



Children's Research Network PhD Symposium 2019 "Doing research for and with children and young people"

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Posters

Rachel Clifford, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

Good Grief: Changing Attitudes to Childhood Grief in Children's Literature

Background: Through the lens of literary trauma theory, the thesis aims to investigate developing approaches to childhood grief in children's literature from early twentieth century to twenty-first. Furthermore, it seeks to locate meaning through a greater consideration of social and cultural constructs. Therefore, it focusses on the acknowledgment or lack thereof, of childhood grief in children's literature and studies cultural influences on these depictions. While still in the early stages of research the thesis objectives are as follows:

- To employ critical perspectives from literary trauma theory when analysing the treatment of grief in children's literature.
- To identify literatures that ignore/acknowledge childhood grief and analyse how treatment of child characters differ accordingly;
- To analyse how society shapes the treatment of childhood grief.
- To evaluate the link between the prevalence of death in the culture of the period of authorship and the treatment of childhood grief in texts.
- To trace the developing awareness of childhood grief and whether this is portrayed in children's literature.

Methods: Literary Trauma Theory explores the impact of trauma in literature and society by analysing its psychological and cultural significance. The thesis draws on the work of two theorists in particular - Cathy Caruth and Michelle Balaev. Caruth believes repression to be a universal response to trauma whereas Balaev's pluralistic trauma theory model challenges this assumption.

Results/findings: It aims to deliver a comprehensive study of the subject of childhood grief in children's literature and offer an analysis of which books deal with the subject empathetically and which ignore grief as a natural consequence of loss.

Impact/Outcomes: This research will serve as a useful guide to parents and teachers alike who wish to introduce the subject of grief to a child through the medium of literature.

Keywords: childhood grief; repression; children's literature; trauma theory;

Desiree Grafton-Clarke, Infant and Child Research Lab / School of Psychology / Children's Health Ireland. Trinity College Dublin

The Power of Parents: The Significance of Parent-Child Interaction for Child Development in Down Syndrome

Background: Parent-child interaction provides the critical infrastructure for child development. However, very little research has been conducted on parent-child interaction in the context of Down Syndrome (DS). This research addresses this gap through detailed examination of parents in triadic and dyadic interaction with their children and will contribute to our understanding of the factors that influence the developmental profile in children with DS.

Methods: Initial data will be presented from 24 children (aged 10 months – 4 years) recruited from within the local community and from Ireland's first dedicated Down Syndrome Clinic as part of a multidisciplinary collaboration with Children's Health Ireland. Preliminary analyses will be presented on different realms of parental influence, and how these are reciprocally related to multiple domains



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of development including language, cognitive, motor, social-emotional and adaptive functioning using gold standard tools. 24 parent-child dyads were video recorded while engaged in play and reading tasks. These observational data are complemented by parent-report measures including quality of life, resilience, family impact, co-parenting and reflective functioning. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with parents will also be presented.

Results/findings: Our initial data reveals both similarities and differences in parenting behaviours displayed by parents of children with Down syndrome and typically developing controls. Our findings also demonstrate the quality of parent-child interaction is associated with performance on the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (3rd Edition). This research extends the long-held principle that parent-child interaction is important for child development to children with Down Syndrome.

Impact/Outcomes: Our testing paradigm provides opportunities to investigate the parental role further and to understand how parents and early intervention therapists may support the development of children with Down Syndrome.

Keywords: Child Development; Parent-Child Interaction; Down Syndrome; Family Environment

References:

- Bayley, N. (2006). Bayley scales of infant and toddler development – Third Edition. PsychCorp, Pearson.

Linda Kelly, Infant and Child Research Lab, Trinity College Dublin

An experimental investigation of father-child conversational balance using a shared book-reading paradigm

Background: Previous research emphasises how diverse and complex child-directed speech is important for child development. Work conducted by the TCD Infant and Child Research Lab highlights that beyond exposure to language, engaging children in conversation with their fathers may have important implications for development. Our findings indicate that greater balance in conversational turntaking between fathers and their children at age two is associated with higher child executive function (EF) at age four. Theoretically, back-and-forth exchanges may engage children's developing EF skills, and provide opportunities to practice these emerging abilities. The current ongoing study aims to manipulate father-child conversational balance during a shared book-reading task and investigate its effect on child EF.

Methods: Nine three-year-olds (5 females; $M = 39.14$ months, $SD = 2.10$) and their biological fathers ($M = 39.78$ years, $SD = 8.79$) have taken part in the study to date (expected $N = 60$). In the literature there tends to be lower response rates from fathers to research compared to mothers and recruitment of fathers has been challenging thus far. Child EF was measured at baseline. Dyads were randomly assigned to a light-text shared-book reading paradigm designed to elicit greater conversation between father and child, or a heavy-text condition designed to limit back-and-forth exchanges. Transcripts of the shared book-reading interactions were prepared in order to calculate balance in father-child turn-taking. Child EF was again assessed post-manipulation.

Results/findings: Preliminary analysis indicates an effect of book-type on conversational balance, demonstrating that this feature of father-child interaction is amenable to intervention. An effect on child EF has yet to be determined.

Impact/Outcomes: EF is a critical component of cognitive development and an important predictor of later achievement. As there can be wide individual differences in EF during the preschool period,



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understanding how to promote the aspects of parent-child interaction which enhance development of these skills is important.

Keywords: fathers; executive function; child-directed speech; pragmatics; parent-child interaction

References:

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Daráine Murphy, University College Dublin & NUIG

Challenges for parents seeking help for an adolescent mental health concern

Background: When adolescents need to attend professional services, such as mental health services, they require the assistance of a parent/guardian to facilitate the process of seeking help and attending services. Very little in-depth research has been conducted exploring the process parents engage in when seeking help if they are concerned about their adolescent child's mental health. Therefore, the aim of this preliminary study was to gain an overview of parent's experiences when seeking help to guide the development of future research studies.

Methods: Participants were recruited to the study through posts on social media sites. Participants consisted of 106 individuals (parents, sibling, extended family, teachers) who had been/or currently are concerned about an adolescent's mental health. We decided to not solely recruit parents in order to get an alternative perspective of the role of parents in the help-seeking process. The online survey involved participants answering 3 open-ended questions about when they became concerned about the adolescent and their experience of seeking help (or not).

Results/findings: Preliminary findings indicate that parental help-seeking for adolescent mental health problems is not a straight forward process. Parents were found to vary greatly in deciding when their adolescent needed professional help. Furthermore, parents encountered many challenges when seeking help in relation to service access and lack of clear help-seeking pathways.

Impact/Outcomes: The overall findings of the study have helped to identify key aspects of the parental help seeking process. These will be explored in more detail in interviews with parents that are planned for the next stage of the research process. By the end of the project we aim to chart the help seeking process so that, in the future, supports can be designed to help parents at critical points of the journey.

Keywords: youth mental health, help-seeking, parents

Angana Nandy, Infant and Child Lab, School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin

Associations among co-parenting, parental play and toddlers' socio-emotional competencies

Background: Much of the child's development is dependent on the early interactions that occur between parents and children. However, there is very little research on real-time interactions



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despite evidence from a small set of studies that mothers' and fathers' behaviours are different within triadic and dyadic contexts (Kwon, Bingham, Lewsader, Jeon & Elicker, 2013). Little research has examined how this variability in context as well as broader family-level processes such as coparenting, relate to the quality of parent-child play interactions. The current study aims to answer the following research questions (i) do parental play behaviours and language use vary by parent gender and context? (ii) does the coparenting relationship quality relate to parental play behaviours and language use in the triadic context? (iii) do mothers' and fathers' play behaviours and language use relate to toddlers' socio-emotional competencies in the triadic context?

Methods: 96 heterosexual cohabiting or married couples with children aged between 24 and 36 months were recruited to take part in a study on Parent-Child interaction at the Infant and Child Lab in the School of Psychology, TCD. Parents were instructed to interact with their children as they normally would within dyadic (one parent + child) and triadic (both parents + child) free-play and structured play contexts. Coparenting relationship quality is coded macroanalytically using Schoppe-Sullivan's Coparenting Coding Scheme.

Parental play behaviours and language functions are coded microanalytically using coding schemes developed specifically for this study. Children's socio-emotional competencies are evaluated from both parental reports as well as real-time coding of children's self-regulation.

Results/findings: Findings from this study will help to enhance awareness of shared parenting and promoting more supportive coparenting relationships during the transition to parenthood and toddlerhood years which is crucial for children's socio-emotional competencies.

Impact/Outcomes: This research will help in identifying key parenting behaviours that are crucial for ensuring children's optimal socio-emotional development.

Keywords: Dyad, Triad, Coparenting, Socio-emotional, toddlers

References:

- Kwon, K., Bingham, G., Lewsader, J., Jeon, H., & Elicker, J. (2013). Structured Task Versus Free Play: The Influence of Social Context on Parenting Quality, Toddlers' Engagement with Parents and Play Behaviors, and Parent-Toddler Language Use. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 42(3), 207-224. doi:10.1007/s10566-013-9198-x

Emer Emily Neenan Trinity College Dublin

It's Our Future – Ask Us: Centring Children's Voice In Earth Science & Climate Change Education Research

(see 'Stimulating Education' session below for abstract)

Siobhán O'Connor, School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin

Family-centred care of children and young people in the acute hospital setting: A concept analysis.

Background: Family-centred care (FCC) has become a central tenet of children's nursing in the Western world over several decades since the publication of the Platt Report in 1959 (Ministry of Health, 1959). Although FCC is a term used frequently among children's nurses, the concept is not clearly defined (Coyne et al, 2011; Smith et al, 2017). It could be argued that it has become a 'catchphrase' and may have lost some of its meaning. No single internationally accepted definition for FCC exists, instead a list of elements are described in much of the literature, contributing to the lack of a clear understanding of the concept.



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When the definition and attributes of a concept are not clearly understood, the impact of the concept on practice is greatly impaired (Rodgers, 1989).

Methods: A concept analysis was carried out, using Rodgers' (2000) evolutionary approach as a guiding framework. The aim was to provide an operational definition of the concept as it applies to hospitalised children through a comprehensive analysis of the literature. This concept analysis provides a foundation to enhance continuing concept development and further research, identifying what FCC means to the hospitalised child, his/her parent/guardian and children's nurses. A robust search strategy was designed to ensure the sample of literature was rigorously selected, represented the literature fairly and minimised researcher bias. The systematic literature search yielded 30 theoretical papers which met the inclusion criteria.

Results/findings: Parental participation in care, the development of respectful and trusting partnerships, information sharing and all family members as care recipients were identified as attributes to FCC. There is limited evidence that FCC enhances the experience of hospitalisation and is associated with reduced anxiety for parents. There is a lack of attention to cultural and societal changes which impact on those receiving and delivering care. While children's nurses have been applying some elements of FCC to their clinical practice for decades, the concept continues to evolve.

Impact/Outcomes: Further research examining the effects of FCC for hospitalised children and their families reflecting cultural diversity and social norms must be conducted, which should include the effects of FCC on parents caring for their child in hospital, how FCC supports parents to make healthcare decisions and the outcomes of FCC for children and families.

Keywords: children, parents, nursing, concept analysis, family-centred care.

References:

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- Smith, J., Shields, L., Neill, S. and Darbyshire, P. (2017). Losing the child's voice and 'the captive mother': an inevitable legacy of family-centred care? *Evidence Based Nursing*, 20, 67-69.



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Policy and Implementation

David Byrne, TU Dublin

Examining Irish Educators' Attitudes regarding the Promotion of Student Social and Emotional Wellbeing: Preliminary findings

Background: A review of the literature identifies that Irish post-primary students are at significant risk of experiencing negative affect in their academic lives. Previous research has demonstrated that initiatives aimed at promoting the development of emotional and social wellbeing in such students can produce positive outcomes such as higher academic achievement, improved self-efficacy and reduced attrition [1][2].

In 2017, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have recently published wellbeing guidelines which mandate all Irish secondary schools to allocate 300 hours of junior-cycle instruction to the promotion of students' social and emotional wellbeing. While much is understood globally about the potential benefits of such programmes, little is known about the attitudes and views of educators in this regard.

The purpose of this study is to address this gap in knowledge by examining the attitudes and opinions of Irish post-primary educators as to how best to promote students' wellbeing.

Methods: This study is being conducted in two phases using a sequential mixed-methods design. Phase one is quantitative in nature, consisting of a large-scale survey of second-level educators (n = 327). Phase two will consist of a series of focus groups which will be stratified according to their respective school-types.

Results/findings: Preliminary findings of the phase one survey will be discussed, highlighting differences in educators' attitudes regarding the act of attending to students' wellbeing, and the available policies and curricula. Differences in attitudes will also be discussed in relation to a number of independent and moderating variables such as respondent age, respondent gender, and the single-sex/co-educational setting.

Impact/Outcomes: This research is designed to provide an understanding of educators' attitudes regarding the wellbeing guidelines and curricula so as to enhance best practice and promote whole-school approaches to promoting students' social and emotional wellbeing.

Keywords: Social, Emotional, Wellbeing, Post-Primary, Junior-Cycle

References:

[1] Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. (2005). Self-Discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents. *Psychological Science*, 16(12), 939-944. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01641.x

[2] Durlak, J. & Weissberg, R. (2005). A major meta-analysis of positive youth development programs. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association. Washington D.C

Sheila Donovan, NUI Galway

'Sharenting' - How Parental Autonomy impinges on the Child's Right to a Private Identity

Background: The GDPR 2016 places responsibility on parents to oversee their teenagers' online activity with the express purpose of safeguarding minor's private data, with no regard for younger children who are the subjects of 'sharenting'. 'Sharenting' defined as online posting of personal data



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and images of one's child is widespread. Children have become the 'click bait' of this century. The focus of this research is to investigate the extent to which the right of the child to a private identity may be compromised by parents' right to freedom of expression. The theoretical framework underpinning this research (which is in its infancy stage) is that of a human rights dimension.

Methods: This research will combine a doctrinal and empirical methodology. Library based research and searches of all relevant legal databases, along with a review of all jurisprudence will be carried out. Surveys will be used to ascertain the extent and frequency of 'sharenting' practices along with the level of awareness of privacy issues and the potential dangers of 'sharenting'. For my sample, I will invite parents to an open discussion seminar on internet privacy, followed by a questionnaire. The survey will consist of 10-15 questions. This will be followed by an invitation to participate in an interview consisting of a limited number of open questions that will allow for an expression of views. Finally, I intend to convene four focus discussion groups consisting of 5-7 children to ascertain their views on 'sharenting'

Results/findings: Desk research has revealed that parents use 'sharenting' to self-validate their role as parents. It reveals a lack of knowledge as to the potential dangers of 'sharenting'. Children whose images are posted are exposed to identity theft, misuse of personal information and images and may be the target of online crime, not to mention the eradication of their right to autonomy and self-determination.

Impact/Outcomes: It is envisaged that this research may lead to improved digital safety and awareness for parents of minors.

Keywords: Autonomy, Privacy, Identity, Self-determination

References

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- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 Available at:<https://gdpr-info.eu/> [accessed:12 October 2018]

Nathan Gavigan, Dublin City University

An examination of the impact and fidelity of implementation of the Moving Well-Being Well physical literacy intervention

Background: Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are considered the basic observable building blocks of the more specialized complex movement skills required to successfully participate in games, sports and recreational activities (Clark et. al, 2002). Behan et. al, 2019 however, report that the current level of FMS among Irish children is at a very poor level. Based on this initial work the 'Moving Well –Being Well' targeted physical literacy intervention was developed. The aim of this study was to examine the impact of the Moving Well-Being Well intervention on the FMS of 6-9-year-old children (n=926) in 18 primary schools across Dublin. The secondary aim of this study was



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to assess whether the teacher and coaches' fidelity in implementing this intervention affected the impact of the intervention.

Methods: Following ethical approval participants (n=926) were recruited from 18 primary schools (22% DEIS) across Dublin. All participants took part in an 8 week FMS focused intervention which included two 30 minute PE classes per week (one performed by the coach, the other by the class teacher), as well as classroom activities and home activity sheets. Six FMS and two stability skills were assessed pre and post using the Moving Well-Being Well assessment app. Students enjoyment and motivation towards physical activity was measured post intervention. Teacher fidelity in implementing the intervention was self-reported via questionnaire, whilst the coaches' fidelity was estimated based on their attendance at CPD training workshops and their completion of weekly reflections.

Results/findings: Results of the research are currently being analysed however initial figures have shown a significant increase in FMS and stability skills over the course of the intervention period. Data will be analysed to investigate whether there exists a relationship between the fidelity of implementation of the intervention and the improvement in FMS.

Impact/Outcomes: This research suggests that when implemented with fidelity, the Moving Well-Being Well can be an effective intervention for the development of FMS among 6-9-year-old primary school children.

Keywords: Fundamental Movement Skills, primary school, children, enjoyment, motivation.

References:

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- Behan et. al, 2019 (under review)

Margaret O Donoghue, Technology University Dublin

[The Link between Context and Curriculum Change in Early Years Education](#)

Background: The new primary school curriculum has both implicit and explicit links with Aistear. Aistear advocates a pedagogy that involves learning through play and allows the child some autonomy in the learning process. Given the policy recommendation that the principles of Aistear be integrated into enactment of the primary curriculum, this study formulated two research questions: How do primary school teachers understand and implement Aistear?

How can primary school teachers be supported to enact the new primary language curriculum in relation to Aistear within their contextual settings?

Methods: The study is situated within a social constructivist paradigm and takes an interpretivist approach. Purposive sampling was employed to identify and select two primary schools as case studies. Data was generated primarily through in depth interviewing and classroom observations, although documentary, school website, and photographic data was also considered.

Results/findings: The study found that the teachers and the principals understood Aistear to be something separate from the curriculum. While the study participants in both schools acknowledged the importance of play in enhancing children's learning experiences, they doubted that the children were 'really' learning through play and tended to direct the play towards activities that would meet the curriculum objectives.



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A predominantly didactic approach was adopted by the teachers in both schools. The children were given limited choice or voice in guiding their learning, and any choices they were given were teacher-led.

Impact/Outcomes: Based on the study findings a model of practice was designed to serve as a practical tool for teachers in the enactment of Aistear within the new primary language curriculum. The study contributes new knowledge to the literature on policy enactment and understanding of how curriculum changes are enacted and managed on the ground in relation to other contextual dimensions.

Keywords: Aistear; curriculum; context; policy enactment

References:

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Wellbeing of young people

Marie Hyland, Trinity College Dublin

Alcohol use, health related quality of life and related harms: Exploring the risk and protective factors for young people living in urban disadvantage.

Background: Risk and protective factors associated with alcohol use and health related quality of life (HRQoL) for young people living in urban disadvantage has received limited investigation internationally. Research to date has shown results for young people in large cross-national studies are predominately from a sample of middle to higher socio-economic communities. Yet little remains know about alcohol use and HRQoL for young people living in urban disadvantage. The aim of the research is to explore the risk and protective factors under the broad domains of health related quality of life, including physical well-being, psychological well-being, autonomy and parent relation, social supports and peers, school environment, leisure activities and depression. The objectives are to estimate the prevalence of alcohol use and binge drinking, to examine HRQoL, depression levels and to predict the risk and protective factors among young people living in urban disadvantage. The theoretical framework used is based on the positivism paradigm, in this early stage study.

Methods: The study design is cross-sectional and has employed a quantitative approach using self-reporting validated instruments which provide a numeric description of a sample of young people living in urban disadvantage, which may be statistically generalized to similar populations. These instruments include the KIDSCREEN 27, AUDIT, Children's Depression Inventory – short version, Rutgers Alcohol Problem Index and ESPAD 2015 sub sections.

Participants are aged 15-17 years old from six designated disadvantaged schools and two Youth Reach centres (N=308). Explicit written consent was secured from all parents/guardians and students. Ethical approval has been granted for this study.

Results/findings: To date 308 young people have been surveyed. Preliminary result indicate the levels of alcohol use; prevalence, frequency, motivations, alcohol behaviours and HRQoL of young people, living in urban disadvantage.

Impact/Outcomes: The results will present a more comprehensive platform to inform prevention and harm reduction, specific to young people living in urban disadvantage.

Keywords: Young People, Urban disadvantage, Alcohol

References

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Angelo Simoes, TU Dublin

Design, implementation and assessment of an emotional intelligence coaching program for second-level Irish students and its impact on emotional and social development and academic achievement.

Background: As per recent guidelines issued by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Irish second level schools are mandated to provide 300 hours of timetabled engagement related to the promotion of wellbeing across the junior cycle curriculum. An indicative syllabus for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) has been devised covering several aspects of wellbeing such as being social, being confident, and being positive about learning. There are myriad means by which students could be enabled to develop these skills and schools have been given autonomy with respect to the manner in which they teach this syllabus and the relative amount of time they spend focusing on each domain. However, implementation challenges of this type of instruction have been reported (Doyle, 2017; NCCA, 2008; Nohilly & Farrelly, 2017; Department of Education and Skills, 2019). Although information as to the overall state of wellbeing instruction in Irish Junior Cycle is scarce, many recent reports from the Department of Education and Skills (2019) show that there is the need to help schools in improving methodologies for and evaluation of SPHE delivery. Teachers previously reported that specific programmes implemented within the SPHE curriculum can help its delivery (NCCA, 2008). Furthermore, a considerable body of research has demonstrated that emotional and social skills coaching can be effectively delivered in second level classroom settings (Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007; Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczak, & Hansenne, 2009; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, 2011) and that doing so can have a positive impact on students' academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). Considering this, the present research aims at designing, implementing and testing the effectiveness and impact of a coaching program to develop emotional and social skills within second-level Irish SPHE classes. At the present, the research is transitioning from program's design to its first implementation in a post-primary school.

Methods: This study will employ a mixed-method embedded design to test and understand the effectiveness of a classroom-based emotional intelligence (EI) program. It includes a non-blind, two-arm, pre-post, cluster randomized controlled trial to evaluate the delivery of EI training to second-level students and its effectiveness in increasing social and emotional skills and academic grades, when compared to regular SPHE classes. It also includes qualitative techniques to gather and analyze the perceptions of students, teachers and Principal about the program's impact.

Results/findings: This research contributes to the literature with information on the development of emotional and social skills in Irish students. Additionally, it also gathers important information on teachers' and students' perceptions of SPHE implementation, a current research gap in the Irish context. The current research design also includes a wide range of implementation measures that will help track and explain the intended (and unintended) outcomes of the program, hopefully contributing with an example of robust program evaluation.

Impact/Outcomes: This research has the potential to improve young teenager students' emotional and social wellbeing and help them achieve academically.



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Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; emotional and social wellbeing; academic achievement; soft skills

References:

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Norah Sweetman, Trinity College Dublin

"up2talk"- An interactive programme to enhance the social-emotional skills of teenagers affected by domestic violence

Background: The rationale for this (completed) active research study was an extensive professional experience of the negative impact that living with domestic violence had on every aspect of adolescent development. The primary aim was to explore the effectiveness of a specially tailored social emotional learning (SEL) programme in enhancing the SEL, and awareness around the effects of trauma, for teenagers affected by domestic violence. The negative effects of living with such violence have been established in research.(1)

Methods: Exploration into the community and education based services available for young victims informed the research design. The active research approach resulted in a ten week, multimedia group programme called 'up2talk'. This interactive programme was completed with five teenage victims. The model used was 'plan-do-review'; the activities and pace of engagement were shaped by the participants' feedback.(2)

Data was collected by semi-structured interviews, individual and group reviews, observations of the group process by both facilitators, and interpretation of their artefacts and activities by participants. Mothers were also interviewed. Thematic analysis was used and data stored in 'nvivo'.

Results/findings: A dense level of secrecy, shame and self-blame permeated their experiences, including intra family and in counseling settings. These effects were significantly relieved by the programme as per participants' and parents' reports and research studies. (2).

This research highlights the need for social-emotional learning, (SEL), as a vital element in the initial naming and recognition of trauma, the reduction of self-blame and shame and the choice to seek help for young people. The ability of young participants to choose and regulate their engagement was also evident.(3)

Impact/Outcomes: This is an advanced use of SEL to improve well-being, and communication skills and maintain these changes for a target group. The effectiveness of SEL has been identified in mainstream schools.(4).

Keywords: young people, domestic violence, SEL



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Deborah Webster, Queen's University Belfast

"Everyone looks perfect on Instagram". *Social media use and subjective wellbeing: the perspective of young people.*

Background: Young people are going online more, at younger ages and in more diverse ways (Livingstone et al., 2014) as social networking sites have now become ubiquitous in their lives (de Vries et al., 2016). This study will investigate the impact that communicating by social networking sites has on their subjective wellbeing, defined by The National Children's Bureau as "a state of positive mental health and wellness" (Weare, 2015).

Research is in its early stages as although data has been collected in two schools it is anticipated that two more schools will be recruited. The aim of the study is to answer the research question, "Is there a relationship between the use of online social networking sites and the subjective wellbeing of adolescents?"

Methods: Four focus groups (2 male and 2 female) of year ten students in Northern Ireland (13 and 14 years old) were recruited. The young people were asked about their use of social networking sites and if they think it affects aspects of their subjective wellbeing.

The challenges encountered of conducting the focus groups have been creating an environment where the young people are able to be honest and open and the challenge for the researcher to remain in a neutral position.

Focus group transcripts will be analysed thematically using NVivo software.

Results/findings: Initial findings show that using social networking sites can pose a risk to subjective wellbeing in terms of body image, self-esteem, feelings of loneliness and sleep. Initial findings also indicate that although not exclusively, these risks are more likely to affect girls than boys.

Impact/Outcomes: Education is needed to inform young people, their parents and teachers of the potential risks to their wellbeing posed by using social networking sites.

Keywords: social media; young people; subjective wellbeing

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Health and Illness in children's lives

Fatimah Alsaggaf, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin / Nursing College, King Abdul-Aziz University

A systematic review of the impact of chronic pain on adolescents' school functioning and pain management in school setting.

Background: Chronic pain that persists for more than three months and continues beyond the normal period of tissue healing is considered as a significant health problem for children and adolescents. Chronic pain has a significant impact on children and adolescents' daily activities and school functioning including school attendance, academic performance/achievement, academic competence, school activities, and social relationships. This review critically synthesises empirical studies on the impact of chronic pain on adolescents' school functioning and pain management interventions in school settings for adolescents with chronic pain.

Methods: A comprehensive search of seven databases; Medline, CINAHL, PsycINFO, ERIC, ScienLO, Cochrane Library, and EMBASE databases, was conducted which resulted in 25 studies.

Results/findings (if applicable): The studies on the outcome of school functioning reported that chronic pain has a significant negative influence on school attendance, academic performance/achievement, academic competence, physical activities, and social functioning. However, other studies indicated that adolescents with chronic pain had better academic performance and competence than healthy peers. Furthermore that chronic pain was shown to not affect older adolescents' social functioning. Studies revealed limited guidelines on how to manage pain in school settings and limited resources. To overcome the struggles of adolescents face in the school settings, school personnel need to work in tandem with medical team and parents to enable an appropriate response to adolescents' chronic pain.

Impact/Outcomes: This systematic review will inform the school personnel about the importance of developing and evaluating formal written policies that facilitate pain management in the school setting and maximize adolescents' school functioning.

Keywords: chronic pain, adolescents, school functioning, pain management

Nicola Lagoda, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin

A systematic review of healthcare provider-patient-parent communication and decision-making within pediatric healthcare.

Background: Literature on communication with adolescents during medical encounters has primarily focused on dyadic interactions, leaving the influence of the third person proportionately unexplored [1] and manifesting the need for more research on paediatric triadic communication. This systematic review aims to evaluate and synthesise empirical studies of triadic communication and decision-making encounters within children's healthcare. The objectives were to:

1. Identify and describe the roles taken on by healthcare provider– patient–parent during healthcare encounters.
2. Explore the facilitators and barriers that occur during triadic communication in healthcare encounters and to investigate interventions in the area of triadic communication.

Methods: The search included studies of children (< 18 years old) accompanied by companions. Using key search terms, a search of CINHALL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO was conducted for studies



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published from 2009-2019. Search results were screened for irrelevant articles and duplicates. An eligibility checklist was developed to guide the selection of appropriate articles. The search identified 2,781 articles, of which 1,927 were selected for further review. Full text was obtained for 163 papers and 27 studies were included in the review.

Both inductive and deductive data extraction techniques were employed. Qualitative studies (n=13) were analysed inductively to establish four broad themes and five sub-themes. Key findings from the quantitative studies (n=9) were extracted using a standard format. Data was extracted by one author and crosschecked for accuracy by another author.

Results/findings: The emergent themes are: Dyadic interactions; Communication interventions; Types of communication and acknowledging children; and Triadic communication which produced the following sub-themes: topics discussed and information sharing; dynamics and turn taking; discourse and characteristics; relationships within triads; Barriers and facilitators to triadic communication.

Impact/Outcomes: The review hopes to identify factors to promote inclusive healthcare encounters and improve provider- patient- parent communication.

Keywords: triadic communication, pediatric care, parent-patient-provider,

References:

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Gillian Motyer, School of Psychology, University College Dublin

Considering the experience of parents who have a child diagnosed with adolescent idiopathic scoliosis: A systematic review

Background: New challenges are introduced to the parenting role when a child is diagnosed with a serious health condition. Parents' whose children develop scoliosis, a lateral curvature of the spine, face challenges such as managing the progression of their child's condition and making important treatment decisions, which could include invasive spinal surgery. The current review was undertaken to provide comprehensive understanding of parents' experiences, identify their key concerns and needs, and assist health professionals in supporting them in their parenting role.

Methods: A systematic, mixed-studies literature review was conducted in line with PRISMA guidelines. The MEDLINE, CINAHL Plus, and PsycINFO databases were searched for relevant studies published in 2000 and thereafter. Studies that focused on parents' experiences in relation to adolescent idiopathic scoliosis were included for review. The MMAT was used to assess the quality of study reporting and design, and a narrative synthesis of the literature was conducted.

Results/findings: A total of 13 eligible studies were included for review. Despite variability in study design, three main themes were identified across the literature which related to parents' information needs, their treatment concerns, and psychological well-being. We considered implications for improving the support of this parent group, as well as directions for the current PhD project and future research.

Impact/Outcomes: This systematic review provides guidance for improving the experience of parents, as they play an important role in managing their child's healthcare and supporting their child over the course of scoliosis treatment.



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Keywords: Parental Experiences, Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis, Systematic Review

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Grace O'Sullivan, School of Psychology / Centre for Pain Research, NUI Galway

The influence of social context on 'everyday' pain experiences in childhood

Background: Paediatric research focuses primarily on clinical pains (e.g. vaccinations), rather than 'everyday' bumps and scrapes around the home. The presence of social support can influence pain behaviour^[1], particularly between parent and child. Naturalistic research is difficult, as suitable methodologies are lacking. We compared two home-based methods for conducting naturalistic observations of 'everyday' pains, against an established methodology for day-care observations.

Methods: Families with a child aged 2.5-5 years were video-recorded at home, during a typical day (maximum three hours), with or without a researcher present. Children in day-care were directly observed by researchers (maximum three hours). Pain events were rated by child and parent using pain-face scales^[2]. Parent distress was reported on numeric rating scales^[3]. Researchers completed the Dalhousie pain scale (while present or watching recordings)^[4]. Recruitment was difficult for the home-recording methodologies, and parents reported discomfort with being filmed, though they reported their child's behaviour was no different. There was a lack of data, as some children experienced no pain events, or equipment difficulties occurred (too few cameras; battery issues). For our current study, we introduced a diary-keeping exercise instead of camera recordings, to overcome these issues.

Results/findings: At home, 13 children ($M_{age}=45.4$ months) were observed, experiencing 14 pain events. Pain events were more frequent ($p=.045$), and child distress was increased ($p=.016$) when additional people were present. Children had lower control over pain events when parents were present ($p=.043$). In day-care, 32 children ($M_{age}=48.4$ months) experienced 44 pain events. Children in day-care exhibited decreased distress ($p=.00$) and lower personal control ($p=0.00$) than those at home. In both settings, caregivers engaged in comforting behaviours, regardless of child age or sex ($p=.003$).

Impact/Outcomes: 'Everyday' pains offer valuable opportunities to observe how children learn pain-management skills^[5]. We are currently exploring the influence of parental social support on "everyday" childhood pain experiences.

Keywords: Paediatric pain; social support; home observation; video-recording

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Stimulating Education

Maggie Martin, School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin

Evaluation of Irish primary school road safety education: Impact on safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Background: The aim is to investigate predictors of children's reported risky road use behaviours utilising the Theory of Planned Behaviour and evaluate the impact of the RSA primary school road safety education programmes on children's road safety knowledge, attitudes. The primary objective is to provide a theoretical and evidence-based approach to road safety education in primary school children.

Methods: Phase 1 of research has utilised a between group quasi-experimental design.

1. Sixth Class children age 11-12 (received RSA programmes)
2. Sixth Class Control Group who did not receive any formal road safety education programmes.

Sample: 1000 children from schools matched by gender and urban/rural location.

Children in both groups were administered:

1. The Adolescent Road User Behaviour Questionnaire (ARBQ)
2. Bespoke questionnaire on RSA content, patterns of road use and demographic information.

Differences in knowledge, attitudes and reported behaviour will be compared with ANOVA and Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM). The 43 item ARBQ will be validated and reduced to a smaller set of items for use on 11 to 12 years population in Ireland. This shorter questionnaire will be used in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Predictors of road use behaviour in Children aged 11-12 years will be assessed through:

1. A questionnaire based on a literature review on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and questions based on focus groups with 11-12 year olds.
2. The 21 Item ARBQ.

Low return of consent forms overcome by extending original sample of schools.

Results/findings: This research will further the literature on the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to understand the road use behaviour of 11 to 12 year old children and provide a model to design evidence based education programmes.

Impact/Outcomes: Age appropriate road safety knowledge will help reduce the risk of serious injury and fatality in young road users.

Keywords: Road Safety, Attitudes, Behaviour, Theory of Planned Behaviour

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Aoife Merrins, Dublin City University

The effectiveness of a co-constructed oral narrative intervention to support pupils' narrative retell in linguistically diverse junior infant classrooms

Background: This research establishes an oral narrative intervention to support English Language Learners' (ELLS) oral language skills, which can contribute to later academic success. ELLs constitute 11% of the primary pupil population in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2016) and are at-risk of academic challenges due to lacking language proficiency (Cummins, 2000). This project implements the integrated Primary Language Curriculum (PLC) (NCCA, 2015) through the integration of both English and Irish storybooks in junior infant classrooms. The co-constructed element facilitates teacher feedback on the intervention-in-action and on necessary adjustments. It aims to enhance pupils' oral narrative retell skills, trial the integration of English and Irish storybooks to implement the PLC and provide professional development (PD) for teachers. It prioritises oral language instruction to support academic language proficiency, to evaluate the PD experiences for teachers and to determine pupil outcomes through a treatment and comparison study. This is early stage research, awaiting ethical approval for data collection from November 2019 – June 2020.

Methods: This study employs Educational Design Research in two phases, the first concerned with intervention usability and the second concerned with intervention impact. Participants include 9 Junior Infant Classes (>50% ELLs), 9 Teaching Teams (1 mainstream + 3 support teachers), and >270 Junior Infant Pupils.

Qualitative data include Observation Schedules, Researcher Reflective Logs, Teacher Reflective Logs, Semi-Structured Interviews, Focus Groups.

Quantitative data include Parent Questionnaire, Teacher Questionnaire, and Narrative Assessment (Petersen & Spencer, 2016).

Both thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) and narrative language measures inform data analysis.

Results/findings: This research anticipates developing an oral narrative intervention suitable for linguistically diverse junior infant classrooms, fostering stronger narrative retell outcomes for pupils in treatment groups and providing PD for participating teachers.

Impact/Outcomes: Contribute important knowledge for Irish educators on how to support pupils' narrative retell in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Determine the feasibility of integrating English and Irish storybooks to implement the PLC.

Keywords : Oral language, English Language Learners (ELLS), Linguistic Diversity, Narrative Intervention, Professional Development,

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Emer Emily Neenan, Trinity College Dublin

"It's Our Future – Ask Us: Centring Children's Voice in Earth Science & Climate Change Education Research"

Background: The world is facing a future of rising temperature, rising sea levels, and rising incidences of natural disasters. Key decisions in environmental, scientific, and educational policy taken now will determine what kind of world today's schoolchildren will inherit when they come of age in an era of climate change. This research aims to measure student engagement with and understanding of key Earth Science topics, including climate change, using a children's rights based approach derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This project is currently in data-collection.

Methods: This research uses Children's Research Advisory Groups (CRAGs), a method developed to meaningfully centre children's voice in research that affects them (Lundy & McEvoy, 2009). CRAGs consisting of representative students were convened and contributed to the development of the research instrument over two phases. The research instrument – an online survey – was then piloted in one school. Following the pilot phase, the survey will now be sent to a wide selection of schools in Ireland, aimed at capturing post-Junior Certificate perspectives on Earth Science. The survey is composed of two sections; a section exploring students' attitudes and level of interest in Earth Science, and a section measuring their understanding of key geoscientific concepts. This latter section incorporates items from the Geoscience Concept Inventory (Libarkin et al, 2006) and the Climate Change Concept Inventory (Jarrett et al, 2012).

Results/findings: Results from the pilot echo observations from the CRAGs; this generation of teenagers is concerned about climate change and wants to learn more about the Earth and how to protect it. They are particularly aware of the interdependence between people and the Earth. This is supported by the recent School Strikes For Climate / Fridays For Future movement, which has seen thousands of Irish school students protesting for climate action and calling for more climate change education in schools. The disposition of the next generation of citizens, as future voters and as future scientists, is vital if Ireland is to meet the challenges of rising temperature, rising sea levels, and rising incidences of natural disasters. It is hoped this research will facilitate a better understanding of this crucial generation's attitudes and needs, and potentially the effective expansion of Earth Science education in Irish schools.

Impact/Outcomes: Current Irish school students will face the consequences of climate change as they come of age, but crucial decisions about climate change mitigation are being taken now, before they have come of age; this research aims to centre their voices in education research that will affect them, and argues that their voices should be included in climate change research generally.



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Keywords: Earth Science; Science Education; Climate Change; Children's Rights

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Fiona Nic Fhionnlaioich, Queen's University, Belfast; Froebel Department, Maynooth University

Children's experiences of learning the Irish language in English-medium schools

Background: The aim of this study is to investigate pupils' experiences of learning the Irish language in English-medium primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. The objectives were to give children an opportunity to share their experiences of learning Irish in school and to compare the experiences of first class children with those of fifth class. In light of curriculum change and in advance of the full implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum (NCCA, 2015) this study is timely in order to generate data on pupils' experiences of learning the Irish language.

The theoretical framework applies the three dimensions of education of qualification, socialisation and subjectification (Biesta, 2013) to the theories of second and additional language learning. This research is at an advanced stage.

Methods: The study is qualitative, based within the social constructivist paradigm, using participatory, child-centred methods. The participants were children in first and fifth class in three English-medium primary schools. Whole class and small group participatory methods were used over three classroom visits. Following transcription, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse the data. Ethical procedures were followed throughout. Some practical considerations when researching with children in whole class settings will be discussed.

This study is being conducted as part of the EdD programme in Queen's University Belfast.

Results/findings: Findings in this presentation will focus on the socialisation dimension, discussing the children's cultural awareness, language awareness and identity with regards to the Irish language. The implications of these findings for me as a teacher educator will be explored and considerations for curriculum development and implementation noted.

Impact/Outcomes: The children's experiences documented in this study will inform my practice and course design, which should impact on student teachers' approaches to teaching Irish which should then influence classroom practices.

Keywords: children's voices, Irish language, primary education.

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Migration

Rong Bao, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

The lived experience of young migrant mothers in China

Background: There are around 245 million rural-to-urban migrants in China, among whom around 35% are female, and young women aged 20-29 are especially mobile (NBS, 2017). In recent years, many researchers have attempted to explore the life of young female workers or migrant mothers who leave their child behind in the rural homes to work in the cities. Young migrant mothers are rarely studied.

These young girls come to the city by themselves, and become a mother shortly after arriving in the city, which makes their experience different from the female migrants who have already become mothers before migrating to the city. Also, in China, as rural migrants, they do not have access to many urban public services. Their transitions into motherhood can be especially overwhelming because they lack the resources and social capital as a young migrant and as a young mother.

Their migration, transition to motherhood and transition to adulthood are closely intertwined. Therefore, this study will adopt a life course approach and aims to understand how their life is actually lived as a young woman, a migrant, and a mother.

Methods: Twenty migrant mothers, aged 18-25 will be recruited from one migrant community in Beijing with the assistance of a local NGO.

The participants will be invited to take part in two rounds of interviews: (a) life-history interviews, with a focus on their past experiences. (b) in-depth interviews, with a focus on their present life.

Results/findings: Overall, this study will not only contribute to a better understanding of the lived experience of young migrant mothers in China, but also contribute to the integration of life course approach and migration studies.

Impact/Outcomes: The research aims to listen to the voice of the young migrant mothers, and make recommendations for improvement in social support to assist young migrant women's transition to motherhood.

Keywords: Migrant mother; young mother; lived experience; life course approach; rural-to-urban migration

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Diego Castillo Goncalves, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin

A socio-legal exploration on the construction of separated children's credibility assessment in Refugee Status Determination



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Background: This paper is part of larger, ongoing PhD research. It explores constructions of credibility-assessment within separated children's international protection claims. As such, it investigates the manner through which children's narratives are reasoned within the asylum decision-making process, while interrogating the potential effects of such procedure by virtue of socio-legal analysis.

Methods: To achieve this, I consider concepts from the refugee law and children's rights literature, such as *Deterrence* and *Agency*, while providing for a new framework, namely, that of *epistemic credibility*. Part I of the paper analyses the notion of credibility within refugee law, tracing a parallel from its *operational origins* in the refugee regime until its more current state. It follows with an analysis of how some of the external, procedural actors (as I frame it) present within the procedure influence the construction of identities of children seeking protection. Part II provides for an added framework, that of *epistemic credibility*, exploring the ways in which decision-makers construct knowledge when assessing separated children's testimonies. Part III tests out this framework in a jurisdictional case study, by scrutinising, through manual coding, separated child international protection appeal cases reported by the UK Upper Tribunal.

Results/findings: By theorizing the epistemic credibility framework, I argue that moving towards maximum objectivity in the process of analysing credibility might have a negative impact upon decision-making, and on the lived experiences of children and young people in the asylum procedure. I also find, through the jurisdictional case study, that adjudicators' assessments of credibility have reshaped the way in how we conceptualise the refugee narrative, including that of separated children seeking protection.

Impact/Outcomes: I conclude the paper by arguing the added value of this proposed framework to the scholarship, including the possible impact of this in making the issue visible to the population affected by it.

Keywords: separated children; children's rights; migration; refugee and immigration law; socio-legal studies

Amy Stapleton, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

Participatory Action Research with Separated Young people: Overcoming dilemmas on the field.

Background: Aged-out separated children (those who are outside their country of origin, without their parent or customary/ legal guardian and have recently turned eighteen) confront significant challenges as they navigate the transition to adulthood due to a lack of family support and because of their distinctly limited access to state support. It is imperative when developing new policies and attempting to resolve an issue as pressing as the displacement of people across Europe, that the contexts and concerns of those most affected are among the informing factors. Despite this, there is a lack of research on this highly marginalised youth population and their voices are rarely heard or considered. This research aims to share the perspectives of aged-out separated children by gaining a detailed understanding of their experiences of the transition to adulthood using a qualitative Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach underpinned by critical theory. The research examines the experiences of aged-out separated children in two European countries: Ireland and France.

Methods: A PAR methodology has been chosen as it provides the participants with a framework for encouraging social change and collaboration by supporting them to co-create new knowledge while reflecting on their own realities. In both contexts, participants are invited to participate in one in-



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depth interview and a group project. However, despite of the benefits of using a PAR approach for social work research, the use of PAR, particularly youth PAR, presents several methodological, ethical and practical challenges. The aim of this paper is to reflect upon the use of a PAR approach with twenty aged-out separated children within the French context and to consider how the challenges associated with the implementation of PAR can be addressed.

Impact/ Outcomes: The research provided a space for participants to actively participate in the research process. The participants used this space to plan and implement six social actions related to their experiences of the transition to adulthood. This process supported them to share their experiences which each other and the wider public, learn from each other, develop a support network and participate in two international events.

Key words: Participatory action research, transition to adulthood, separated young people

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Spaces of Learning and Participation

Carolann Bargary O'Neill, Limerick Institute of Technology; University of Limerick

The Only Exercise They're Getting is their Thumbs': The impact of ICT on Irish Children

Background: In recent years, children have become armed with an array of technological devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops that are in turn saturated with applications and games. Parallel with their immersion in an online world has been a growing debate as to the dangers that ICT engagement and online activity can present for children. (Ferneding 2003, Turkle 2013). Much of the deliberation has centred on the 'screen time' debate (Livingstone, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016) and 'gaming disorders' (World Health Organisation, 2018).

Drawing on a current PhD study (at an advanced stage) exploring the use of ICT for learning by Irish Primary School children, this paper presents the findings that relate to the concerns regarding children use of digital technologies as reported by children, teachers and parents.

Methods: Taking an interpretivist position, this study adopted a qualitative approach employing the use of semi-structured interviews (Kvale and Brinkman 2009) with parents and teachers and focus groups (Kitzinger 1994) with primary school children. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and uploaded to NVivo.

Results/findings: Utilising Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and a Thematic Analysis Framework (Braun and Clarke 2006; 2013), the study reveals the concerns faced by children, parents and teachers regarding children's digital activities. Incidents of tantrums, addiction, sleep deprivation, eyesight difficulties and concentration difficulties were reported.

Impact/Outcomes: This study illuminates a highly complex and controversial phenomenon recognising that children also have concerns regarding the impact of digital technology use on their health and wellbeing. The study also acknowledges the child as an active agent in his or her own development, that is, "... a growing, dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the environment in which it resides" (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.21).

Keywords: Digital Technologies; Children; Health and Wellbeing; Ecological Systems Theory; Thematic Analysis;

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Melissa Bonotto, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway

Child with additional needs requires additional support at the right time

Background: Early intervention and the rationale that timing is crucial to support children and families' needs are a pressing subject (Devaney 2011, 2013). This study aims to examine the concept of early intervention as 'happening early in the child's life' within the Family Support preschool context. It is embedded in the Bioecological Model (Bronfenbrenner/Morris, 2006) which establishes the importance of proximal process as engines of development: the PPCT model. So child's development at this research is studied considering every level of the child's context and its interconnections, under the perspective of each person characteristics, its interactions with other people and environment and indications of time. It is also guided by the Irish National Policy Framework for Children (2014).

Methods: Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with parents and focus group with preschool teachers. The Mosaic approach (Clark 2005) was used to capture preschool children with additional needs' views and experiences. Quantitative data was collected through the My Family Star (Early Years) scale with parents. Approved by the NUI Galway Ethics committee, particularly attention was given to children's' assent to being involved in this study.

Results/findings: Preschool children with additional views on what is meaningful/significant for them to have their additional needs supported are exciting preliminary findings to be presented. For example, interacting with other children and adults and spending time outside, mainly with nature.

Impact/Outcomes: Every child with an additional need should have the right to access additional support at an early stage if is to every child to thrive. According to this study, offering early intervention to children with additional needs is giving them more opportunities to develop and grow and to develop a strong and positive self-esteem. (study preliminary findings).

Keywords: preschool children, meaningful interactions, early intervention, family support, additional needs

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Clara Hoyne, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

Does the Home Learning Environment (HLE) impact on Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood?



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Background: There is growing evidence that socioemotional development is critical for school readiness and future educational outcomes. This research examined which factors in the home had positive associations with socioemotional development in early childhood.

Methods: This study is a secondary analysis of the second and third waves of the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) longitudinal Study. It is a government funded study of children from a nationally representative probability sample. Data from 3 and 5-year olds in the infant cohort of the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) study was used. The GUI study asked mothers what play and learning activities they engaged in with their children in the home. Socio emotional development was measured using the parent report Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) at age 3 and age 5, and the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) at age 5.

Results/findings: Findings indicate that at age 3 and at age 5 activities in the Home Learning Environment (HLE) were positively and significantly associated with various aspects of socioemotional development, particularly for prosocial behaviour and self-control. The HLE made a significant contribution to predicting socio-emotional development scores, even after other factors were controlled in regression models. Maternal factors, such as warmth, positive quality of the mother child relationship, age and education, contributed more to the regression models than paternal and family factors.

Impact/Outcomes: A rich home learning environment is important for later development, but parenting style and positive aspects of parent-child relationship are also critical for socioemotional development.

Keywords: Home Learning environment (HLE), socioemotional development, early childhood

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Deirdre McGrath, TU Dublin

Participation in Early Childhood Settings

Background: This piece of research is at the proposal stage and will be undertaken over the next two years. Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in children's views on the matters which affect them (Lundy and McEvoy, 2012), influenced by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, there is a lack of research on what participation means for children in early childhood



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settings (Correia et al., 2019). Similarly, we know little about early years educators' ideas about participation in early childhood settings or the practices they may engage in to enhance the participation of children in their settings. The aim of the research is to look at the idea of participation from the perspectives of both children (aged 3-5) and practitioners in early childhood settings in Ireland. It is expected that a number of theoretical approaches including the sociology of childhood and children's rights will influence this research.

Methods: This will be a qualitative study where data will be collected from both young children and early year's educators. It is intended to draw from the Mosaic approach to consult with young children. The Mosaic approach is a framework for listening to young children where creative and child centred methods of data collection such as photography, drawings, tours, and conversations (Clark, 2005) are used. In-depth interviewing will be used to collect data from early years educators. Areas of concern at this point in the process include ethical issues about researching with young children and the approach to the analysis of the creative materials produced by young children.

Results/findings: This research is important as it will highlight children's own perspectives about their participation within early childhood settings.

Impact/Outcomes: This research will shed light on practices, which facilitate children's participation in early childhood settings.

Keywords: participation, early childhood, children's rights, children's voice

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Christina O'Keefe, Institute of Education, Dublin City University

The importance of play in enhancing the learning of pupils on the Autism Spectrum (AS)

Background: There is increasing recommendations from both national and international legislation surrounding the use of play based approaches to learning. This includes the implementation of the Aistear programme within the Irish educational context (NCCA 2009). However, few supports are currently in place to promote the play of pupils on the AS. This is surprising given that difficulties in play remain a core feature of ASD (Barnett 2018).

Lack of play skills may restrict children's access to essential aspects of development including language and social skills (Carrero et al. 2014) and further exacerbate the isolation often experienced by pupils on the AS (Hess 2006). As a result, educators have a responsibility to support the play of these children. In recent years, some recommendations have been proposed to facilitate the play of pupils on the AS. However, the majority of this research has been conducted in clinical settings as opposed to classroom contexts.

This investigation is at a very early stage in development and aims to identify the importance of play in enhancing the learning of pupils on the AS.



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Methods: This study will be based on a design based research methodology to promote the play of young children on the AS within mainstream educational contexts. Participants will include children with varying profiles across the AS. This is important given that much previous research in this area is based on 'high-functioning' pupils on the AS.

This investigation will adopt a mixed-methods approach to adequately address the research aims. Quantitative measures will identify pupils' performance levels in play. Qualitative measures will be employed to obtain the perspectives of practitioners and pupils. Children can offer meaningful insight into their educational experiences (Humphrey and Lewis 2008), an area often neglected in the Irish research context (DCYA 2011).

Areas of concern include the adaptation of appropriate measures to observe and assess play given its inherent and dispositional qualities. In addition, obtaining children's views in an accessible manner remains one of the major challenges of this investigation.

Impact/Outcomes: One of the proposed outcomes of this investigation is to support teachers in enhancing the play of young children on the AS. This, in turn, will enable pupils to reach their unique potential and increase opportunities for learning and development.

Keywords: ASD, Aistear, Play, Early Years

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