

Make a Difference for Young Children



Established in 1999, HighScope Ireland is a non profit-making body. HighScope Ireland is based in Dublin and Fermanagh at Early Years - the organisation for young children. The Institute is one of several HighScope Institutes throughout the world. It is accountable to the HighScope Educational Research Foundation based in Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA. HighScope Ireland works to support children, families and practitioners through shared control in active learning situations. The Institute employs an Operations Manager, a HighScope Consultant and a team of HighScope Endorsed Trainers who bring together representatives from the voluntary, statutory, independent and community sectors that wish to enhance the quality of early childhood care and education and provide a range of training which is responsive to local need throughout Ireland, with clear linkages to existing curriculum and quality frameworks, utilising the HighScope approach.

The central belief of the HighScope approach, training and ongoing support is that children construct their own learning by doing and being involved in working with materials, people and ideas. It is a quality accredited approach to early childhood care and education which has been shaped and developed by research and practice over a forty year period that identifies and builds on children's strengths, interests and abilities. The HighScope curriculum is used internationally in a variety of early childhood settings and produces a range of positive outcomes and results for practitioners, managers, children and in terms of family involvement.

Budget 2016 contained much to be welcomed in terms of commitments to early childhood care and education. We strongly contend that the present economic climate be taken as a key opportunity to seize upon opportunities to work and think differently, to build upon recent successes and to progress and maximise on evidence-based excellence and innovation through a clear focus on high quality early care and education, building up through the educational, training and employability pathways.

This is a vital opportunity for us to make our voices heard on the importance of the early childhood sector to young children, their families and their communities. The following are some of the key issues regarding early childhood education and care in Ireland. Please make your local representatives aware of the following to encourage them to press for action and **MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.**

Make a Difference for Young Children

WE NEED:

- Investment in proven, outcomes driven and evidence based high quality early childhood development, health and wellbeing, family support and early intervention and prevention services and programmes across Ireland.
- Public expenditure on early care and education services over the next Programme for Government period to be brought up to the OECD average of 0.8%, in order to improve quality, accessibility and affordability of provision for all children.
- A focus on high quality services for under 3s as well as over 3s.
- Inclusive services for all children, including children with disabilities, Traveller and Roma children.
- A review of the funding structures, supports, systems and rates required to ensure high-quality, affordable, accessible early care and education provision for all children.
- Strengthened family (combined maternity and paternity parental) paid leave policies so a child can spend at least the first 12 months at home with a parent and towards the average in other European countries of 18 months' paid leave to parents.
- An adequately resourced and supported training, qualifications and professional development focus on the entire workforce across sectors working with young children, which overhauls how the profession, remuneration, training and career development are valued and viewed and also recognises the experience many staff will already possess.
- Ireland's high level of child poverty to be addressed urgently as a central issue, including the role of high quality early childhood services, in the next Programme for Government.
- The integration of a child rights, Early Childhood Development and participation focus in all policy sectors, initiatives, legislative and non-legislative work, in recognition of the UNCRC, UN Sustainable Development Goal commitments and other European Commission recommendations.

"This brings everything together. I had learned of the benefits of a child lead approach but when I tried to do it I ran into all kinds of difficulties. HighScope taught me how to put things into practice in the room and now all my previous training comes together for me." **HighScope training participant, Dublin**

For further information please visit
www.early-years.org/highscope