



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

# Early Childhood Services

## Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Background

Historically services developed to address disability issues in young children in an ad hoc way with no clear policy direction or remit for service provision

- Early Childhood Services for Children with Developmental Delay provided by Health Boards and funded partner agencies in the Learning Disability and Physical and Sensory Disability Sectors
- Health Board Development of Early Childhood Services to provide for all children with DD on a geographic and assessed needs basis (2003 onwards)
- HSE Report of the Reference Group on Multidisciplinary Services for Children aged 5 – 18 (2009)
- National Framework - Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (2010)



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People

### Policy

Legislation - Disability Act (2005) and EPSEN Act (2004)

Policy Level – Cross Sectoral Team (CST) Cross  
Departmental and Cross Agency Group

### Implementation

**National** – National Coordinating Group (NCG)

*Education and Health Working Group*

**Regional** – Regional Leads (West, South, DML, DNE)

**Local** – Local implementation Groups (LIGs)

*The NCG and LIGs include representation from education.*



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Early Childhood Services - Reconfiguration

Intervention provided through

- Primary care teams when needs can be met there
- Geographic based EI and school aged teams
- Support from Specialist teams where needed

In order to arrive at

- A clear pathway to services
- Equity and Consistency in service provision across the country
- Effective teams working in partnership with families
- Optimum use of Resources
- Health and Education working jointly to achieve best outcomes for children



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Early Childhood Services – Additional Provision

- Supports to Special Pre Schools
  - 29 Special preschools - 450 children
- Pre school Support Service
  - 11 services - 475 children
- Grants to individual pre schools to support individual children



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Framework for Collaborative Working between Education and Health Professionals

The NCG established a working group to develop a Framework for Collaboration.

Recommendations:

**Structures for formal links**

**Policies and protocols**

**Training for professionals from both sectors and parents**

**Pathways through key transition stages.**

A key recommendation was the development of **Local Education and Health Fora** with suggested membership outlined below.

Education	Health
Parents (e.g. National Parents Council)	Parents of pre-school children
IPPN (Irish Primary Principals Network)	Primary Care
NAPD, ACCS, VEC (post primary management/principals)	Children's Network Disability Teams (Early Intervention and School Age)
NABMSE (National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education)	Children's Specialist Disability Services
Education Centre Director	CAMHS
NCSE	City and County Childcare Committees
NEPS	IPPA (Irish Pre-schools and Playgroups Association)
SESS (Special Education Support Service)	



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Successful Transitions, Seamless Service Provision - Challenges

### Distinct Sectors

- Health
- Education
- Early Childhood Sector
- Parents and Families

cultures, philosophies, policy directives,  
budgets, expectations, background, training



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## Seamless Service Provision - Challenges

### Consistency and Clarity in provision

- Early Intervention Teams
- Specialist teams
- Primary Care Teams
- Supports to Mainstream Pre Schools
- Role of Special Pre Schools
- Role of Early Educators in EI teams
- Resource Allocation Model based on Assessed Need





Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Successful Transitions,  
Seamless Service Provision –  
Looking ahead

- Framework for Collaborative Working between Education and Health Professionals – Implementation
- Early Educators as key practitioners
- Policy supporting practice
- Practice reflecting policy
- HSE Structural Changes – Social Care Division
- Child and Family Agency



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Thank You