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IMPLEMENTING AISTEAR THROUGH A SÍOLTA LENS

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Abstract

This paper examines how a continuous professional development programme supported fourteen community-based Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres in two disadvantaged areas in Ireland to implement *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (Aistear)* (NCCA 2009) using *Síolta, The Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (Síolta)* (CECDE 2006).

Action research was chosen as a research methodology as its process of identifying a problem, planning an intervention, implementing the intervention and evaluating the outcome (McNiff and Whitehead 2006), allowed for ownership of both the process and change. In addition, action research is closely related to the *Síolta* Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation (CECDE 2006), which ECCE settings are expected to implement. This would help the practitioners develop the skills needed to implement *Aistear* and to learn how to improve teaching and learning through the successful management of innovation and change.

The majority of the participants found the programme interesting, easy to understand and useful to their practice in the future. There was an emphasis on 'learning for practice' with participants mentioning that they had learned new ways of interacting with children along with different ideas that could be implemented in their setting. They also felt that they had a greater understanding of *Aistear*.

Using the *Síolta* Standards as prompts for reflective thinking, *Aistear* as the theory with which they could compare their practice and subsequently action planning to improve this practice helped participants to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their settings.

Bibliography

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