



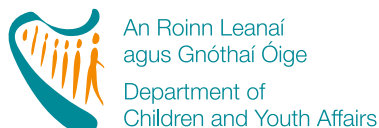
# Update on the NEYAI Evaluation and Dissemination Plans

Spring 2014

**NEYAI** National Early Years  
Access Initiative  
Promoting Better Outcomes for Children & Families

 **pobal**  
government supporting communities

# Update on the NEYAI Evaluation and Dissemination Plans Spring 2014



Pobal is a not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU. The Board is appointed by the Government of Ireland following consideration of proposals received from stakeholders of the Company and the National Social Partners.

Pobal's mission is to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality through integrated social and economic development within communities. Pobal encourages the piloting of new initiatives and we are committed to contributing to policy development through the lessons learnt from the programmes we manage.

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# Section 1

## Purpose of Publication

### 1.1 Introduction

This publication updates key audiences in the early years care and education sector on the final phase of implementation and wind-down of NEYAI. Definitive results from the national-level evaluation of the Initiative are in the course of being prepared. These will be produced in late spring and disseminated thereafter.

This document also contains initial information about project-level evaluation themes and dissemination plans. As information on more specific dates and events becomes available, it will be communicated by the team and by NEYAI projects to all interested parties.

NEYAI information is also contained on the Pobal website at [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie).

### 1.2 Background to NEYAI

#### A Partnership Initiative

The National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) is a collaborative partnership between The Atlantic Philanthropies, Mount Street Club Trust, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Early Years Education Policy Unit (DES) and Pobal. The last mentioned is the contractual entity for the governance, management and administration of the Initiative, which has an overall budget of €5.4 million for the period of 2010-14.

#### Aims of the Initiative

NEYAI aims to improve quality and practice within early years services for children (0-6 years) and their families living in disadvantaged areas. It does this through interagency collaboration and by developing innovative community-based models to respond to local needs. NEYAI works across a number of thematic areas with a strong focus on Síolta - the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDC, 2006) and Aistear - the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009). Both of these are seen as fundamental to the growth and development of quality in the provision of early years care and education. The rights of the child are the primary focus of NEYAI as it aims to ensure that each child is given the opportunity to reach his or her full potential and that obstacles to the realisation of this goal can be addressed in policy and practice.

#### Governance and Support Structures

Three structures support the implementation of NEYAI: the **Steering Group** ensures the overall strategic, decision making and operational direction of the Initiative; the **Evaluation & Learning Expert Advisory Group (ELEAG)** acts in an expert advisory capacity to the Steering Group on all aspects of evaluation; and the **NEYAI Learning Community** brings together Pobal staff, representatives from each project/consortium and the evaluation team to engage in dialogue, and share and disseminate learning from the project implementation to collectively influence policy.





## Capturing the Evidence through Robust Evaluation

NEYAI is a cohesive national initiative comprised of 11 local projects with differing thematic focuses and approaches. Evaluating individual projects could not capture the full potentiality or developmental impact of the Initiative as a whole; therefore, an external, national-level evaluation is a key strategic component of NEYAI to provide an evidence-base to inform policy and practice in early years education. In this way, the Initiative aspires to 'leave in place a sustainable legacy for the future'. The NEYAI Steering Group appointed a team of evaluators under the direction of Dr. Kieran McKeown to undertake a formative evaluation of the Initiative. An overview of the national evaluation approach, scope and methodology is provided in section 3.1 and at

[www.neyai-evaluation.ie](http://www.neyai-evaluation.ie).

## 11 NEYAI Projects – Themes and Focuses

Eleven projects from five counties are funded under NEYAI and they work collaboratively with a range of partners from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to achieve their objectives. They are located within **Children's Services Committee (CSC)** areas for reasons of strategic importance. Each of the selected projects has a specific focus under the following overarching thematic areas, although projects also work across themes:

### Training and Professional Development:

The focus of this theme is to enhance the quality and standard of childcare service provision through the professional development, training and up-skilling of staff. Projects working under this theme are

**Addressing Gaps between Training and Practice** (South Co Dublin), **The Professional Pedagogy Project** (Donegal), and **Quality through Professionalisation** (The Shanty, Tallaght).

### Integrated Family Services Management and Practice:

This theme is concerned with building and strengthening the capacity of service providers to engage with systems and frontline practice change to inform a community-based model of joined-up services to children and families. **Start Right** (Limerick); **Bringing it all Back Home** (Dublin city); **Tús Nua Project** (Longford/Westmeath), **Integration of Services and Continuum of Care Demonstration Model for Children 0-6 Years, Rialto** (Dublin city); and **Fingal Parenting Initiative** (Fingal) all work within this theme.

### Language, Literacy and Numeracy:

Projects working under this theme aim to develop and improve numeracy, mathematical, language and learning skills for children in the 0-6 age group. They include **the Early Years Numeracy Project, NCI** (Dublin city); **Happy Talk – The Glen/Mayfield Early Language & Learning Project** (Cork city); and **the Early Years Language & Learning Initiative, Ballyfermot** (Dublin city).

## Activity Areas Under Each Theme

Themes are underpinned by five 'areas of activity'. Each project selected priorities from the following:

1. The promotion and dissemination of quality improvements through the use of **Síolta and Aistear**
2. Up-skilling the early childhood care and education workforce
3. Fostering improved health/learning and school readiness outcomes among young children
4. Developing parents' skills and improved parenting support
5. Demonstrating a continuum of services for the 'whole child', linking and integrating the child, family, local services and the community

## Final Phase

The 11 projects have operated in an environment of rapid change – in terms of policy and the infrastructure for the delivery of early intervention and prevention services, with both funding cuts and new funding initiatives – resulting in alterations to some planned activities. All projects are now moving into their final phase of implementation and are exploring legacy, sustainability and related dissemination activities to ensure policy engagement, in conjunction with the NEYAI Learning Community and at individual-project level.

Plans to sustain aspects of NEYAI work – including practitioner networks – through other structures or agencies are being developed and this is an important legacy outcome. What the local work shows is that, with limited resources, there is potential for scaling-up and the transfer of learning, although this remains to be validated by final evaluation outcomes.

More information on each project's local evaluation and dissemination plan is provided in section 3.2.





# Section 2

## Project Information & Project Profiles

The Initiative will finish in 2014, but NEYAI projects have different end dates – two will conclude in April, four in July and five in August.

This section provides a brief profile of each of the eleven NEYAI projects with accompanying statistics which refer to work carried out directly with target groups and/or substantial interventions. They relate to all of the work undertaken by the project including those aspects that are part of the national evaluation.

Data provided about the number of children and parents targeted by the projects was correct at the time of going to print. It should be noted, however, that some projects may have additional numbers of participants in 2014.

### **Early Years Language & Learning Initiative**

#### **Dublin South West Inner City Integration of Services and Continuum of Care Demonstration Model for Children 0-6 Years**

#### **Happy Talk**

#### **Canal Communities Family Welfare Initiative - Bringing it all Back Home**

#### **The Professional Pedagogy Project (PPP)**

#### **The Fingal Parenting Initiative (FPI)**

#### **Tús Nua Project**

#### **Early Years Numeracy Project**

#### **Start Right Limerick**

#### **Addressing the Gaps between Training and Practice (formerly CPLN)**

#### **Quality Through Professionalisation: Professional Education & Training Programme to Implement Fledglings Early Years Manual**





## Early Years Language & Learning Initiative

**Lead Agency:** Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership Company Ltd

**Location:** Dublin



The vision for the project is to enhance the learning and development opportunities for children by working in collaboration with parents and ECCE practitioners and teachers in the early years settings and schools. This will result in a positive impact on children's language and learning as well as significant improvements in their social and early literacy development. The second strand of the project is Aistear training for groups combining early years practitioners and teachers.

The success of this project will be based on an improvement among the families involved in terms of positive interaction between parents and children, increased opportunities for learning and development through play, an increased awareness and knowledge among parents with regards to fostering language development in children, and the recognition of the role parents have in their children's learning and development.

The Aistear training will result in the implementation of Aistear in all settings in Ballyfermot, thereby improving learning opportunities for children and making the transition from pre-school to primary school easier.

In relation to the consortium members and service providers, success will be based on the positive collaboration and the inter-agency process in implementing this project, building on the good practice that is in existence locally, and working together more effectively both during the project and following its completion.

Children who have participated in the project will be prepared for the demands of formal schooling and will achieve increased scores in standardised literacy tests administered in schools in subsequent years.

 	
15	Childcare centres
147	Staff in childcare centres
7	Primary schools
34	Staff in primary schools
30	Teachers
4	Home School Liaison teachers
1,222	Children
92	Parents directly in Chatter Matters

“Children who have participated in the project will be prepared for the demands of formal schooling”



**NEYAI** National Early Years  
Access Initiative  
Promoting Better Outcomes for Children & Families

<b>5</b>	Childcare centres
<b>43</b>	Staff in childcare centres
<b>2</b>	Primary schools
<b>49</b>	Staff in primary schools
<b>401</b>	Children (to date)
<b>113</b>	Parents (to date)

### Dublin South West Inner City Integration of Services and Continuum of Care Demonstration Model for Children 0-6 Years

**Lead Agency:** Barnardos Rialto Family Centre  
**Location:** Dublin

The vision of the consortium is to develop a 'whole child' model of long-term prevention and early intervention in the community for children 0-6 years and their parents so they can fully avail of all their learning opportunities through the integration of community, voluntary and statutory agencies, as outlined in the Office of the Minister for Children's policy document, 'The Agenda for Children's Services' (2007).

The consortium members are committed to establishing a more effective continuum of services for the 'whole child' through linking and integrating the child, family, local services and the community. The consortium believes that through this proposed project, it will maximise its collective efficiency and effectiveness at meeting the identified needs of children 0-6 years and their families within the model area. Central to this vision is taking the existing resources available within the community and local services, and working together creatively to find innovative, alternative approaches to service co-ordination, design and delivery.

This is an evidence-based demonstration project for children living in the Dublin South West Inner City area (specifically the Children Services Model area). It is envisaged that the project will be replicable in other communities across Ireland. The core principle of the model is the provision of services for children 0-6 years, based on the child being supported within their family and local community. This project is informed by the Action Plan of the Dublin City Children's Services Committee (CSC) and the research audit carried out by Dublin City Childcare Committee for the CSC.

"Central to this vision is taking the existing resources available within the community and local services, and working together creatively to find innovative, alternative approaches to service co-ordination, design and delivery."





## Happy Talk

**Lead Agency:** Cork City Partnership

**Location:** Cork

Happy Talk supports the language development of children aged 0-6 years in the Glen/Mayfield, Cork city, with 9-month developmental checks as well as programmes in crèches, pre-schools and junior infants classes. Through early identification, children are referred to HSE supports: speech, language, occupational and psychological therapies.

Happy Talk speech and language therapists develop and deliver programmes based on speech and language assessment results. Happy Talk takes a universal approach combined with individual speech work. It trains ECCE staff and parents using evidence-based programmes and coaches them as they interact with children in the settings. To support the development of a language-rich environment, ECCE settings undertake Book Area and Whole Setting reviews. A Borrow-a-Book scheme and Happy Talk storybooks encourage collaboration between parents and ECCE staff.

Awareness is raised in the wider community through a 'Storypoint' and posters displayed in the community and on buses featuring local children and parents, each with a key message. Happy Talk supports collaboration between parents and staff for the transition from pre-school to junior infants using an information-sharing tool. Interagency collaboration supports quality in the settings as well as the delivery of the Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) and Parents Together (Parents Plus).

"Awareness is raised in the wider community through a 'Storypoint' and posters displayed in the community..."

<b>24</b>	Total Childcare centres
6	Crèches
14	Pre-schools including Early Start (this has since reduced to 13 as two pre-schools amalgamated)
3	Public health nurse clinics
1	Toddler group
<b>100</b>	Staff in childcare centres (approx)
<b>5</b>	Primary schools
<b>15</b>	Staff in primary schools
<b>450</b>	Children per year (there is some overlap from year to year)
<b>400+</b>	Parents



## Canal Communities Family Welfare Initiative - Bringing it all Back Home

**Lead Agency:** Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service

**Location:** Inchicore, Dublin 8

Bringing it all Back Home (BIABH) has been in existence since 2011. Currently 28 families are engaged in this part-time project. The results of their evaluation show that BIABH has had a positive impact on the parents and children engaged with the service. BIABH is a needs-led and strengths-based programme. The recognition by the BIABH team that the basic needs of a family must be met before engagement can occur has been a crucial element in fostering engagement in this seldom-heard population.

Parents described how their parenting styles have been influenced and have changed in response to the information, education and training they have received through home visits, Marte Meo Communication Skills and the Incredible Years Parenting Programme. Parents also recognised that the acquisition of positive parenting behaviours creates a legacy whereby their children will be influenced by the positive relationship they have developed, and will bring these behaviours to their relationships with their own children in the future.

The BIABH team has also created a legacy of skills and knowledge within the early years services in the area through the provision of education and training.

Despite BIABH being a relatively new programme in the lower Inchicore area, the evaluation of the project shows that it has made a valuable contribution by supporting parents to develop and maintain nurturing relationships with their children. Parents have provided numerous examples of how they and their children have benefited as a result of their engagement with BIABH. While it is still early to determine the impact of BIABH on the children's long-term outcomes, there is substantial national and international evidence to indicate that children's outcomes are improved through targeted early interventions which support parents in their parenting role.

“...the evaluation of the project shows that it has made a valuable contribution by supporting parents to develop and maintain nurturing relationships with their children.”

7	Childcare centres
22	Staff in childcare centres
1	Primary schools
2	Staff in primary a schools (Lonn Dubh Project Workers)
180	Children
43	Parents





## The Professional Pedagogy Project (PPP)

**Lead Agency:** The Donegal County Childcare Committee (DCCC)

**Location:** Donegal

The Professional Pedagogy Project (PPP) is a framework of professional development and practical supports encompassing a 12-week training programme and a variety of follow-on supports aimed at enabling childcare service providers to make steady, quantifiable changes and improvements to their practice. The PPP provides an in-depth focus on the areas of early childhood play and curriculum, planning and reflective practice, assessment for learning and transitions.

Síolta and Aistear are used to frame the content and delivery of this initiative. All training and wraparound support provide a flexible basis to meet the needs and circumstances of the participating childcare services as far as possible. For example, training is offered inside and outside childcare service hours as well as on a full-day or evening-session basis.

The delivery method goes beyond isolated training. A model of continuous wrap-around information and mentoring support for participating childcare services is employed. The professional development aspect of the programme is supported and reinforced by follow-up themed cluster sessions, on-site mentoring and implementation support, and access to a peer discussion forum, Donegal CCC website and library resources. Parents of children in the participating childcare services are the secondary targets of the project. A range of information sessions is provided to inform parents of the project and the expected outcomes for their children.

The project targets early childhood services in Donegal town, Inis Eoghain and Letterkenny, with 68 participants. The PPP aspires to enable childcare service providers and their staff to recognise, value and engage with legislative and practice frameworks in their day-to-day work, allowing them to take a strategic, consistent approach to the enhancement of quality childcare and education provision.

A legacy will be created through the development of pre-school to primary school Transitions Statement, including training and parental resources on pedagogy and Aistear, which should benefit the early years sector.

10	Childcare centres
68	Staff in childcare centres
41	Primary schools
0	Staff in primary schools
572	Children
981	Parents



“The PPP aspires to enable childcare service providers and their staff to recognise, value and engage with legislative and practice frameworks in their day-to-day work”



## Fingal Parenting Initiative

### The Fingal Parenting Initiative (FPI)

**Lead Agency:** Fingal County Childcare Committee (CCC)

**Location:** Fingal

The vision for The Fingal Parenting Initiative is to create a vibrant and supportive learning community where early years service providers, parents and family support services work together to promote a positive, developmental trajectory for children in their care through the roll-out of evidence-based parenting programmes (children 0-6 years) and interagency collaboration in Fingal.

It is envisaged that, as inclusive hubs of care and education activities, community-based childcare services proactively engage parents as key partners in their children's development and education. FPI will ensure that parents from diverse linguistic and cultural communities are sensitively and respectfully engaged by skilled service providers who support their parenting practices and assist them in accessing support services and achieving community integration.

Our goal is to ensure that every parent in Fingal whose child is attending a community-based childcare setting will be offered the opportunity to engage in parenting courses that have been proven to help them establish positive and supportive relationships with their children. We believe that this will support the parents' role as key educator of their children and shape the development, learning and well-being of their children within the family.

We believe that this project will establish a model of dynamic interagency collaboration in Fingal, with early education and childcare services working harmoniously to provide accessible information and support to parents and practitioners.

“Our goal is to ensure that every parent in Fingal whose child is attending a community-based childcare setting will be offered the opportunity to engage in parenting courses”

**33**

Total sites:

22

Childcare centres

11

Local agencies including community development officers, public health nurses and social workers

**129**

Staff in childcare centres

80

Staff trained as FPI facilitators (54 childcare staff and 26 agency staff)

**0**

Primary schools

**0**

Staff in primary schools

**1,500**

Children

**1,000**

Parents





## Tús Nua Project

**Lead Agency:** Longford County Childcare Committee (CCC)

**Location:** Longford

Síolta and Aistear underpin this project and their tools are used to support practitioners, parents and children throughout the project lifetime. This project is implemented through an interagency approach that comprises statutory and voluntary organisations working together for better outcomes for children in Longford and Westmeath. This partnership will serve to support parents, children and childcare providers in Longford and Westmeath in strengthening their capacity to enable children to access, participate and have a seamless transition within a nurturing environment.

“This partnership will serve to support parents, children and childcare providers ... strengthening their capacity to enable children to access, participate and have a seamless transition within a nurturing environment.”

The initiative focuses on target groups within RAPID and Clár areas in both counties. The project works with feeder pre-schools into DEIS schools in relation to improving school readiness. A referral process has been implemented within the sample area and referrals come from a variety of sources such as public health nurses, social workers or the family themselves. This consists of the early years workers completing play activities within the home which prepare the child for pre-school and assisting the parents in accessing a high-quality pre-school for their child by eliminating existing barriers such as toilet training, behaviour management, transport, literacy, finances and fear. This empowers the family to engage with the local community's pre-school service and ultimately facilitates an important stage in their child's education. The target group is children (0-6 years) and their families, who are living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas in both Longford and Westmeath. Two full-time early years workers and a part-time administrator are employed.

**12**

Childcare centres

**122**

Staff in childcare centres

**n/a**

Primary schools

**n/a**

Staff in primary schools

**320**

Children (ECCE Free Pre-School Year only)

**467**

Parents



## Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland

**10**

Childcare centres (9 plus 1 after-school project)

**153**

Staff in childcare centres (approx)

**6**

Primary schools

**30**

Staff in primary schools (infant classes, Home School Community Liaison teachers and learning support only)

**740**

Children (approx)

**1,110**

Parents (approx)

### Early Years Numeracy Project

**Lead Agency:** National College of Ireland

**Location:** Dublin

The Docklands Early Numeracy Project focused on improving the numeracy outcomes for children aged 0-6. Each term, the local community worked together to plan the 'Docklands' Early Numeracy Activity Week', with lots of play-based activities and events set around mathematical themes, such as positional language, shape, space and size. These activities took place both at home and in the ECCE settings and primary schools. They succeeded due to the enthusiasm, creativity and hard work of local parents, ECCE practitioners and teachers.

In addition, there were training sessions each term to help staff and parents support children's early numeracy development. As one parent said, 'It helped me to understand simple things I can do at home with my child to help improve his numeracy skills. It helped me realise the things I was not doing and wasn't aware I should be doing with my child to work on those skills.'

Approximately 860 children (0-6 years) and their families took part. Feedback from participants is very positive. As an ECCE practitioner said, 'The children really grasped the concept, reinforced at home and in school. Maths was great fun.'

A local evaluation of children's numeracy outcomes in 2012-13 indicated that their numeracy concepts and skills had improved over the year and that they were performing on a par with those in a middle class sample. Results from the Sigma-T standardised tests in 2nd class indicate that the children in the Docklands primary schools, unlike DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools nationally, are performing to national norms. The project demonstrates that improving outcomes for children is most successful when cross-organisational learning communities are fully involved in the creation of safe yet challenging opportunities for purposeful numeracy interactions.

"It helped me to understand simple things I can do at home with my child to help improve his numeracy skills."



## Start Right Limerick

**Lead Agency:** Paul Partnership Ltd

**Location:** Limerick city

Through planned community outreach and professional development activities, Start Right Limerick seeks to develop systematic and sustainable changes in parental capacity, interagency collaboration, resource allocation and, at a macro level, greater understanding of the fundamental impact of early years experiences on outcomes later in life. The project works with families, service providers and local community organisations to ensure that children on the south side of Limerick can enjoy fulfilling, healthy and happy childhoods.

Start Right works to achieve these objectives by:

- Co-ordinating all partner service providers' work with a given child (0-3) and family, through the design and implementation of a Community Wraparound Programme.
- Promoting quality early childhood care and education to children within ECCE settings through the provision of mentoring support to enhance the capacity of staff in early years settings.
- Increasing the access of children with additional and special educational needs to early childhood education and care settings by supporting early childhood practitioners to successfully include these children in their settings.
- Enhancing integrated work practices and advocating resource sharing in the early years sector in statutory, community and voluntary agencies.

“The project works with families... to ensure that children on the south side of Limerick can enjoy fulfilling, healthy and happy childhoods”

9	Childcare centres (10 at time of national evaluation)
81	Staff in childcare centres
5	Primary schools
18	Staff in primary schools
724	Children
450	Parents







7	Childcare centres
75	Staff in childcare centres
0	Primary schools
0	Staff in primary schools
411	Children
411	Families (approx) (the project's primary target group have been staff involved in settings)

## Addressing the Gaps between Training and Practice (formerly CPLN)

**Lead Agency:** South Dublin County Partnership Ltd  
**Location:** South Dublin (Clondalkin and Tallaght)

The South Dublin NEYAI Consortium comprises seven community-based early years services (located in Tallaght and Clondalkin), South Dublin County Childcare Committee, Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board, Early Childhood Ireland and South Dublin County Partnership. The work of the consortium aims to develop innovative learning-centred actions that promote quality and professionalism within the early years sector.

The consortium has developed a range of interlinked actions to support, promote and enhance quality practice, the cornerstone of which is the development and introduction of quality mentoring in all of the early years settings involved in the project. Along with this mentoring approach, the project is also supporting services to enhance the quality of their provision through:

- Improved professional development policies and practices within settings, including the creation of a professional development portfolio for all staff involved in the project.
- The development of a best practice model for work placement and the provision of training for workplace mentoring.
- Local-Level learning communities – the facilitation of a peer-support network of early years service managers.
- Supporting services to improve their consultation with children and parents.
- Promoting good governance.

“The work of the consortium aims to develop innovative learning-centred actions that promote quality and professionalism within the early years sector.”





## Quality Through Professionalisation: Professional Education & Training Programme to Implement Fledglings Early Years Manual

**Lead Agency:** The Shanty Educational Project

**Location:** Dublin 24

The vision for this project centres on the design and implementation of a professional training programme that will use and refine an innovative early years manual developed for Fledglings Early Years Centres at An Cosán. As early years educators participate in the training programme, they will be challenged to integrate the national frameworks, Síolta and Aistear, with the HighScope curriculum in daily planning and evaluation. Quality mentors and supervisors will support work-based learning.

Through the implementation and refinement of the professional training programme within five centre-based sites (four Fledglings and one Rainbow House), the manual itself will be refined for use within Fledglings settings. It will also be adapted for use within other HighScope settings by localising its introductory content and setting out the local context and organisational ethos.

In addition, the project's vision incorporates the documentation and refinement of an innovative 'Additional Needs Intervention Programme' resulting from a 10-year partnership between the HSE and Rainbow House (An Cosán). This programme will be incorporated into the manual as an additional resource for HighScope early years centres.

5	Childcare centres
52	Staff in childcare centres
9	Primary schools
310	Staff in primary schools
248	Children
480	Parents (approx)











# Section 3

## Evaluation

### National and Local Evaluation - Introduction

A national evaluation team was appointed for NEYAI and a formative evaluation of the Initiative was undertaken. An overview of the national evaluation approach, scope and methodology is provided in section 3.1.

The Initiative has also funded some local-level evaluations and the national evaluation team has been appraised of and advised on these. Section 3.2 sets out the themes of local evaluations and plans for their dissemination.

### Complementarity between Local- and National Level Evaluation

It is anticipated that local evaluations will complement and add value to the findings of the national evaluation and vice versa. NEYAI will receive interim and final local evaluation reports which acknowledge the overall Initiative, its funders and the national evaluation. Furthermore, data sets from the national evaluation will be provided to local projects for insertion in their final evaluation reports, thereby complementing and creating a link between local- and national-level evaluation. In addition, the NEYAI Learning Community is engaged in ongoing dialogue and information sharing to inform a set of cohesive dissemination activities.

Early indicative results have already been captured, but definitive results are now imminent. National evaluation results are being analysed and will be ready for publication in April/May; local evaluations are showing tentatively positive outcomes for children, parents and staff, and final reports are due shortly. In some cases there is both anecdotal and statistical evidence (from observations or measurements) of improved child outcomes.

It is acknowledged that results are of a preliminary nature and require further analysis, but it is also acknowledged that emerging evidence is trending in a positive direction in a number of areas.

### Range of Products and Dissemination Activities

The NEYAI Pobal team is working with the NEYAI Learning Community to plan for the dissemination of local evaluation results in conjunction with the national evaluation outputs. A secure online portal was established for NEYAI groups to facilitate dialogue and to share information and ideas throughout the life of the Initiative. Results from the national and local evaluations will be shared on this portal with key stakeholders, targeted audiences and the wider public.

There will be a range of outputs from the national and local evaluations including:

1. Findings of the National Evaluation in report format
2. Case-studies or thematic reports
3. Data sets for each NEYAI project
4. Final evaluation of the Learning Community
5. Local evaluation reports – thematic, practice guides and materials

**It is envisaged that a national conference will be held in late spring to disseminate NEYAI findings.**







## 3.1 National Evaluation Overview

In this section, Dr Kieran McKeown, who is conducting the NEYAI national evaluation with his colleagues Trutz Haase and Jonathan Pratschke, provides an overview of the scope and approach of their work to date.

### Introduction

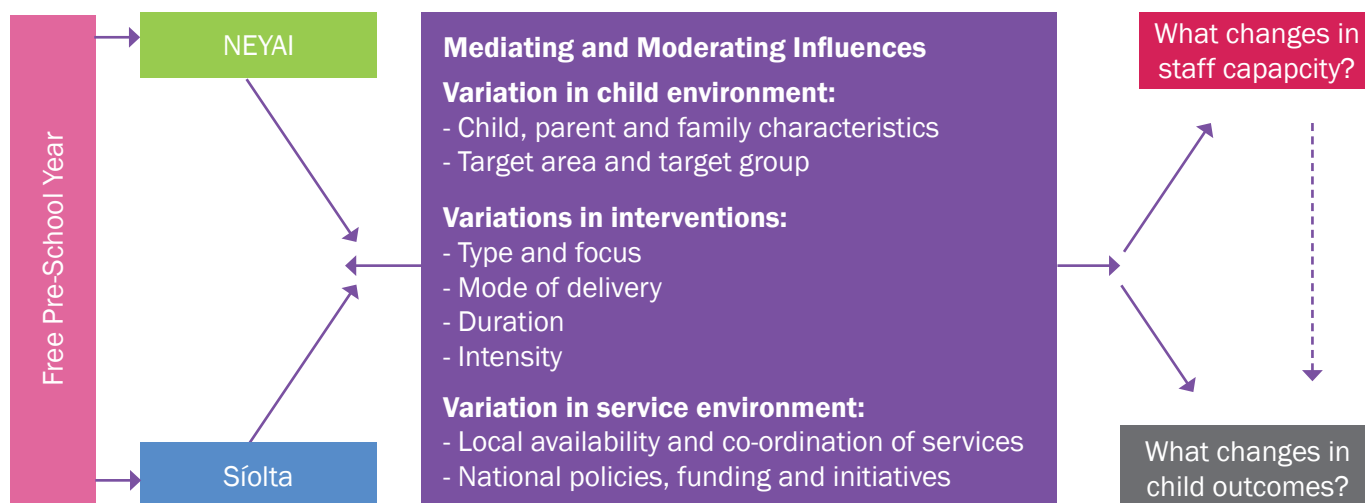
Evaluation is an integral part of the National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI). This was made clear when the three-year initiative (2011-2014) was officially launched by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in June 2011. In a speech to Seanad Éireann in that year, the Minister referred to NEYAI as being made up of 'a select number of local demonstration projects' with 'a focus on evidence-based practice and ongoing project evaluation for the purpose of advising future policy and the mainstream provision'<sup>1</sup>.

### Scope of Evaluation

The evaluation of NEYAI involves comparing children in centres that participated in this initiative with children in centres that participated in the Síolta Quality Assurance Programme (2010-2012). All children are in the Free Pre-School Year, itself a new programme introduced in 2010. Given this research design, the evaluation of NEYAI has become much more than originally envisaged. It is still an evaluation of NEYAI, but it is also an evaluation of Síolta and, more generally, an evaluation of the Free Pre-School Year. This wider framing of the evaluation – while still addressing the original research questions – is illustrated in the following diagram of the logic model which informs the study.

<sup>1</sup> Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2012b.





## Logic Model of Evaluation

The left-hand side of the diagram depicts the inputs which we label NEYAI and Sólta – both conceptualised as programmes within the Free Pre-School Year – and these include the interventions delivered to children (and parents where applicable) as well as training and mentoring of staff. The right-hand side depicts the outcomes which are conceptualised as improved staff capacity and improved child outcomes. The dotted line between staff capacity and child outcomes denotes the research question about whether improvements in staff capacity (where they occurred) influenced improvements in child outcomes.

At the centre of the logic model is the hypothesised pathways by which inputs are transformed into outcomes, also called the mediating and moderating influences. These include variations in the child's environment, especially personal and family circumstances and the area where they live; variations within and between NEYAI and Sólta in the type, focus, mode of delivery, duration and intensity of interventions; and variations in the local and national service context which may influence implementation of the programme.

## The Quality Cycle in Early Years

The evaluation is designed to make a contribution to the wider national agenda on improving quality in early years services. Its focus is on quality but seen through the prism of outcomes. Linking quality to outcomes could be seen as providing a missing link in the current paradigm about quality in early years services, which tends to focus on implementing the national quality framework (Sólta) and the national curriculum framework (Aistear) for early years services. These frameworks are the bedrock of quality in early years services, but the measurement of child outcomes is necessary to complete the quality cycle by providing evidence to verify that their implementation is creating experiences for children which result in improved developmental outcomes. To date, there has been little systematic measurement of child outcomes in any early years services in Ireland.

## Defining a Successful Pre-School System

The evaluation adopts the perspective that a successful pre-school system is one which improves outcomes for all pre-school children while simultaneously narrowing the gap in outcomes between children. This is also the stated goal for early years education by the Department of Education and Skills (DES): 'Provide a quality inclusive school and early years education system with improved learning outcomes'<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added]. It is also the understanding which informs how the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines a 'successful school system'<sup>3</sup>. Underpinning this perspective is a simple vision that every child, without exception, has a natural potential to do well and to flourish; by extension, children who face adversity need extra care and education to help them flourish and do as well as other children. This perspective is summarised in the vision of the Government (2011-present) which expresses Irish society's commitment to every child: 'That growing up in Ireland means you have the best start in life available anywhere in the world.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Department of Education and Skills, 2011:6.

<sup>3</sup> 'The highest performing education systems across OECD countries are those that combine high quality and equity. In such education systems, the vast majority of students can attain high level skills and knowledge that depend on their ability and drive, more than on their socio-economic background. ... The benefits of investing in equity in education outweigh the costs for both individuals and societies and ... equity can and should go hand-in-hand with quality. Furthermore ... investing in equity in education is economically efficient, in particular if investments are made early on. ... In the current context of international economic recession, this evidence becomes more relevant than ever.' (OECD, 2012a:14). See also OECD, 2010b:27.

<sup>4</sup> Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2012a:viii.



### Why is Reducing the Gap in Child Outcomes Important?

Closing the gap in child outcomes is not just a moral issue. The economic rationale for investment in early years rests primarily on the benefits of closing the gap rather than simply improving overall child outcomes<sup>5</sup>. The strength of the economic argument, as Nobel Laureate James Heckman has shown<sup>6</sup>, rests primarily on the return on investment that comes from disproportionate benefits that accrue to disadvantaged children by comparison with other children in terms of lifetime benefits to individuals and society; correspondingly, the opportunity cost (or 'opportunity lost') of not reducing the gap is much greater than the cost of reducing it. With this understanding, the evaluation focuses on both the overall level of outcomes as well as the gap in outcomes during the Free Pre-School Year.

### Developments in Early Years Sector

The evaluation comes at a time when the early years sector in Ireland, defined as the care and education of children aged 0-6, has experienced significant development in four main areas: (i) publication of *Síolta* in 2006 (National Framework for Early Childhood Education) and *Aistear* in 2009 (National Early Childhood Curriculum Framework); (ii) introduction of the Free Pre-School Year in 2010 for every child (children between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months); (iii) selective implementation of *Síolta* and *Aistear* as well as other initiatives to improve quality in early years through the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) and its successor, the Area-Based Childhood (ABC) Programme, plus the National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI); (iv) introduction in 2013 of a Pre-School Quality Agenda which includes a National Quality Support Service for Pre-School Services, additional resources for training and upgrading the pre-school inspection service.

5 'Educational equity is often discussed as a moral issue. Another way to think about equity is as a way to promote productivity and economic efficiency. As an economist, I focus on the economic value of equalising educational opportunities and achievement in order to identify the most effective way to increase productivity. ... The logic is quite clear from an economic standpoint. We can invest early to close disparities and prevent achievement gaps, or we can pay to remediate disparities, when they are harder and more expensive to close. Either way we are going to pay. And, we'll have to do both for a while. But, there is an important difference between the two approaches. Investing early allows us to shape the future; investing later chains us to fixing the missed opportunities of the past.' (Heckman, 2011).

6 'Investment in early education for disadvantaged children from birth to age 5 helps reduce the achievement gap, reduce the need for special education, increase the likelihood of healthier lifestyles, lower the crime rate, and reduce overall social costs. In fact, every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education produces a 7 to 10 per cent per annum return on investment. Policies that provide early childhood educational resources to the most disadvantaged children produce greater social and economic equity.' (Heckman, 2011).





### What is a Child Outcome?

Given that 'child outcomes' are central to the evaluation, it is important to define them clearly. As used in the evaluation, child outcomes refer to a child's development in areas that are widely regarded as central to normal and healthy development: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; communication skills and general knowledge. This is measured using the Early Development Instrument (EDI), an instrument that is now used in many countries to assess the development of children around the ages of 4-5<sup>7</sup>. The EDI is an appropriate instrument for assessing the impact of the Free Pre-School Year since the object of this programme is to enhance the child's development and capacity to learn in the year before they start primary school. The EDI is sometimes referred to as a measure of 'school readiness'. This term is difficult to define and its use runs the risk of implying that readiness is an attribute of the child without reference to the child's family, community, pre-school, school, or wider context of family policy and services for children and families. For that reason, we prefer to think of school readiness as having a number of different elements: children's readiness to learn; schools' readiness to support children's learning; capacity of families and communities to provide developmental opportunities for children; and public policies and services which support all parents and children but especially those facing adversity. Given this understanding, the EDI measures one aspect of school readiness – the child's readiness to learn – but requires a wider frame of reference for understanding the factors which influence it. That wider frame of reference is the context for interpreting the findings and implications of this evaluation.

### Evaluation Questions

Building on the understanding just outlined, the evaluation addresses two specific questions:

- Do NEYAI and Síolta have an impact on staff capacity and child outcomes, when all measured sources of variation are taken into account?
- If NEYAI or Síolta, or both, have an impact, what are the 'active ingredients' associated with improved staff capacity and child outcomes?

In order to answer these questions, the evaluation measured staff capacity and child outcomes at wave one (baseline) and wave two (follow-up). Measurement was based on standardised instruments in three separate questionnaires: Staff Questionnaire, Child Assessment Questionnaire and Parent Questionnaire. Given that the evaluation focuses on children in the Free Pre-School Year, the baseline for children is defined at 1-2 months after the start of the Free Pre-School Year. For staff, baseline data was collected before any training or mentoring interventions took place; however, this applied to NEYAI only since the Síolta intervention pre-dated the start of the study. Given that Síolta is the nationally accepted and approved standard for all childcare in Ireland – and the fact that a majority of Síolta centres in this evaluation are already validated or close to validation (14 out of 21) – the Síolta sample could be seen as a standard against which to assess NEYAI in terms of staff capacity and child outcomes. At the same time, the Síolta sample allows the evaluation to assess if meeting Síolta standards is associated with improved staff capacity and child outcomes when other sources of variation are taken into account.

7 Further details at: [www.offordcentre.com](http://www.offordcentre.com) and [www.rch.org.au](http://www.rch.org.au)





## Measurement of Staff Capacity

The Staff Questionnaire measures staff capacity on a number of dimensions including: childcare qualifications and work experience, assessment of the centre's work and workplace quality, work engagement, staff-child and staff-parent interactions, quality of childcare centre, and personal well-being. The questionnaire was completed on-line in about 30-40 minutes – at [www.neyai-evaluation.ie](http://www.neyai-evaluation.ie) – by childcare staff in each centre excluding administrative and support staff. Prior to implementation, the questionnaire was piloted in two childcare centres which were not part of the evaluation.

## Measurement of Child Outcomes

The purpose of the Child Assessment Questionnaire is to assess the well-being of each child across a range of domains that are recognised as central to child development, using the EDI as already described. The assessment was carried out in each centre by the Childcare Leader and Childcare Worker, who had a thorough knowledge of the child and knew the child for at least a month. The assessment took about 30-40 minutes and results were entered on-line by childcare staff at [www.neyai-evaluation.ie](http://www.neyai-evaluation.ie). Prior to implementation, the Child Assessment Questionnaire was piloted in two childcare centres which were not part of this evaluation.

## Measurement of Child, Parent and Family Characteristics

The Parent Questionnaire assessed the well-being of each mother across a wide range of domains that are recognised as central to personal and parental well-being, and the well-being of children. It is similar in scope to the parent questionnaire used in the Growing Up in Ireland National Longitudinal Study of Children (GUI) and was completed using a face-to-face interview with the mother of the 'focus child', the latter defined as the child on whom the Child Assessment Questionnaire was completed. Each parent was interviewed in the home or childcare centre, or elsewhere if that was her preference, and at a time agreed with the interviewer. All three questionnaires are systematically linked to each other through an ID numbering system which maintains confidentiality while allowing the data to be analysed as one integrated database.

## The Sample

In Ireland, there are approximately 4,300 childcare centres<sup>8</sup>. This study covers less than 2% of these: 70 in total, with 49 in NEYAI and 21 in Síolta. Similarly, the estimated number of staff employed in the childcare sector in Ireland is 21,000<sup>9</sup>. This study covers just 3% of these staff with about three-quarters in the NEYAI sample (543) and one-quarter in the Síolta sample (204). The number of children in the Free Pre-School Year in Ireland in 2012 was around 66,000<sup>10</sup>. This study covers less than 1% of these (448) with just over half in NEYAI (258) and just under half in Síolta (190).

## Representativeness and Relevance of Sample

The sample for this evaluation is not a representative sample of the childcare sector in Ireland because it was not randomly selected and moreover, by virtue of constraints imposed on the research design from the beginning, this could not have been otherwise. There are similarities and differences between the sample and the national childcare sector but, on balance, the differences outweigh the similarities in the areas where comparable data exists.

This suggests that some caution is necessary in making inferences from the study to the childcare sector generally, particularly those parts of it which are under-represented in the study, notably smaller centres with less qualified staff, private providers, and those located in more advantaged areas serving the children of more advantaged parents. Overall, our impression is that the sample comprises the more able centres in NEYAI and Síolta, and this impression is reinforced by anecdotal evidence about centres which declined to participate and on those which subsequently dropped out. These considerations imply that inferences from this study about the wider population of children in the 2012-13 Free Pre-School Year cannot be justified in terms of the *representativeness* of the sample. However, representativeness is not the only or even the main goal of our analysis, or indeed the only basis on which such inferences can be made. Our main goal is to identify the success factors or 'active ingredients' associated with child development and learning outcomes for this group of children. Our contention, supported by theory and evidence on child development, is that these factors are not unique to any particular group or setting of children but have relevance to all pre-school children.

For that reason we believe the findings of this evaluation may have relevance for all children in the Free Pre-School Year, and possibly for the early years sector generally.

8 Based on Pobal Annual Survey of the Early Years Sector 2012 which surveyed 4,356 childcare centres in DCYA-funded programmes (Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE), Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) and Childcare Education & Training Supports (CETS)). (Pobal, 2013:3).

9 This is an estimate based on 4,356 centres with an average of 4.9 staff per centre (see Pobal, 2013:38-39).

10 Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2012b:66-67.

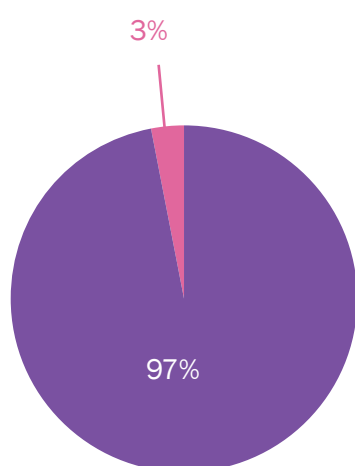




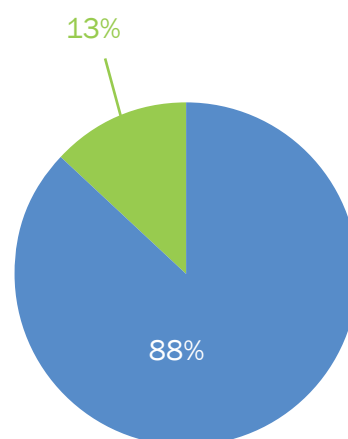
### Seeing the Free Pre-School in Context of a Child's Life

The Free Pre-School Year entitles every child in Ireland, between the ages of 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months, to a year of free pre-school education. The 'school year' is defined as three hours per day, five days per week, 38 weeks per year, amounting to 183 days or 549 hours in total. The length of the Free Pre-School year is the same as the 'school year' in primary schools, but the number of hours in classroom is shorter<sup>11</sup>. By contrast, a calendar year in the life of a child is 365 days, of which 12 hours are spent sleeping which implies that the number of waking hours in the year for a typical 4-year-old child is 4,380 hours. In other words, the Free Pre-School Year is equivalent to 12.5% of a child's calendar year. Extending this to include all the life experiences of a typical 4-year-old child, the Free Pre-School Year represents just 3% of the child's entire life's experiences.

In this evaluation, it is even less since the two waves of data collection cover about two-thirds of the Free Pre-School Year (wave one data collection was in November/December 2012; wave two was in June 2013). These simple calculations are graphically illustrated in the following diagram in order to underline how, from a child's perspective, the Free Pre-School Year is a relatively small part of the influences which have been experienced in that year much less in the child's entire life. Viewed from that perspective, the fact that any intervention on this relatively small scale is known to have life-long consequences for children is itself remarkable but only, as is also known, when the quality of the intervention is itself remarkable. Our search in this evaluation is to find those remarkable 'success factors' or 'active ingredients' which have the potential to create life-long consequences for these children and the wider society.



- % of time in the life of a 4-year-old in Free Pre-School Year
- % of time in the life of a 4-year-old not in Free Pre-School Year



- % of time in a calendar year in Free Pre-School Year
- % of time in a calendar year not in Free Pre-School Year

11 Primary schools in Ireland are open for 183 days each year, and provide about 4.7 hours of daily instruction (i.e., excluding time for breaks and roll call).







## Concluding Comment

The evaluation has a simple and singular purpose: to find ways, based on evidence, of developing a successful pre-school system which improves outcomes for all pre-school children while simultaneously narrowing the gap in outcomes between children. Given the focus on evidence throughout the study, and the wider appeal to evidence as a basis for making policy and improving practice<sup>12</sup>, it is worth remembering that evidence is not just about ‘facts’ or ‘findings’ as conventionally understood. More fundamentally, evidence is a way of seeing (as implied by its Latin root ‘evidens’ – to see out), just as knowledge is also a way of seeing (as implied by its Greek root ‘gnosis’ – ‘to know by the senses’)

This understanding points to the importance of being aware that evidence is created through the way we think and see things. The evaluation draws particular attention to the way we think about child outcomes and how we measure them.

Seeing things through the prism of outcomes is not a new idea – indeed the focus on outcomes is pervasive in every area of public policy<sup>13</sup> – but this idea has no influence on practice or policy unless there is evidence about outcomes or at least a way of seeing action as linked to intended outcomes. This does not imply that every child outcome is important, or can be measured, or even should be measured<sup>14</sup>. But some child outcomes are important and need to be measured if we are to know how well the Free Pre-School Year is working and, by identifying success factors associated with child outcomes, build a successful pre-school system. That is the purpose of this evaluation.

“The evaluation has a simple and singular purpose: to find ways, based on evidence, of developing a successful pre-school system which improves outcomes for all pre-school children while simultaneously narrowing the gap in outcomes between children.”

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<sup>12</sup> For a review, see McKeown, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the Statement of Strategy by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), which was set up in June 2011, places particular emphasis on using evidence to improve performance: ‘Information is a key driver for improving the delivery of services. In the current economic climate, with reducing resources, better analysis of performance information will be essential in achieving the most value from use of these resources’ (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2012a, p. 11). Similarly, the report of the task force to advise on the new Child and Family Agency (CFA) emphasises the importance of establishing a performance management framework for the new agency so that ‘the Minister and the DCYA will have a key role in setting clear objectives and raising the political dialogue from one that concentrates on inputs to one that focuses on desired outcomes and realistic measurable targets’ (Task Force on the Child and Family Support Agency, 2012, p. 16).

<sup>14</sup> The observation attributed to physicist Albert Einstein seems apposite here: ‘Not everything that is important can be measured, and not everything that can be measured is important’.

## 3.2 Themes of Local Evaluation and Plans for Dissemination

<b>Ballyfermot/ Chapelizod Partnership Ltd</b> <hr/> <b>Early Years Language &amp; Learning Initiative</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	Aistear workshops 1. What was the impact of the training on the implementation of Aistear in education settings? 2. What were the experiences of participants in the training sessions? 3. How successful was the cross-sectoral approach in delivering Aistear training to early years and primary educators? 4. Language Enrichment Initiative: what is the impact of the Initiative on staff/child interactions and on the overall quality of the setting?
	Final Evaluation will be available	January 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	February/March 2014
<b>Barnardos Rialto Family Centre</b> <hr/> <b>Dublin South West Inner City Integration of Services</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	1. Speech and language supports (specific evaluation completed by Trinity College SLT Department) 2. Interagency work – consortium (review of process and learning to emerge from this work)
	Final Evaluation will be available	Mid-2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	Circulation via consortium members, Children Service Committee and NEYAI forums
<b>Cork Partnership</b> <hr/> <b>Happy Talk</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	1. Providing supports through a universal approach delivered by speech and language therapists working in early years settings combined with some targeted intervention as opposed to being clinic-based 2. Training and in-setting coaching as strategies to upskill ECCE staff as well as improving parental capacity to support children's language development 3. Creating a whole-community approach by supporting greater awareness of early intervention in language and learning in the target areas 4. How interagency working supports the above
	Final Evaluation will be available	Two interim reports: July 2012 and October 2013 Final evaluation report: July 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	A Happy Talk conference 1st February 2014



## 3.2 Themes of Local Evaluation and Plans for Dissemination

<b>Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service</b> ..... <b>Bringing it all Back Home (BIABH)</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	Determine the effectiveness of BIABH in terms of its influence on the parent-child relationship and the parents' capacity to nurture their children's development. Key objectives are to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perceptions of parents, stakeholders and the BIABH team about the programme.</li> <li>• The strengths and challenges of BIABH.</li> <li>• The parents' perspective of the influence of BIABH on their parenting role and their relationship with their children.</li> </ul>
	Final Evaluation will be available	December 2013
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	10th December dialogue meeting Final report to be made available to stakeholders of BIABH in December 2013/January 2014.
<b>Donegal County Childcare Committee</b> ..... <b>The Professional Pedagogy Project (PPP)</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	1. Professional Pedagogy Project focus areas to improve practice 2. The effectiveness of training and mentoring 3. External factors to improve quality practice
	Final Evaluation will be available	March 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	An event will take place in Donegal in March/April 2014
<b>Fingal County Childcare Committee</b> ..... <b>The Fingal Parenting Initiative</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	The main aim of the FPI Local-Level Evaluation is to examine the effectiveness of a community version of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme (PPEY), delivered within early years and preschool settings, in reducing child behavioural problems and parental stress.
	Final Evaluation will be available	First quarter of 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	Presentation of findings to Fingal Children Services Committee and FPI facilitators on 5th December in Blanchardstown Area Partnership Local events and presentations in 2014 (TBC)

## 3.2 Themes of Local Evaluation and Plans for Dissemination

<b>Longford County Childcare Committee (CCC)</b> ..... <b>Tús Nua Project</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early family support</li> <li>2. Uptake of Free Pre-School Year</li> <li>3. Quality of provision</li> </ol>
	Final Evaluation Date	End of April 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	Dissemination event to be held at the end of April.
<b>National College of Ireland</b> ..... <b>Early Learning Initiative</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Numeracy</li> <li>2. Parental involvement</li> <li>3. Implementation of Community Curriculum priorities and related activities</li> </ol>
	Final Evaluation will be available	<p>Results from last year (2012-13) now available</p> <p>More results available in June 2014</p>
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	<p>Celebration event on 17th June</p> <p>ELI Newsletter</p> <p>Informal meetings e.g., working group meetings, consortium meetings and other fora where appropriate</p>
<b>PAUL Partnership</b> ..... <b>Start Right Limerick</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	<p>The overall aim of the evaluation is to analyse the effectiveness of the service-delivery mechanisms of the Start Right Limerick project in improving outcomes for children. The evaluation, therefore, focuses on two main areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi-agency collaboration: map the evolution of changes in behaviours and attitudes among key stakeholders involved in the multi-agency collaboration that characterises the Start Right Limerick project.</li> <li>2. Development in the early years settings: analyse the value of targeted interventions in early years settings.</li> </ol>
	Final Evaluation will be available	June 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	Report for public circulation and findings will be used to provide an evidence base supporting targeted influencing of key decision makers.



## 3.2 Themes of Local Evaluation and Plans for Dissemination

<b>South Dublin County Partnership Ltd (formerly CPLN)</b> <b>Addressing the Gaps between Training and Practice</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate the effectiveness of a targeted intervention on the quality of early childhood care and education in settings involved in South Dublin NEYAI project.</li> <li>2. Process evaluation of NEYAI project and its intervention components/activities.</li> <li>3. Conceptualise the role of Quality Mentor.</li> <li>4. Document corporate governance systems within the project.</li> </ol>
	Final Evaluation Date	June 2014
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	<p>Product launch: promoting outputs/product from project Quality Mentoring process resources, policies and procedure, best practice guide to work placement, CDP statements and professional development portfolios developed and used within the project</p> <p>Certification event: to acknowledge learning outcomes achieved as a result of involvement in the project</p> <p>Learning seminar: findings of local evaluation</p> <p>Involvement in national NEYAI dissemination events</p> <p>Other conference dissemination opportunities as they arise (presentations at SDCCC, CSC, etc).</p>
<b>The Shanty Educational Project</b> <b>Quality Through Professionalisation: Professional Education &amp; Training Programme</b>	Main Areas for Local-Level Evaluation	Local-Level Evaluation commencing Feb 2014
	Final Evaluation will be available	Date to be confirmed
	When and How Results are to be Disseminated	Date to be confirmed

## Appendix A: Contact Details for NEYAI projects



### NEYAI

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Holbrook House  
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### Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership Ltd Early Years Language & Learning Initiative

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### Barnardos Rialto Family Centre

### Barnardos Rialto Family Centre Dublin South West Inner City Integration of Services

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### Cork Partnership Happy Talk

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### Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service Bringing it all Back Home

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### Donegal County Childcare Committee The Professional Pedagogy Project (PPP)

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### **Fingal County Childcare Committee The Fingal Parenting Initiative**

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### **Longford County Childcare Committee (CCC) Tús Nua Project**

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### **National College of Ireland Early Learning Initiative**

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### **PAUL Partnership Start Right Limerick**

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## **Addressing the Gaps between Training and Practice**

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### **South Dublin County Partnership Ltd (formerly CPLN) Addressing the Gaps between Training and Practice**

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### **The Shanty Educational Project Quality Through Professionalisation: Professional Education & Training Programme**

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## Appendix B: NEYAI Structures and Members

### Evaluation and Learning Expert Advisory Group (ELEAG) Members

Tony Crooks (Chair)	Adjunct Professor of Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth
Marjorie Smith	Professor of the Psychology of the Family and Co-Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London
Áine Hyland	Emeritus Professor of Education, University College, Cork
Bernie McDonnell	Pobal, Manager, Equality Programmes
Gail Birkbeck	Strategic Learning and Evaluation Executive, The Atlantic Philanthropies

### Members of NEYAI Steering Group

Noel Kelly	Chairperson, Preparing For Life, Northside Partnership
Noelle Spring	Vice Chairperson, Katherine Howard Foundation
Catherine Hynes	Department of Education and Skills (Early Years Education Policy Unit)
Chares Delap	Mount Street Club Trust
Jane Forman	The Atlantic Philanthropies
Stella Owens	Project Specialist – CES
Aisling Gillen	National Specialist Family Support, HSE
Gretta Murphy	Kilkenny County Childcare Committee
Tony Crooks	Adjunct Professor of Applied Social Studies, NUIM
Ruth Cullen	Cork City Childcare Committee
Albert O'Donoghue	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Denis Leamy	CEO, Pobal
Bernie McDonnell	NEYAI Programme Manager, Pobal

### Pobal NEYAI Team

Bernie McDonnell	Programme Manager
Nuala Kelly	Co-ordinator
Emily Cunningham	Administrator

### NEYAI Evaluation Team [www.neyai-evaluation.ie](http://www.neyai-evaluation.ie)

Dr Kieran McKeown	Social & Economic Research Consultant
Trutz Haase	Social & Economic Consultant
Jonathan Pratschke	Social & Economic Consultant





## **The National Early Years Access Initiative 2010-2014**

The National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) is a collaboration between a number of funding partners namely, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Mount Street Club Trust, The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Board of Pobal.



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