Launch of the Intercultural Education Strategy 16/9/2010

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- Brief history of developments in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Sector
- Awareness of intercultural issues in practice frameworks
- Implementation in the ECCE sector
- Challenges
Investment in ECCE

- Sustained programme of investment since 2000
  - Creation of infrastructure
  - Development of regulation and inspection- Sector regulated first in 1997
  - 2006 - Development of Síolta, the National Quality Framework (CECDE)
  - 2006 - Publication of Diversity and Equality Guidelines for childcare providers (OMCYA)
  - Development of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA)
- Universal pre-school provision introduced in January 2010
Awareness of intercultural issues in practice frameworks and in Regulations

- **Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 5**
  - A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure that each child’s learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the service through the provision of the appropriate opportunities, experiences, activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child and the child’s **cultural context**
Síolta – the National Quality Framework for early Childhood Education

- Children from birth – 6 years
- Applicable across all settings where children aged birth to six are present
- Structured around:
  - Defining
  - Supporting
  - Assessing
- Mediated for ages and settings
Defining Quality with ِسیمَلَتَا

- Principles
- Standards
- Components
- Signposts for Reflection
- 'Think-abouts’
Promoting positive identities and a strong sense of belonging requires clearly defined policies, procedures and practice that empower every child and adult to develop a confident self and group identity and to have a positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others.
Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

- Aistear – Irish for ‘Journey’
- Provide all children with appropriately enriching, challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities
  - Children from birth to six years
  - Range of early childhood settings
  - Parents/guardians, childminders and practitioners

Published in October 2009
The Framework's themes

- Well-being
- Identity and Belonging
- Communicating
- Exploring and Thinking
Identity and Belonging

The theme of *Identity and Belonging* is about children developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community.
Identity and Belonging

- **Aim 1** Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories.

- **Aim 2** Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended.

- **Aim 3** Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.

- **Aim 4** Children will see themselves as capable learners.
Practice Frameworks - Implementation

1. The setting of sectoral standards for all awards in early childhood care and education to include Síolta and Aistear

2. Universal pre-school provision – providers have to adhere to the principles of Síolta

3. National Voluntary Childcare Organisations working with pre-school providers on quality improvement measures

1. OECD recommended that these guidelines be supported by capacity building activities to ensure that they are successfully implemented.

2. Dormant Accounts funding approved in 2010 – training programme for the workforce - Scheme co-ordinated through the City and County Childcare Committee Structure
Challenges

Participation: OECD research shows a poorer take-up amongst marginalised children and migrant children even where countries have a long established tradition of pre-school provision.

Meeting specific needs: OECD recommendation ‘the specific needs of immigrant children should not be overlooked; they should be addressed in all areas of the initiatives but especially through the language and socio-cultural development of the child through pedagogy and curriculum, training of teachers, and parental and community involvement’
Challenges

Workforce Development – 12% of the workforce have no qualifications; 41% have a qualification at Level 5 on the NFQ

Universal pre-school provision only introduced in January 2010. Ensuring quality of provision is of paramount importance
Thank You