

Marian Brattman  
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Dear Researcher,

Congratulations on the completion of your research project. As part of the Child and Family Agency's (Tusla) ethical approval process, you are invited to submit a summary report of your completed research, which will be uploaded onto the Tusla Research Centre. This report will be made available to Tusla staff, and external audiences, for the purpose of shared learning and developing Tusla's knowledge and information base.

You will be delighted to hear that previous summary reports have garnered interest from a wide audience, including journalists, interested in learning about Tusla's work and new knowledge that can be shared in the public sphere. In this context, we want to offer guidance in the event that external communication of your research findings in public spheres occur when your research is circulated more widely.

As the Agency has facilitated access to Agency data and human participants for your research project through our research ethics approval process, we have a number of requirements of you when you submit your summary report.

- The summary report is available to Child and Family Agency staff and external audiences for the purpose of shared learning and developing the Agency's knowledge and information base. It will be stated on the Tusla Research Centre that the research findings are the researchers' own and have not been endorsed by the Child and Family Agency and that the Agency has not had a role in determining the quality of the research in its entirety and the validity and reliability of the findings within it.
- If your research project is a component of an academic qualification, you will need to discuss external communication of research findings with your academic supervisor in the first instance, and adhere to any requirements of the academic institution in this regard.
- If the research has not been funded by the Agency, the researcher must not act as a spokesperson for the Agency when communicating findings in external settings and should not use Child and Family Agency branding in this regard. We ask you to disseminate findings in accordance with the Agency's Research Dissemination Policy and Procedure (attached), and that all researchers who have been ethically approved by Tusla read the policy, discuss the dissemination of research findings with line management in the first instance and consider the dissemination checklist for the type of research study you have undertaken.
- If your research has been funded or part-funded by Tusla, this will need to be declared and the policy guidance in Tusla's Research Dissemination Policy and Procedure followed. If your research has been funded by the Agency, a joint position on communicating the findings should be developed and in accordance with the Agency's

Research Dissemination Policy and Procedure and Agency's Communication Department guidelines.

- If you are asked to share your research findings with external media, consider the impact of external communication of research findings on participants who engaged in your research project. You may need to seek their re-consent prior to communicating research findings in the public arena through traditional or new media channels, if this has not already been captured in the information sheet and consent form for the study. If this is not feasible, every attempt to anonymise and de-identify participants' data should be made.
- When communicating research findings from your project, focus specifically on the learning from the research project only.
- If applicable, please have regard to your professional code of conduct.

I attach the template for submitting a summary report.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marian Brattman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Marian Brattman

Interim National Manager for Research



## Ethically Approved Research - Summary Report

This is a Summary Report provided by the researcher to Tusla, Child and Family Agency. The study pertaining to this report was approved by the National Research Office, Research Ethics Review Group. This report will be stored within the Tusla Research Register which will be accessed by National Research Office staff. Please indicate whether or not you give permission for your report to be made available to other staff of the Child and Family Agency and the wider public on the Research Register within the electronic Tusla Research Centre (on the Tusla Child and Family Agency website).

When completing this Summary Report, please adhere to the headings provided. Research studies vary in size; however the completion of this report should not exceed 3,000 words. Please complete, sign and return to [recadmin@tusla.ie](mailto:recadmin@tusla.ie)

<b>Full Title of Research Study:</b>	Parental Engagement and Relationships (PEAR) in Early Childhood (EC)						
<b>Name of Researcher/Researchers:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Surname:</b></td> <td>Leitão</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>First Name:</b></td> <td>Catarina</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Existing post-nominal Letters:</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<b>Surname:</b>	Leitão	<b>First Name:</b>	Catarina	<b>Existing post-nominal Letters:</b>	
<b>Surname:</b>	Leitão						
<b>First Name:</b>	Catarina						
<b>Existing post-nominal Letters:</b>							
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## Student Research

If research was undertaken for an academic award please state:

<b>Official title of the course:</b>	
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### **Abstract:**

The Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) has implemented the Powerful Parenting model in Tallaght, Dublin. This model involves placing a dedicated Parent/Carer Facilitator (PCF) within Early Learning and Care services. The PCFs work with parents to identify needs, offer one-to-one and group support, and coordinate with relevant education, health and social services. The research project conducted aimed to study the Powerful Parenting model.

To better understand the model's impact on families, 44 parents receiving support from the model (the intervention group) were compared with 35 parents who did not (the comparison group) on a set of outcomes: quality of the parent's relationship with the Early Years Educator; quality of the home learning environment; parental stress level; and parent's views on the influence of gender on caregiving (given the focus of the model on engaging fathers).

In both groups, most parents were mothers, in the 30-40 age range, who identified themselves as White Irish, cohabitating, and with children who were approximately four years old on average. The Intervention Group had a higher percentage of parents who completed up to secondary education level, and had medical card (indicating a low income for the family size), while the Comparison Group had a higher percentage of parents who completed tertiary level, and who did not have medical card.

Parents from both groups completed an online questionnaire which included standardised tools to assess the mentioned outcomes. The project did not find significant differences between the intervention and comparison groups regarding any of the four measured outcomes. Also, impacts did not vary by family characteristics such as parents' educational level, income, ethnicity and household constitution. Since the intervention and comparison groups were not equivalent in all the observed background characteristics (such as educational level, and medical card holding), it is difficult to draw conclusions about the impacts.

However, interviews with 27 parents (24 mothers, and three fathers), 8 PCFs and 7 ECEC managers indicated that tailored support adapted to families' needs, and organisation of activities for families, are among the most valuable features of the model. Parents described the PCF's role as a bridge between home and preschool, and a central point of contact. Parents valued PCFs showing high interest in their work, and being approachable and responsive to their parents' needs. Parents reported positive outcomes from the support received, such as a better understanding of their children's needs, facilitated access to services for families, and socio-emotional benefits.

Within this research project, parents were also asked about their experiences regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, namely regarding changes, difficulties, and concerns. The most frequently identified experiences related to restrictions, social isolation, negative impacts on parents' emotional and psychological well-being, negative impacts on children's emotional well-being and development, concerns with physical health, uncertainty about the future, and positive changes regarding family time and activities. The study reinforced that social support, childcare services and schools provide an important nurturing environment for both children and parents.

Overall, this research project aimed to contribute to informing approaches to ensure greater access to more inclusive parenting support services during children's early years.

#### Reference list :

Cordis website:

<https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/442335-promoting-power-parents-in-children-s-early-education>

Leitão C, Shumba J, Quinn M (2022) Perspectives and experiences of Covid-19: Two Irish studies of families in disadvantaged communities. PLOS ONE 17(7): e0270472. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0270472>

#### Permission Box

**I give permission for this report to be made available on the Tusla Electronic Research Centre website; it may be viewed by those internal and/or external to Tusla.**

Yes/No (please circle)

**Researcher Signature:**

*Catarina Ferreira Cardoso Leitão*

**Date: 7 February 2023**

**I give permission for my personal details including name, email address and title of qualification to be made available on the Tusla Electronic Research Centre website; it may be viewed by those internal and/or external to Tusla.**

Yes/No (please circle)

**Researcher Signature:**

*Catarina Ferreira Cardoso Leitão*

**Date: 7 February 2023**