quality of the data derived from the interviews, input was sought from a relation who acted as a critical friend (Albon and Mukherji, 2015). A critical friend is someone who is reassuring and empathetic, but who also provides truthful and frank feedback that may be hard to accept. A critical friend is someone who agrees to speak the truth with a positive approach but will highlight flaws and confront difficulties and tense situations. It was considered that the critical friend selected was appropriate as he had achieved a first-class honour in a Master's Degree on Human Rights and Globalisation. Within his thesis he interviewed people living in DP, so he had to be aware of his own bias to write his thesis. Thus, it was considered that he could judge whether bias was present in both the questions and interpretations.

3.10 Mode of Data Analysis

There are several different methods that can be used to examine the results from qualitative data. Denscombe (2017) recommends making oneself familiar with the contents of the interviews and then use a system of coding to refine the data. Coding the data involved identifying a word, a sentence or multiple sentences which are repeated in all interviews and pointed to a trend or bias (Burke Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

In order to become familiar with the contents of the feedback, the interviews were read for the first time as they were dictated into the printed documents. They were re-read a second time underlining general themes and started the coding process. Recurring topics or perceptions were recorded and assigned a code in the margin of the recorded interviews e.g. relationship with the parents, learning English, cultural celebrations and

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

behaviour issues, understanding of DP. When this part of the review was completed, a thematic analysis of the data was carried out to find recurring codes. These were then grouped with similar codes. The reports were critically evaluated to ensure that there were no obvious omissions. Central themes and sub-themes were chosen for the purpose of this study. The coding framework is included Appendix 3.

3.11 Challenges and Limitations

It was a challenge to recruit participants for this research. The experience with the first preschool was positive to be involved in the research where the manager agreed to be involved and selected three voluntary participants. Subsequently, it was difficult to source further participants. The use of email proved to be an ineffective form of contact as emails were ignored. DP is not considered a suitable setting for families so it was not easy to gain access to a setting (O'Brien and O'Shea, 2014).

After multiple failed attempts to contact personnel in different settings, an introduction was made with the manager from Setting B. However, practitioners did not volunteer to become involved but had to be selected by the manager. The reason for this could have been related to the sense of feeling inadequate and not having sufficient knowledge to answer the questions. Another possibility could have been that the participants were experiencing research fatigue. There was some communication difficulties with two of the ECEC practitioner who did not have English as their first language and it prevented them from completely understanding some of the questions.

One limitation of the study included the use of fuzzy generalisations. Fuzzy generalisations may be derived from qualitative analysis where there is no scientific

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

evidence to back up the finding. Fuzzy generalisation substitutes the certainty of scientific data with statements that require qualifiers (Albon and Mukherji, 2015).

Limitations related to the interview approach may result in gaining information which includes interviewee bias. The participant may want to present themselves in a positive light which does not reflect the truth i.e. Social Desirability Bias (Grimm, 2010). If the participants do not tell the truth and give false information, the validity of the findings are compromised.

Semi-structured interviews make it harder for comparability of results as they are all based on a personal representation of beliefs, views and attitudes.

Finally, female participants only were used in the research study and analysis. In Setting A the opportunity arose to interview a male staff member who had only worked in the setting for three weeks. This offer was not accepted by the researcher and a female who had worked in the setting six years was interviewed instead. On reflection, it was considered that perhaps this volunteer should have been selected as he could have provided useful information. Firstly, he was a male working in a predominantly female workplace but also he may have questioned practices in this new setting rather than just accepting the status quo.

3.12 Conclusion

In conclusion, the objectives as set out in the introduction of methodology were completed. The research design and methodology provided the justification for the use

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

of semi-structured qualitative interviews. Ethical considerations described the measures that were taken to safeguard the ECEC practitioners' character and reputation. Informed consent and a commitment to ensure confidentiality were included with particular reference to GDPR requirements. Safeguards against bias to ensure objectivity were included in the positionality of the researcher. The process of thematic analysis of the data is explained including the methods used for coding the data. Finally, the challenges and limitations of the study were detailed. Data gained from the interviews including findings, conclusions and recommendations will be included in the chapters which follow.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Chapter Four Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews with the ECEC practitioners are presented and analysed. Five major themes emerged from the coding of the data recorded which included: (1) Managing cultural and religious diversity (2) ECEC practitioner's involvement with parents (3) Navigating behaviour in the early years' setting (4) Negotiating language barriers (5) ECEC practitioners understanding of Direct Provision.

The study was informed by reviewing the findings from participants in two settings. Setting A is a preschool exclusively attended by children from DP. Setting B is a preschool attended by a small number of children living in DP together with a mix of children from the local community.

4.2 Managing cultural and religious diversity

Cultural and religious identities emerged as one of the five themes. One of the principle challenges that the ECEC Practitioners have to address is the ethnicity of the children attending both preschools.

4.2.1 Recognizing cultural differences

The participants described many practices where they provided a forum for the children to acknowledge their individual cultural identities. International Day and World Culture Day were celebrated in both settings.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

In Setting A, Vanessa stated that:

“There is no set culture and then we kinda incorporate everything. It’s a blank canvas when we get new kids in and we just see what’s coming in the door and how to incorporate those kids and their families and what their beliefs and values are and they’ll come to us and talk to us and we invite them in as much as possible.”

Another ECEC practitioner in Setting A, Candice talked about:

“work in partnership with the parents, like asking them to provide like emm, pictures so the children feel that they have a sense of identity so like that we have a family wall in or room...that we’ve displayed and that way the kids have their form of identity....Emm, they don’t really show, they come here and they just feel free, like emm, nobody actually talks about like their identity in that sense, they just..., I suppose it’s about making them feel comfortable within themselves.”

Vanessa also explained:

“you know make sure we have everyone’s flag up in the room, eh we’ve a world map and we get them to point out things. They can bring in little emm, sometimes you get them to bring in food items....so we can represent their cultures in the house area.”

“we’ll do a breakfast morning....we’ll provide different foods, like we might provide olives and salami and stuff and they’ll say ‘oh we eat this in my country’ or and they’ll say ‘and we eat this as well’ and then we might go and get that for the next time. So it’s really good to learn about them in an informal way.”

In Setting B, Eman described a similar scenario:

“we have in the room like emm, the food containers, so we tell the families whatever the Polish food or the Syrian or the African or any food they use and if they have empty containers they can bring here, we have it in the shop area, so they can see ‘oh it’s from my house’, they are familiar, we have a family wall here so emm, they can see different families, different backgrounds, different cultures,....we have characters of different people, like people’s character books from the cartoons from different nationalities.”

Research has shown that Irish educators have responded with compassion to the challenges of education in this multi-cultural society and the responses in both centres would confirm this finding (Devine, 2006).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

The researcher concluded that the ECEC practitioners did acknowledge and respect the different customs of the children attending the preschools and they were actively engaged in celebrating the differences with the children.

4.2.2 Religious Issues

All of the interviewees made reference to respecting religious differences when they were questioned about ethnic holidays and celebrations. There was no evidence that the Catholic Religion was been prioritized or that it influenced the educator's practices even though the Board of Management for Setting A was managed by a Catholic Order.

In both settings, the participants recorded that they were very conscious of parental concerns in relation to Halloween.

In Setting A, Kate explained that:

“a lot of people didn't want their children to have anything to do with Halloween and black cats and witches and all that.”

In Setting B, Hilary had a similar experience and recounted that the Pentecostal Christians believed that:

“witches were real and that the cats could transform and they were evil and totally, totally hated, didn't want anything to do with Halloween.”

Hilary also explained that:

“I had to bring the parents in and say look you know, we were not going to change everything for two children when there were forty two other children that you know celebrated there things, it is not fair to do that, so we spoke to the parents and we said look we will be doing cats, we will be doing spiders, then they were happy so long as they were not Halloween cats and they were not witches cats.”

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

In terms of celebrating religious festivities, there was a consensus in both settings that recognising different religious beliefs resulted in acceptance and tolerance among the parents of the children who were attending the services.

In Setting A, Kate explained that:

“we found that everybody, Muslims, anybody is happy for us to do Christmas. The Muslims will join in with Christmas, no problem. That’s absolutely no issue at all. We will also try and do things for Eid and different Muslim things, we’ll try and make a bit of a fuss over that. But we generally haven’t found it that difficult.”

Eman in Setting B, confirmed that her experience was similar to Kate’s in Setting A:

“everyone celebrates Christmas, when we had Eid, so we make a card here, emm and we can give them, so we have big Eid and small Eid for the Muslim religion.”

Candice from Setting A, described how the ECEC practitioners learn about different religious practices:

“If you’re not that familiar of a culture and then you ask parents, maybe they’re prepared to tell you and then say yeah we can celebrate so you have to also work in partnership with parents especially if you’re not in the know-how of these celebrations. So like same with Eid and Ramadan with the Muslims, I suppose it’s because we’re not familiar and you don’t want to do something that would disrespect them.”

In Setting B, Hilary had a different experience in relation to some parent’s opinion of

Santa:

“saw Santa as a false god and they did not want Santa to come in and give them presents at all. They wanted the present but they would not come in to Santa so we had to hold the present here but then we would acknowledge the traditions, like emm Eid and you know, anything that was coming up of any family that was in the service.”

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

4.2.3 Conclusion

Children who are seeking asylum encounter many difficulties their daily lives. This includes adapting to different cultural and religious practices (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2015). It was considered in both of the settings visited that the ECEC practitioners made a significant effort to observe the varied religious practices which were observed by the children and their families. Research has revealed that ECEC practitioners must learn to understand the child and the parents who do not have the same culture and background (Peeters and Sharmahd, 2014). The challenge for the ECEC practitioners is to gain the knowledge and skills in order to address these challenges.

4.3 ECEC practitioners' involvement with parents

Family issues emerged as another central theme as it is recognized that positive educator interactions and connections are vital for the successful development and education of children (Woodhead, 2006).

4.3.1 Parent-teacher relationships

Kate in Setting A described the efforts the ECEC practitioners make in terms of parent-teacher relationships:

“It is something we work really, really hard on we are now doing these Friday morning sessions, where it is just an hour, parents can come in and play.....we are using it as a platform for parents to discuss anything they like with us, to feedback to us on how they think we are doing or what they want for their children”.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Kate explained that difficulties communicating with the parents were addressed as follows:

“There are English Language classes and some other adult education classes provided.....there’s an interpreter on site. We sometimes call on her and she’ll translate as well. She has an Arabic keyboard so if I email her a parent note, she will send it back to me.”

Candice from Setting A goes a bit further to describe the effort they make to develop positive relationships with the parents and explained the practice of home visits:

“We took time out because the kids are out, we said we will go into the home just to say hi for the kids.... sometimes they might have difficulties at home with their child and we wouldn’t really experience that in school so we work in partnership to see how best we can actually emm try and help the parent”.

In Setting B, Hilary had the advantage of an already established relationship with the parents whose children started in the creche within the DP centre prior to preschool and she is the manager there also:

“very good, excellent even, I would say emm we have a service over the road, a creche service so a lot of the parents that do come to use, I will have known them since their children started in the creche service cause I manage both this service and the creche service within the Direct Provision Centre”.

Hilary goes a bit further and describes the role of ECEC practitioners of different nationalities:

“Now we have two staff, one on the morning and one in the afternoon, emm, Eman she’ll tell you herself she can speak Urdu., Pakistani, you know she can speak 3 or 4 different languages and Muna...they are very linguistic....we find it really, really helpful as well, and I think parents sometimes feel more comfortable and you know what else as well, they would wear their traditional scarfs and stuff....and I think they find that a as comfort cause they can see that we respect....”

The ECEC practitioners in both setting have engaged in the process of building strong relationships with the parents. This approach provides a forum for the ECEC

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

practitioners to learn about the needs of the families and will help them to establish a context where everyone feels included.

4.3.2 Parenting practices

Parental practices in terms of physical punishment used by the parents on their children presented challenges to the teachers. ECEC practitioners want to build relationships with the parents but their legal obligation is the protection of the child. Physical punishment contravenes child protection and the law and must be reported if suspected or witnessed. Under the law, the ECEC practitioners has a mandatory duty in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 to report child protection concerns above a defined limit to Tusla (Tusla Child and Family Agency, 2015).

In Setting B, Hilary explained:

“there are many cultures here and so we have many different styles of parenting that have come with their cultures and it’s just to get the blend of everybody and see things from different points of view.”

She described an instant where a child was:

“push and push and push and push constantly, pushing the boundaries and the rules of the playschool, right there is no hitting, there is no kicking, there is no hurting, there is no this, that and the other and the parents used to say ‘o my God how come he just does not know’ and I used to say because at home it ends up in a wallop, it always, so he is wondering why it is not ending up in a wallop, so he keeps pushing and pushing cause then when you do end up in a wallop then it is like ok.”

She also described a scenario where parents have said:

“Take a branch off the tree and beat him, just beat him, it is okay, I give you permission and we are like no, that is not the answer, so then you have the kids that come in cause parenting style is beating so when they do not get their own way, beat the children and we are saying no beating but at home it is beating so

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

it is about learning and trying to get parents, we saying no beating, you know, there is no hitting."

This parenting style has consequences for both the child and the educator in the school setting. Educators have to inform the parents that this is not considered acceptable practice.

Vanessa in Setting A considered that parents were not aware of the law in terms of child protection and explained:

"it is down to a lack of awareness of parents and families of child protection legislation in Ireland because the culture is very, very different at home" I think another piece that needs to be done in Direct Provision is like you know a kind of emm, like a little crash course on at your point of arrival in Ireland..... I think all parents should be given that like information ... on child protection and practice handbooks and Children's First and the Child Care Act."

Both school settings followed the HighScope Educational curriculum and this approach was new for all parents as they were unfamiliar with the model of education.

Candice in Setting A recalled:

"In say African culture you have to respect your teacher or adults so then like if a child says 'Hi Candice', they wouldn't really like that, ...they probably all say 'Auntie Candice' ... but then we have to try and change it because with HighScope they want children to be using first names or else you could be marked down if they... they want it to be more strict like how they would be strict with their children....and shout ... and they are looking at you like 'what?' (laughs) 'just tell them you're in charge and they have to listen to you'... if a child does not want to partake in activities and the parents are like 'but they have to, they have no choice' because there's so many rights of the child, they're not aware of that so it's a little bit of a discrepancy."

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Kate in Setting A went on further to say that for some parents, their perceptions of a successful working preschool is to have the children:

“sit, concentrate and be studious at the age of two or three years.”

Some of the parents did not understand the value of play with particular reference to out-doors particularly in cold weather. As Candice in Setting A explained:

“Like the outdoor thing would be different because it is understandable, some parents are coming from cold countries and then we are letting children play outside and so they do not have understanding of the benefits maybe which we try and actually explain but it is really difficult.....well not that we know what’s best, we’ve been trained in what would be beneficial for children with their development.”

The ECEC practitioners acknowledged that HighScope allowed them to respect the rights of the child in the preschool setting by giving them freedom of choice in terms of his/her approach to education. However, one of the challenges the ECEC practitioners all agreed upon was they had a significant task to convince the parents of the value of this school curriculum.

4.3.3 Parental psycho-emotional issues

Bronfenbrenner explained that the ecosystem refers to distant influences on the child’s life (Hayes et al., 2017). If a child’s parents are experiencing trauma and stress in their lives this may affect the quality of the relationship they have with their child.

In Setting A, Kate confirmed this view:

“Behavioural problems.....a good deal is because of parenting practices and parenting ability and the parents who are stressed out and depressed and all that kind of stuff who are not really able to give what ideally they should be able to give because of their circumstances and because of any amount of loss and separation that they have suffered.”

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

In a research study that was carried out in Setting A, Kate discovered that one woman had lost:

“my mother, my sister, my first born and my last born.”

She concluded that:

“when you’re trying to be a good parent and you’ve got all of that shit going on and you’re in the asylum system and you’re out of your culture and you’re living here and you don’t know what the future holds and you’re trying to raise your children and keep your marriage going, so I think that’s a lot to do with why we have behavioural problems with children.”

Sophie in Setting A described her experience of learning about parental difficulties:

“some parents will come to you and openly say ‘oh you know, I’m feeling a bit depressed’ and you know ‘we’ve lost family members’ and they’d say that they think it’s affecting the children a bit and stuff like that so yeah but it would only be from the parents telling you that their child didn’t behave aggressively in their country, it just happened when they came here.”

Research has shown that parents who are seeking asylum have to address huge challenges in their own lives including learning a new language, adapting to different ways of life and living in a new culture (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2015). The ECEC practitioners have a fundamental role to play in supporting these asylum seeking families who are experiencing such hardship.

In Setting A, Candice told the story of one mother who has been living in DP for the past eighteen months. She said:

“She actually just felt, she doesn’t feel like it’s home yet, you know she still misses home in the sense that there’s so many different cultures, she’s a bit afraid really so she just sticks to her Albanian culture, her foods, even just the people she is meeting.....she said she just doesn’t feel comfortable still, she just feels cooped up, like she’s not free yet, you know?....I really want him (her child) to speak more

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Albanian, I only speak to him in Albanian at home and then he answers me in English' so you know we have that".

Machowska-Kosciak (2013) found that children may disown their own language and adopt the native language in order to fit in and be accepted in the community. However, parents can become distressed and frustrated as indicated by the woman in this account as they may feel their own cultural identity is diminished. The challenge presented to the ECEC practitioners in this context is the necessity for them to work with the parents to maintain the child's identity. The loss of the first language can result in the diminution of self-esteem. It can also present difficulties in terms of communications with the family and can prevent the child from being included socially in his/her own extended family and community (Hayes et al., 2017).

The ECEC practitioners also described many struggles with parents who have a child with a disability attending the preschools. The parents do not want to face the reality of their situation. This has been the particular experience with African parents. They have great difficulty agreeing to allow outside support systems to be involved with their children as they have huge concerns that it will affect their emigration status.

Hilary in Setting B gave an example of this struggle:

"we have been working with that mum for over a year and we have just got her to allow us to put a request in for Speech and Language."

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

One African parent explained to Hilary in Setting B the reason for this lack of engagement:

“back home, that child would never be seen out in the community cause it’s a slight, they would be saying ... oh my God, God is paying you back for something that your parents did, that’s why your child has a disability”.

4.3.4 Conclusion

The engagements between the home and the preschool fits into the mesosystem of the Bronfenbrenner bioecological model (Hayes et al., 2017). This model provides the framework to look beyond the child to the context in which they are growing and the relationships involved.

Bronfenbrenner’s exosystem refers to external influences that affect the child’s life (Hayes et al., 2017). In this system, the child does not have any direct involvement but is affected by decisions made external to their own setting. A child may not receive additional supports as required as the parents are concerned that application for such may affect their refugee status (White 2011).

The ECEC practitioner can play a central role in developing and supporting relationships with the parents and through providing the child and parents with additional supports as required.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

4.4 Navigating behaviour in the early years' setting

Navigating behaviour in the early years setting was a theme that emerged and the ECEC practitioners considered that it was one of the most complex issues they had to address. The children who are living in DP may have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs in children can be caused by experiencing traumas in one's life including living in chronic poverty (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2018). ECEC practitioners have a responsibility to recognise that problematic behaviour may be caused by ACEs rather than considering that the child is behaving in a wilful manner (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2018).

4.4.1 Separation Anxiety

There were different experiences noted by the ECEC practitioners in terms of the children suffering from separation anxiety.

In Setting A, Sophie said:

“a lot of them I think would have PTSD and I suppose it can be difficult cause they might have separation anxiety which is totally understandable, you know they've no English, mam and dad are leaving them here and then going home like does the child understand?”

She also felt that it was important to be:

“very sensitive and aware of where some children have come from like, some children have come from war-torn countries and they might not be able to settle in straight away, you know they could have post-traumatic stress”.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

However, Kate in Setting A had a different experience:

“we don’t get a huge amount of separation anxiety when they start. Some of them do but they don’t all come in roaring and crying, they’re usually pretty keen to come in...they often have siblings who’ve come through the place, which helps.”

She also pointed out that:

“we’re doing the HighScope system, we have a good staff ratio and the relationships between the staff and the children are quite strong, so we have a good success rate with regard to children who are coming in with emotional difficulties.”

It can be postulated that separation anxiety did not exist for the children in Setting A, as the preschool is within the DP centre so the children are not leaving the family confines.

In Setting B, children did not appear to suffer from any anxiety starting preschool as Hilary explained:

“Excellent...now I do believe that a lot of it is because they have been going to the creche service, they’re used to leaving their parent....they’ve probably been going since they’re one, one and a half, so by the time they come to three, they’re very comfortable.”

French (2007) has confirmed that the educators in some settings give the children who are seeking asylum an affirmative and encouraging experience when attending school. Therefore preschool can be seen as a haven for children coming from difficult backgrounds. A challenge for the ECEC practitioners is to work on building the children’s confidence and self-identity as it may have been seriously compromised from experiences before coming to the country in addition to those experienced from living in DP.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

4.4.2 The child's self-regulation and conflict resolution

The educational curriculum used in both settings was HighScope which was developed for the Perry Preschool project (Weikart and Schweinhart, 1997).

It was mentioned frequently by the ECEC practitioners in both preschools that it was used to address self-regulation and conflict resolution. Six respondents referred to the advantages of HighScope in the preschool setting. They described using this curriculum to manage the children's self-regulation and conflict resolution.

In Setting A, Kate stated when the HighScope Model was introduced into the service, she thought that it would never work for the children in the centre:

“They're too bold, they're too mad, they're too diverse, how can they possibly do HighScope if they can't speak English but it's actually working brilliant and they very quickly have learnt the routine of coming in and planning and going doing your work and reviewing it and then going to small group time and large group time and snack time and outdoor time and wash hand time and tidy up time and they are responsible for their own learning.”

Bronfenbrenner has stated that the child's progress and advancement is influenced by the main people in his/her life and the response above indicated that not only do the children respond positively to the input from the educators but they are also affected by the peers in their group (Stewart 2011).

In Setting B, Hilary explained that:

“most of us have been trained in HighScope.....Very, very much child-led but obviously there is adult, you know, they do not have a free for all but it is very much following the children's interests and where they go, so we might have an

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

idea for a day and it might be going this way and the kids could change it another way so we just go with the children.”

In Setting A, Vanessa explained that she had to be convinced of the value of HighScope:

“HighScope is a lot to take in. I was coming from play-based myself and when I came I was kinda like God, this is so different like, this is bizarre like and I was kinda thought at the beginning, it’s not going to suit these kids because what they need is kinda boundaries or you know when really HighScope lifts all of those boundaries and it’s fantastic.”

The interviewees informed the researcher that one of the key lessons that the ECEC practitioners have had to learn is that it is acceptable for a child not to participate if they do not wish to do so. Kate in Setting A described a scenario:

“You have 10 children, probably 7 of them will do it and they will make whatever they want and they will be happy doing that and the other 3 will not and they will get up and leave and do whatever they want and nobody is going to say ‘come back and sit down, how dare you leave the table’. It does not happen anymore so we do not have the discomfort that we used to force children to do stuff.”

By applying the HighScope curriculum, the ECEC practitioners are allowing the children to decide for themselves how they will develop academic and social skills which ultimately will lead to their educational advancement (O’Toole, Hayes and MhicMhathúna, 2014).

Six out of the eight ECEC practitioners acknowledged that there are many behavioural challenges within the classroom. Many of the respondents stated that the HighScope framework has helped the ECEC practitioners to eliminate conflict in the classroom. Both settings use the HighScope six steps of conflict resolution to deal with behavioural issues (French, 2013).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Hilary in Setting B found that there is always value in getting the other children involved when they have reached an impasse:

“The children always tell us what is the right thing to do, always and they’ll listen to their peers so much easier than they’ll listen to us and they kinda think they’ve done it themselves and then they go off happily most of the time, sometimes children are just in bad form and they want just want someone to take notice of them.”

Kate in Setting B described how she deals with a conflict when there are two children involved. She learnt to approach the two children involved and say:

“‘I see we have a problem’ or ‘you look angry’ and then you take away whatever it is they’re fighting over, for example a car and you say ‘now we have a problem, we’ve got one car and two of you, what are we going to do about it?’ and you let them work it out for themselves and it’s fantastic.”

To help the children deal with their feelings, Vanessa in Setting A said:

“We would have quite a bit of emm challenges with emotional regulation in the class. So, we do a lot of work around that and we’ve got the emotions stuck up like 2 parts of the room....so we name feelings. Saying you look sad or you look upset or I can see that you’re crying and we’ll go to the door and we’ll say ‘you look sad’ and we’ll point to the sad picture and then they’ll kinda follow on from it, what’s making them sad.”

4.4.3 Conclusion

Children who suffer ACEs can experience toxic stress and this excessive activation can result in long-term adverse effects both on the body and the brain. However, it has been documented that by recognizing and acknowledging the trauma and building trusting and supportive relationships the long-term effects of ACEs can be reversed (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2018). The researcher considered that the

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

ECEC practitioners in both settings showed an awareness and a desire to address issues related to trauma in the children's lives.

Based on the interviews that were completed, it was evident that the HighScope framework has supported the ECEC practitioners to address and respond to the children's needs to achieve positive outcomes.

4.5 Negotiating language barriers

Negotiating language barriers was another theme to emerge from the coding process and it is one of the most frequent challenges that the practitioners had to address within the ethnic community.

Starting in preschool can be a difficult adjustment for children who are asylum seeking as they are coming from a background which is different from the dominant culture.

The children may have had little or no experience of life beyond their family. Having to adjust to learning a different language adds to the challenges facing the child and also the ECEC practitioners who have to manage this education.

It has been confirmed that the best time for a child to learn a second language is in early childhood (NESSE, 2008). However, it is fundamental that children continue to use their native language in pre-school as this may be the main way they have for reasoning and engaging with their family members (Mhic Mhathúna 2012).

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

4.5.1 Different approaches and opinions

Both settings related that many children were able to speak English on arrival at the preschools which was a surprising finding considering the number of different nationalities attending the settings.

The ECEC practitioners gave mixed responses in terms of the recognising the importance of maintaining the child's primary language.

In Setting A, Kate stated that they had a high percentage of children who have English as their second language so they:

“don't make allowances for those children (who do not have English) in certain respects, we just carry on, it's full immersion here, because I can't speak Arabic so the Syrian children have to just cope and they do they seem to know not to do that and they generally remain silent and they will gradually pick up words in English.”

However, Sophie in Setting A related:

“Like the Syrians wouldn't really be able to communicate that much which I think can lead to frustration, they can lash out sometimes cause they're unable to express themselves.... I can understand that it must be really hard for them.”

In Setting B, Hilary stated that the majority of the children coming to the preschool have fluent English. She explained that:

“the children from the Direct Provision they've always in the last 5-6 years, English is what is mainly spoken. We've not found it to be any different. I don't know is it because of the crèche service over there, that they've started at one, so they've already immersed in English in the crèche service.”

Muna in Setting B had a different account:

“If there are two children from the same country, they love to talk in their own language and we prefer it that way, we don't say 'don't use the other language' because when they're learning language they need to be, use their own language

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

first and then they need an environment when they listen the language all the time so when they listen the language they making, they're building a relationship with their first language and then trying to get the second language."

Eman in Setting B confirmed Muna's account:

"we never force them to speak English, so they can speak in their own language, yes as soon as time passes, they learn English so quick.....a child is upset and he doesn't know English and if I know that language so we can use that language. The children do appear comfortable, at the start they don't but as time pass then they do, they are comfortable, like ehh nursery rhymes we can sing in 2 or 3 languages or especially Urdu is my language, my first language, so I speak in Urdu and they laugh so the tone is the same but they can speak in their language."

In Setting B, Amy described some of the solutions used to bridge communications:

"the language barrier can be a little tricky trying to explain to the child but pictures are good you kinda have to just simplicity, simple words and don't make anything longwinded."

In Setting B, Muna also described successful methods of interaction:

"when they start they have their mother tongue and then they...they're very good for picking the language, the second language, because when doing the circle group time, they're singing different kind of songs and then we're translating to different kinds of songs like say when we open the door we're greeting them the different languages."

4.5.2 Conclusion

It is well documented that if the pre-school setting does not place a value on the importance of the child's first language, it may impact negatively not only on the child but also the child's family (Mhic Mhathuna, 2012).

Negotiating language barriers is a challenge for all ECEC practitioners. It has been reported that children who are starting a second language advance in learning through

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

consistent support from their educator in addition to the child linking and differentiating the two languages. By taking this approach they are more likely to become involved in the learning process. This technique has been found to be far more effective than keeping the two languages as separate entities (Ó Duibhir and Cummins, 2012).

The researcher found that the approach taken in Setting A did not make allowances for children who could not speak English and the approach taken was described as full immersion. The management of language in Setting B included early childhood practitioners who had several languages and they encouraged use of their primary language until they became fluent in their secondary language.

4.6 ECEC practitioners' understandings of Direct Provision

The final theme to emerge from the coding framework was the ECEC practitioners' understandings of DP. It has been acknowledged that living in DP impacts significantly on the lives of the children living in these settings (Mc Mahon, 2015). Thus, it was considered important to ascertain the ECEC practitioner's understanding of the implication for the children who are living in DP.

4.6.1 ECEC practitioners' understandings of Direct Provision

Bronfenbrenner described the child's home setting as the most significant factor in influencing the child's academic advancement in school (Bronfenbrenner 1967/2005).

It was of concern to note that the ECEC practitioners did not describe any awareness of the adverse effects for the children who live in DP.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

In Setting A, Kate did not show an understanding of the negative implications of living in DP:

“It frustrates me to be honest that people do have this idea of what Direct Provision is like and there are people who have lived in Direct Provision who are going out there and spreading things that are not true and saying how dreadfully they have been treated and stuff like that and we’re bending over backwards to treat people well within Direct Provision. Direct Provision itself is not great. It was only designed to be a temporary fix for people for six months ...people were living in it for up to 9 years and that is not ok. But at the same time, Setting A in particular is the best, I mean it is the flagship, it’s beautiful and you know, within Direct Provision it’s beautiful and a huge amount of money has been pumped into it and it’s all about the residents and it’s all about being respectful and all that stuff.”

In Setting B, Amy did not demonstrate any awareness of the possible consequences for the children of living in DP:

“To be quite honest I never think of them as being in Direct Provision and I don’t actually know a lot about Direct Provision if I’m being honest. I didn’t know what it was till I came in here, emm I wasn’t exposed to it.”

Hilary in Setting B described the advantages for the community living in DP compared to the poor living outside in the local community. She did acknowledge that the uncertainty of their refugee status was a source of on-going stress but did not describe any other disadvantages:

“So they don’t have outgoings in that line like you would have and then they don’t have obviously rent or a mortgage. So you might have people in the community, that are working on a minimum wage, that end up being worse off than people living in Direct Provision. The biggest thing about people living in Direct Provision is not knowing what’s going to happen. Not knowing will they get status or not. That’s probably the biggest stress for them and how long they’re going to be on the system.”

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

4.6.2 Conclusion

It has been acknowledged that families living in DP suffer extreme material deprivation. On investigation of childhood poverty, Fanning and Veale (2004), argue that as a result of living in DP, asylum seeker children experience levels of destitution and hardship related to personal possessions and accommodation in addition to social marginalisation. It is recognised that children living in DP are living in levels of poverty below the twenty percent poverty line. The welfare discrimination of children in the DP setting is in contravention of the child's rights under the UNCRC (1989) (Fanning, Veale, and O'Connor, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem includes the influences on the child which have been agreed at a macro-level such as the government decision to introduce the DP model as a solution for the provision of accommodation for asylum seeking families. The introduction of this policy and the roll-out has had significant adverse impact on the families living in the DP centres (Fanning and Veale, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem relates to the reactions to experiences which may change over time. This has a particular relevance to children living in DP as their reactions to the changes in their lives may be very different depending on their age. Some children have been born in DP and over time have become institutionalised in this setting. The impact on the child may appear to have little or no effect when they are a young child but may impact on them significantly in subsequent years (O'Toole, 2016).

The challenge for ECEC practitioners working with children who are living in DP is to recognize that there are negative impacts for the children as a result of living in DP and

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

to work towards addressing these deficits. The need to be informed of the rights of the child in the current settings. They have a duty to deliver the appropriate and high standard of education to the children in the DP setting. They also have an obligation to respect the rights of the child in the preschool setting.

In the following chapter, the conclusions to the research questions will be discussed and recommendations from the findings of the study will be made.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Following on from data analysis in chapter four, the researcher returns to the original research question: What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in DP? Further review of the findings from the data analysis will be completed and conclusions will be drawn. Recommendations for future practice will be made, while being cognisant of the limitations of this small scale study and applying Bassey's theory of fuzzy generalisations (Bassey, 1999).

5.2 Conclusions

Reviewing the theme on how the ECEC practitioners managed cultural and religious identity, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory demonstrates the important role that the ECEC practitioner plays in altering the child's life for the better (Hayes et al., 2017). Failure to understand influences such as culture and religion can lead to a disconnection in the mesosystem, thus it is important that ECEC practitioners consider practice through a bioecological lens.

In the vignettes related to the cultural and religious issues, the ECEC practitioners demonstrated respect and acknowledgement of the family traditions and worked towards inclusivity of all beliefs. The majority of ECEC practitioners were open-minded and attuned to cultural and religious differences of the children and were able to

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

recognise and celebrate them. This ethos is in accordance with the recommendations from the Siolta Standard – Identity and Belonging (Department of Education and Skills, 2017).

Devine (2011) has postulated that there is a nationwide ambition in Ireland to establish a single identity. This has been defined in the context of being Catholic, white and a nationalist. The people who have these identities are considered to belong and those who do not, are considered to be outsiders and are therefore marginalised in society.

It is reasonable to have had an expectation that the ECEC practitioners would see these children as not belonging to their society. However, their responses contradict this. They demonstrated that they see these children as part of their community and recognized and respected the richness of their cultural and religious backgrounds.

Waldron and Ruane (2010) advocated that educators have a responsibility to identify and acknowledge each child's identity in order to give them a sense of belonging and inclusivity. In both settings, the ECEC practitioners have described situations where they have worked to achieve this.

Looking at how ECEC practitioners address their engagement with parents who are seeking asylum, it is important to look at Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem which refers to the significant influence of different interactions between the diverse elements of the child's microsystems (Hayes et al., 2017). These interactions include the relationship between the parents and ECEC practitioners. Families will have experienced trauma

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

and tragedy in their lives while fleeing from their own countries (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2015). These experiences will have been exacerbated for the families living in DP. Studies on people living in DP have indicated that families suffer from extreme boredom, depression, marginalisation and powerlessness (White, 2011). It was considered that the ECEC practitioners recognised the value of developing positive parent-teacher relationship and considered it a priority to do so. The ECEC practitioners made significant efforts to develop supportive relationships with the parents. They demonstrated that they understood the importance of doing so in the context of the best interests for the children.

Exploring how ECEC practitioners navigated behaviour in the early years setting, it was discovered that some children have suffered from separation anxiety but the majority have not had any difficulties transitioning from the family home to the preschool setting. However, the convenience of having an early years setting specifically in the DP centre as described in Setting A which included children who are seeking asylum should be reviewed. The model as described in Setting B where the children left the DP setting and mixed with the local children is a more inclusive approach. The conditions in Setting A could be a holding back factor for the children and could make the transition into Primary School a much more difficult experience.

The ECEC practitioners acknowledged that some of the children attending the preschools are clearly traumatised and have needs beyond education. It is likely that all of the children will have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences and that this is continuing because they are living in the DP setting in habitual poverty. It has been

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

acknowledged that ECEC practitioners are struggling to fill their role successfully (Hayes et al., 2017). The ECEC practitioners acknowledged that they had difficulty accessing support services in some instances.

However, the HighScope curriculum has provided the ECEC practitioners with an invaluable tool to support them in their effort to address behavioural challenges. The ECEC practitioners were unanimous that HighScope has provided them with the means to manage many of the factors and influences operating in the child's microsystem. The HighScope approach has facilitated the development of an ethos to enhance the way the ECEC practitioners work with the children (Hayes et al., 2017). HighScope has provided the forum so that ECEC practitioners respect the rights of the child in terms of their freedom of choice. This is in line with the advancement of practice in relation to putting a focus on a rights-based approach including diversity as promoted by experts in the field (Hayes, 2002).

Appraising how the ECEC practitioners negotiated language barriers, it was a surprising finding from the managers in both settings who reported that most of the children were able to speak English. In the first setting, the manager reported that the majority of the children were able to speak English as their first language. In the second setting, the manager recounted that as all of the children had attended the creche within DP before they had attended the preschool, they had become proficient in English in the previous setting.

However, in spite of these accounts, it was acknowledged by some of the ECEC practitioners that there were children who did not have English as a first language. This

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

would have been expected because of the range of nationalities attending the preschools.

The children in Setting A may be at a disadvantage in terms of learning English as an additional language. They will not be exposed to the same rich language development as they attend preschool with other children who may not speak fluent English.

The children in Setting B are offered the opportunity of acquiring English as an additional language through normal immersive procedures with children from the local community. These children will be dialoguing with English speaking children in their learning and play setting. Aistear provides guidance in terms of addressing language barriers as it has recognised the value of language as one of the four main themes is communication. Aistear maintains that language provides the means of imparting one's opinions, beliefs and feelings. It advises teachers to always reply to the children's questions and that they should demonstrate effective communications in a motivating and encouraging manner (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

ECEC practitioners can help children through the learning process for the second language using different scaffolding strategies. Moving on from something that is known to the child to a new subject is described as dynamic scaffolding and this approach helps the child to improve and advance in terms of language ability (Mhic Mhathúna, 2012).

It has also been shown to be advantageous to the children, if ECEC practitioners have a knowledge base in relation to the child's first language when he/she comes into the

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

ECEC setting (Murray and Urban, 2012). This approach has been followed in Setting B, where they have included ECEC practitioners in their staffing complement who are able to speak the language of some of the children seeking asylum attending the school.

Finally, considering the ECEC practitioners understanding of DP, it was striking to note that they had given little or no consideration to the adverse effects of DP and its impact on the children. The ECEC practitioners did not seem to contextualise adequately the children's home environment in terms of the violation of the rights of the child and the potential outcomes. It is difficult to explain why this is the case. Is it because the ECEC practitioners have spent so long working in the settings, they have become immune to the hardships experienced by the families in these settings? Alternatively, are they not able to face the reality and implications of such deprivations? Is it a form of self-preservation? It may be at some level, these ECEC practitioners have themselves become institutionalised into acceptability of such environments. Whatever the reason may be, it is of concern as there is a likelihood that the ECEC practitioners may not be addressing adequately the rights and needs of the children.

5.3 Recommendations

I will now propose recommendations that I consider pertinent to the findings of this research study.

I would recommend that ECEC practitioners should be provided with further professional development in the area related to children and families who are living in

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

DP. Education for the ECEC practitioners in the DP settings should be more nuanced to ensure they are adapting Siolta and Aistear to the specific needs of children living in DP. They should also receive specific education in relation to the human rights of the child who is living in DP.

It is not an individual responsibility to introduce and implement successful pedagogy systems. In order to achieve positive outcomes, there should be governmental frameworks in place to support the ECEC practitioners which would lead to a mutual ethos with unified vision and value system within the services. There should be adequate resources in place to facilitate child-free hours where in-service training in specific areas related to diversity and inclusion can be achieved. This is essential for the educators who are engaged with children and their families who are marginalised in society (Peeters and Sharmahd, 2014).

Furthermore, I recommend that Better Start mentoring service should provide psychological and quality supports for ECEC practitioners working and caring for children living in DP. These ECEC practitioners are working with families where trauma is evident through the family narrative or may be communicated by the child in his misbehaviour. The families in DP are being traumatized not only by the process of DP but also by the experiences from their recent past – war, conflict and refugee camps. The ECEC practitioners may become affected by these stories of suffering and sometimes may feel a sense of helplessness when they are unable to address the issues in question. When the participant said “I never think of them as being in Direct Provision” this could be seen as self-preservation. She may not have wanted to see it because she

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

could not cope with it. Psychological and quality supports are needed for the ECEC practitioners so they are better equipped to deal with the challenges presented to them from the families who are seeking asylum.

It is considered that there is a need for other therapeutic and assessment services in the preschool setting such as psychological, speech and language therapy and teaching English as an additional language which is currently beyond the skill sets of the ECEC practitioners.

In addition, I would recommend that all preschools for children living in DP should be placed outside the confines of DP and located in the local community. In the current environment, in Setting A, these children are being isolated from the local society and may suffer ostracization when they transition into Primary School. Integrating the children with the indigenous group would give them a sense of belonging and make them feel they are part of the community. This recommendation has a sound theoretical backing (Moran, et al., 2016) and should be considered for all settings.

Although it was not a finding in the data analysis, it is worth noting that the researcher experienced difficulty gaining agreement from ECEC practitioners to participate in this research study. It is possible that the participants are suffering from research fatigue. There are so many different disciplines researching DP, which include psychology, sociology, human rights, education and anthropology to name a few. There should be guidelines set up by the Education Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) to describe how to research educational institutions in Ireland including those that are in DP. These

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

guidelines could spread the research equally nationwide and ultimately lessen/prevent research fatigue in this area.

Finally, it is recommended to expand this research thesis and have it performed on a larger nationwide scale. Two early years settings were included in the study but the researcher is convinced that it would benefit from further analysis if every preschool who has children from DP included in the classes, was surveyed. In addition, there is also scope to broaden the study further by including primary schools where children from DP are enrolled.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Reference List

Adams, M. and Bell, L.A. (2016). *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge.

Albon, D. & Mukherji, P. (2015). *Research Methods in Early Childhood - An Introductory Guide*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Arnold, S.K. (2012). *State Sanctioned Child Poverty and Exclusion The case of children in state accommodation for asylum seekers*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/State-Sanctioned-Child-Poverty-and-Exclusion-The-case-of-children-in-state-accommodation-for-asylum-seekers.pdf>

Baissangourov, P. (2008). *English as an Additional Language: A study of the supports available in local preschool services in the Donegal area*. (BA Hons dissertation). Belfast: Queens University.

Bardon, S. and Pollak, S. (2018, June 28). About 3,000 asylum seekers to have right to work. *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/about-3-000-asylum-seekers-to-have-right-to-work-1.3546153>

Bassey, M., (1999). *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*. 1st ed. Buckingham: Open University Press.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Bernardi, F. and Boado, H.C. (2013). Previous School Results and Social Background: Compensation and Imperfect Information in Educational Transitions. *European Sociological Review*, 30, 207-217. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jct029>

British Educational Research Association (BERA). (2018). *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, 4th ed. London. Retrieved from <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethicalguidelines-for-educational-research-2018>

Britto, P.R., Lye, S.J., Proulx, K., Yousafzai, A.K., Matthews, S.G., Vaivada, T., Perez-Escamilla, R., Rao, N., Ip, P., Fernald, L.C.H., MacMillan, H., Hanson, M., Wachs, T.D., Yao, H., Yoshikawa, H., Cerezo, A., Leckman, J.F., Bhutta, Z.A. and Early Childhood Development Interventions Review Group, for the Lancet Early Childhood Development Series Steering Committee. (2017). Nurturing care: promoting early childhood development. *The Lancet*, 389 (10064), 91-102. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31390-3

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1967/ 2005). The split level American family. In U. Bronfenbrenner (Ed.). *Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development* (pp. 201-209). London: Sage.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Bronfenbrenner, U. and Morris, P. A. (2006). The Bioecological Model of Human Development. In R. M. Lerner and W. E. Damon (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol 1, Theoretical Models of Human Development* (pp. 793-828). West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons.

Bryan, A. (2009). The intersectionality of nationalism and multiculturalism in the Irish curriculum: teaching against racism? *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12, 297-317. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240525669_The_intersectionality_of_nationalism_and_multiculturalism_in_the_Irish_curriculum_teaching_against_racism

Burgess, R. G. (1984). *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies*. Lewes: The Falmer Press.

Burke Johnson, R. and Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational Research Quantitative Qualitative and Mixed Approaches*. 5th ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cairde. (2015). Ethnic minorities and mental health in Ireland: Barriers and recommendations. Dublin: Author

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Cao Thanh, N. and Thi Le Thanh, T. (2015). The Interconnection Between Interpretivist Paradigm and Qualitative Methods in Education. *American Journal of Educational Science*, 1(2), 24-27. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/79e6/888e672cf2acf8afe2ec21fd42a29b2cbd90.pdf>

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2018). ACES and Toxic Stress: Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/aces-and-toxic-stress-frequently-asked-questions/>

Children's Rights Alliance (2010). *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved from <https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/UNCRCEnglish.pdf>

Children's Rights Alliance and Law Centre for Children and Young People (2015). Making Rights for Real Children: A Children's Rights Audit on Irish Law. Retrieved from https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/MakingRightsReal2015.pdf

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Citizens Information (2019). Services and entitlements for people seeking asylum.

Retrieved from

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving_country/asylum_seekers_and_refugees/services_for_asylum_seekers_in_ireland/direct_provision.html

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power, and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Data Protection Commision. (2003). Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Retrieved from <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/about/mission-statement/data-protection-acts-1988-and-2003#top>

Dean, M. (1994) *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*. London: Routledge.

Deegan, G. (2017, December 18). *State paid private firms €400m to run direct provision centres*. Retrieved from: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/state-paid-privatefirms-400m-to-run-direct-provision-centres-1.3330661>

Denscombe, M. (2017). *The Good Research Guide For small-scale social research projects*. 6th ed. London: Open University Press.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2009, April 7). *Press Release Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Barry Andrews welcomes free pre-school year in early childhood care and education (ECCE)*. Retrieved from https://www.dcy.gov.ie/docs/7_April_2009_Minister_Andrews_welcomes_free_preschool_year%3Cb/1083.htm

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2016). *Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education*. Retrieved from <http://aim.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-Equality-and-Inclusion-Charter-and-Guidelines-for-Early-Childhood-Care-Education.pdf>

Department of Education and Science. (1999). *Ready to Learn White Paper on Early Childhood Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Ready-to-Learn-White-Paper-on-Early-Childhood-Education.pdf>

Department of Education and Skills. (2016). *Survey of early years practitioners: Consultation for the review of education and training programmes in early years*. Dublin: Author.

Department of Education and Skills. (2017). *Siolta The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. Retrieved from <http://siolta.ie/media/pdfs/siolta-manual-2017.pdf>

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Department of Health and Children. (2006). *National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010 A*

Guide for Providers. Retrieved from

https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/childcare/childcare_providers.pdf

Devine, D. (2006). Welcome to the Celtic Tiger? Teacher Responses to Immigration and Increasing Ethnic Diversity in Irish Schools. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 15, 49-70. Retrieved from

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09620210500200131?needAccess=true>

Devine, D. (2011). *Immigration and schooling in the Republic of Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Devine, D. (2013). 'Value'ing children differently? Migrant children in education. *Children and Society*, 27(4), 282-294. doi 10.1111/chso.12034

Dumčius, R., Siarova, H., Nicaise, I., Huttova, J. and Balčaitė, I. (2012). Study on Educational Support for Newly Arrived Migrant Children. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274713788_Study_on_Educational_Support_for_Newly_Arrived_Migrant_Children

European Commission (2019). *2018 Reform of EU Data Protection Rules*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/justice-and-fundamental-rights/data-protection/2018-reform-eu-data-protection-rules_en

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Fallon, J. (2005). Early Childhood in Ireland: Evidence and Perspectives. Retrieved from http://siolta.ie/media/pdfs/03_early_childhood_in_ireland.pdf

Fanning, B., Veale, A. and O'Connor, D. (2001) *Beyond the Pale: asylum-seeking children and social exclusion in Ireland*. Dublin: Irish Refugee Council.

Fanning, B. and Veale, A. (2004). Child Poverty as Public Policy; Direct Provision and Asylum Seeking Children in the Republic of Ireland. *Childcare in Practice*, 10, 241-251. doi:10.1080/1357527042000244374

Foreman, M., Ní Raghallaigh, M., Feeley, M. and Moyo, S. (2016). *Transition: from Direct Provision to Life in the Community - the experiences of those who have been granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or leave to remain in Ireland*. Retrieved from https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Transition-from-Direct-Provision-to-life-in-the-community_M-NiRaghallaigh_M-Foreman-et-al-2016.pdf

French, G. (2007). *The Framework for Early Learning Children's Early Learning and Development – Executive Summary*. Commissioned by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. Retrieved from <https://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=aaschsslrep>

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

French, G. (2012). The High Scope Approach to Early Learning. In M. Mhic Mahuna and M. Taylor (Eds.), *Early childhood education and care: an introduction for students in Ireland* (pp. 127-134). Dublin: Gill Education.

French, G. (2013). Early Literacy and Numeracy Matters. *Journal of early childhood studies*, 7, 31-45. Retrieved from <https://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1065&context=aaschsslarts>

Garrity, S., Moran, L., McGregor, C. and Devaney, C. (2017). An informed pedagogy of community, care, and respect for diversity: Evidence from a qualitative evaluation of early years services in the west of Ireland. *Child Care in Practice*, 23, 305-321. doi: 10.1080/13575279.2017.1329707

Grimm, P. (2010). Social Desirability Bias. *Wiley International Encyclopedia of Marketing*, doi10.1002/9781444316568.wiem02057.

Hayes, N. (2002). *Children's Rights - Whose right? A review of child policy development in Ireland*. Retrieved from Trinity's Access to Research Archive website:
<http://www.tara.tcd.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/60509/Children%3fs%20Rights%20-%20Whose%20Right%3f%20A%20Review%20of%20Child%20Policy%20Development%20in%20Ireland%20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Hayes, N., O'Toole, L. and Halpenny, A. (2017). *Introducing Bronfenbrenner A Guide for Practitioners and Students in Early Years Education*. Oxon: Routledge.

Health Service Executive (HSE) (2009). *Health Services Intercultural Guide: Responding to the needs of diverse religious communities and cultures in healthcare settings*. Retrieved from https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Publication_Health_Services_Intercultural_Guide.pdf

Health Service Executive (HSE) (2011). *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/children/welfarepractice.pdf>

Hill, A. (2018, September 10). Migration: how many people are on the move around the world? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/sep/10/migration-how-many-people-are-on-the-move-around-the-world>

Holland, K. (2017, October 10). Budget 2018: Free pre-school plan to expand to two years. *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/budget-2018-free-pre-school-plan-to-expand-to-two-years-1.3249704>

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Irish Refugee Council. (2013). *Direct Provision: Framing an alternative reception system for people seeking international protection*. Retrieved from https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/DP_Report_Final.pdf

Irish Refugee Council. (2018). *Children in Direct Provision Accommodation*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/children-and-young-people/children-in-direct-provision-accommodation>

Janta, B. and Harte, E. (2016). Education of migrant children Education policy responses for the inclusion of migrant children in Europe. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1655.html

Kane, C. (2008). A Right to Play A study of the Care and Educational Needs of Asylum Seeking Children and their Families. *Mayo County Childcare Committee*. Retrieved from <http://www.mayochildcare.ie/en/media/Media,8688,en.pdf>

Kennedy, F. (2001). *Cottage to Creche: Family change in Ireland*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Kilkelly, U. (2007). Barriers to the Realisation of Children's Rights in Ireland. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1961731

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Lally, C. (2019, January 2). *Number of asylum claims reaches 10-year high*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/number-of-asylum-claims-reaches-10-year-high-1.3745511>

Lentin, R. and Moreo, E. (2012). Introduction: Immigration in Ireland and migrant-led activism. In R. Lentin & E. Moreo. (Eds.) *Migrant activism and integration from below in Ireland* (pp. 1-20). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lentin, R. (2016). Asylum Seekers, Ireland, and the return of the repressed. *Irish Studies Review*, 24(1): pp. 21-34. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284517170_Asylum_seekers_Ireland_and_the_return_of_the_repressed

Luibheid, E. (2013). *Pregnant on Arrival: Making the Illegal Immigrant*. University of Minnesota Press: London.

Machowska-Kosciak, M. (2013). A language socialization perspective on knowledge and identity construction in Irish post-primary education. In F. Farr and M. Moriarty (Eds.), *Language Learning and Teaching: Irish Research Perspectives* (pp. 87-110). Bern: Peter Lang.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Marino Institute of Education (MIE). (2018). *Ethics in Research Policy for Marino Institute of Education, 2017-2018*. Retrieved from https://www.mie.ie/en/Research/MERC_Marino_Ethics_in_Research_Committee/Ethics_in_Research_Policy_PDF_.pdf

May, S. (2009). Critical multiculturalism and education. In Banks, J.A. *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education* (pp. 33-48). New York: Routledge.

McGregor, C., Dalikeni, C., Devaney, C., Moran, L. and Garrity, S. (2019). Practice guidance for culturally sensitive practice in working with children and families who are asylum seekers: learning from an early years study in Ireland. *Child Care in Practice*, 1-14. doi: 10.1080/13575279.2018.1555137

McMahon, B. (2015). *Working group to report to government on improvements to the protection process, including direct provision and supports to asylum seekers*. Dublin: Department of Justice and Equality.

Mhic Mhathúna, M. (2012). Child Language in the Early Years. In Mhic Mhathúna, M. and Taylor, M. Dublin: Gill Education.

Mills, J. and Birks, M. (2014). *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide*. 1st ed. London: Sage Publications.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Moran, L., Garrity, S. McGregor, C. and Devaney, C. (2016). *'Hoping for a Better Tomorrow' A Process Study Evaluation of the Greater Tomorrow Crèche and Ballyhaunis Community Preschool Services, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo*. Galway: The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. The National University of Ireland, Galway.

Murray, C. and Urban, M. (2012). *Diversity and Equality in Early Childhood. An Irish perspective*. Dublin: Gill Education.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2005). *Intercultural Education in the Primary School Enabling Children to Respect and Celebrate Diversity, To Promote Equality and to Challenge Unfair Discrimination*. Retrieved from <https://www.into.ie/ROI/InfoforTeachers/SocialInclusion/InterculturalEducation/NCCAInterculturalGuidelines.pdf>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2009). *Aistear The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

National Economic and Social Forum (NESF). (2005). *Early Childhood Care and Education* (NESF Report 31). Retrieved from http://files.nesc.ie/nesc_archive/nesc_reports/NESF_31.pdf

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training (NESSE). (2008).

Education and Migration Strategies for Integrating Migrant Children in European Schools and Societies A synthesis of Research Findings for Policy-Makers. Retrieved from <http://nesetweb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2008-Education-and-migration-strategies-for-integrating-migrant-children-in-European-schools-and-societies.pdf>

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms? In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing feminist research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

O'Brien, C. and O'Shea, S. (2014). *Lives in Limbo*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/lives-in-limbo>

Ó Duibhir, P. and Cummins, J. (2012). *Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-12 years)* (Research Report No. 16). Retrieved from https://www.ncca.ie/media/2467/towards_an_integrated_language_curriculum_in_early_childhood_and_primary_education.pdf

Ombudsman for Children's Office. (2017). *Annual Report 2017*. Retrieved from https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/14532_OCO_AR_17_English_web.pdf

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Osler, A. and Starkey, H. (2010). *Teachers and Human Rights Education*. Staffordshire: Trentham Books Limited.

Osler, A. (2016). *Human Rights and Schooling An Ethical Framework for Teaching for Social Justice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

O'Toole, L., Hayes, N. and MhicMhathúna, M. (2014). A Bio-ecological Perspective on Educational Transition. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 140, 121-127. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.396

O'Toole, L. (2016). *A Bio-Ecological Perspective On Educational Transition: Experiences Of Children, Parents And Teachers*. Doctoral Thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology. doi:10.21427/D7GP4Z

Peeters, J. and Sharmahd, N. (2014). Professional development for ECEC practitioners with responsibilities for children at risk: Which competences and in-service training are needed? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 22, 412-424. doi: 10.1080/1350293X.2014.912903

Pobal (2018). *Early Years Sector Profile Report 2017/2018*. Retrieved from <https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2018/11/Early-Years-Sector-Profile-Report-2017-2018.pdf>

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Quinn, E. (2009). The Organisation of Asylum And Migration Policies In Ireland.

European Migration Network. Retrieved from

https://www.newcommunities.ie/download/pdf/organisation_of_asylum_and_migration_policies_in_ireland__esri_2009.pdf

Reception and Integration Agency (RIA). (2010a). *Direct Provision*. Retrieved from

http://www.ria.gov.ie/en/RIA/Pages/Direct_Provision_FAQs

Reception and Integration Agency (RIA). (2010b). *Education*. Retrieved from

http://www.ria.gov.ie/en/RIA/Pages/Education_While_In_RIA_Accommodation

Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) (2019). *House Rules and Procedures for*

Reception and Accommodation Centres. Retrieved from

http://www.ria.gov.ie/en/RIA/Pages/House_Rules_Procedures

Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R. and Nores, M.

(2004). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions. *HighScope Press*, 1-19.

Retrieved from [http://nieer.org/wp-](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf)

[content/uploads/2014/09/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf)

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Sirius Network. (2014). *A Clear Agenda for Migrant Education in Europe*. Retrieved from <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Agenda-and-Recommendations-for-Migrant-Education.pdf>

Stewart, J. (2011). *Supporting Refugee Children: Strategies for Educators*. New York: University of Toronto Press.

Suárez-Orozco, M. and Suárez-Orozco, C. (2015). Children of Immigration. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 8-14. doi: 10.1177/0031721715619911

Taguma, M., Kim, M., Wurzburg, G. and Kelly F. (2009). *OECD Reviews of Migrant Education Ireland*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/OECD-Review-of-Migrant-Education-Country-Report-for-Ireland.PDF>

Thornton, L. (2015). Spotlight on Direct Provision. In Children's Rights Alliance (Eds). *Making Rights Real for Children: A Children's Rights Audit of Irish Law* (pp.124-130). Retrieved from https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/MakingRightsReal2015.pdf

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Titchen, A. and Hobson, D. (2005). Phenomenology. In B. Somekh and C. Lewin (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences*, (pp. 121-130). London: Sage Publications.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union (EU). (2015). *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015 Settling In: Settling In*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Tudge, J. R., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E. and Karnik, R. B. (2009). Uses and misuses of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 1 (4), 198-210.

Tusla Child and Family Agency. (2015). *Mandated Persons*. Retrieved from <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018). *Figures at a Glance*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Van Os, C. (2018). *Best Interests of the Child-Assessments for recently arrived refugee children: Behavioural and children's rights perspectives on decision-making in migration law*. Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit.

Waldron, F. and Ruane, B. (2010). *Human Rights Education Reflections on Theory and Practice*. Ireland: The Liffey Press.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Way, E. (2013). Understanding Research Fatigue in the Context of Community-University Relations. *Local Knowledge: Worcester Area Community-Based Research*. 3. Retrieved from <https://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=localknowledge>

Weikart, D.P. and Schweinhart, L.J. (1997). High/Scope Perry Preschool Program. In G.W. Albee and T.P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Primary Prevention Works* (146-166). London: Sage Publications.

White, A. (2011). 'Every Wednesday I Am Happy': Childhoods in an Irish Asylum Centre. *Population Space and Place*, 18, 314-326. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/psp.659>

Woodhead, M. (2006). *Changing perspectives on early childhood: theory, research and policy*, (Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007). Retrieved from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001474/147499e.pdf>

Yan, L. (2012). Development and application of desktop virtualization technology. *IOSR Journal of Engineering*. 2(2), 310-314.
doi: 10.1109/ICCSN.2011.6013725

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Appendix 1 - Consent Form

Dear Practitioner,

My name is Ann Donnelly. I am in the second year of my masters in Early Childhood Education in Marino Institute of Education in Dublin. For my thesis I am asking the question “What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when working and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision? Based on the setting you are working in, I was wondering would it possible for me to interview you and your colleagues in relation to the above question. This would aid me gaining further insights for my research and I would really appreciate your help. I hope to carry out these interviews within the month of February. As previously discussed I am flexible to work around your schedule in relation for when is a suitable time to carry out these interviews. The interviews will vary in length depending on what each person brings with them but will likely be between 45 minutes to 60 minutes.

The research is confidential and your name will not be used in any work published in the study. I will use pseudonyms so you cannot be recognized in the study. Any data will be collected securely and my supervisor and I will be the only people with access to it. I will use two voice recording devices to record the interviews. The second device is a precaution in case there is a problem with the other device. All data will be destroyed 13 months post collection of the data as per Marino’s Guidelines.

Participation is optional and there will be no negative consequences if you do not wish to participate. If you do consent to part take you may withdraw at any stage without adverse consequences. I would be more than happy to share the findings of my thesis with you upon completion in the hopes that my findings will be of benefit to others.

Many thanks,

Ann Donnelly.

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Please complete this form if you wish to participate in this study.

- I fully understand all the information provided to me ☐
- I understand that this study is a confidential one and that my identity will be protected in all publications related to this study ☐
- I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time and that my decision to participate will not affect my rights in any way. ☐

Please tick the boxes above to indicate your willingness to participate

I _____ wish to participate in the interviews conducted for the research that is being carried out for this Mater's level research.

Signed _____

Date _____

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Appendix 2 – Interview Questions

Q1.) What age bracket are you within 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 60+?

Q2.) How many years have you been working in Early Childhood Education?

Q3.) What is your qualification level?

Q4.) Where did you train?

Q5.) How long ago did you train?

Q6.) How many years have you been working in this setting?

Q7.) Are you or any of your colleagues trained in LINC's (Leadership for Inclusion in Early Years)

Q8.) Could you tell me a bit about the different backgrounds, nationalities and cultures that the children in your class are originating from?

Q19.) Do you consider there are multiple cultures in your classroom?

Q10.) If so, what is it like to try and negotiate all of the cultural backgrounds in your classroom?

Moving forward for the purposes of this research would you mind if we concentrate on the children who are currently living in Direct Provision?

Q11.) How would you describe your relationship with all of the parents?

Q12.) Have you experienced that the children in your care are fluent in their native tongue/ in English/ in Irish/ in their parent's language? How would you describe their linguistic skills?

Q13.) For the children where English is not their first language do they seem comfortable using their mother tongue or their parent's language in the classroom?

Q14.) What language do you use in the classroom and do the children appear comfortable with this?

Q15.) In your opinion, from what you have seen, how do you think the children who are coming from Direct Provision integrate with other children in the classroom?

Q16.) Following on from that, in your opinion, how do you think their emotional state is in the classroom and has it changed over the course of the year?

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Q17.) What do you do as a practitioner that helps to integrate children in your opinion?

Q18.) It must be hard to juggle all of those cultural practices and religious holidays and ethnic celebrations, how do you manage to do that? Or do you?

Q19.) Research has shown us that parents have a better relationship with professionals in Early Childhood than they do at other stages of their children's schooling/ educational journey. Have you had an experiences where you think that families coming from Direct Provision are integrating into the community or society well or otherwise?

Q20.) Do you think that your students who are living in Direct Provision are grappling with identity issues or are they secure in their identity? What do you think? If yes, can you give me an example. If no, can you identity an identity issues children in their position could potentially struggle with?

Q21.) Are there challenges early childhood educators face in providing appropriate education to the children who are living in Direct Provision and if so, what are they?

Q22.) How do you think your service or you in particular support families and the children in your care who are living in Direct Provision?

Q23.) Is there anything you think you have to do differently with these children that are coming from Direct Provision that you may not have to do with other children (whether they're from Ireland, Poland, the Philippines)

Q24.) What are your hopes for the children coming through your service coming from Direct Provision?

What are the challenges for Early Childhood Education and Care practitioners when educating and caring for children who are living in Direct Provision?

Appendix 3 – Coding Framework

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Managing cultural and religious diversity	Recognising cultural differences Religious issues	Cultural differences Cultural celebrations Religious differences Religious celebrations Different nationalities Different traditions Different foods Cultural identity Equality Anti-bias
ECEC practitioner' involvement with parents	Parent-teacher relationships Parenting practices Parental psycho-emotional issues	Parenting styles Parent's trauma Parental support Parental integration Parental education Child protection
Navigating behaviour in the early years' setting	Separation anxiety The child's self-regulation and conflict resolution	Emotional state (of the children) Dealing with emotions Behavioural problems Reasons for behavioural problems Conflict resolution HighScope Play-based education Child-led curriculum
Negotiating language barriers	Different approaches and opinions	Language barrier Language as a challenge Non-verbal communication English as an additional language (EAL) Teaching English
ECEC practitioners' understanding of Direct Provision	ECEC practitioners' understanding of Direct Provision	Resources Government policy Direct Provision Resentment Hostility Acceptance of Direct Provision Integration into Direct Provision Support for children in Direct Provision