

The Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Research & Evaluation Study 2015 - 2018



Overview

- The Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS)
- UNESCO CFRC Research and Evaluation Study
- Parenting Support and Parental Participation Work Programme
- Why support parents?
- Policy context
- Multi-stranded, innovative approach to parenting support
- UCFRC research to date/future research activity.



Families, parents and caregivers play a central role in child well-being and development... Families can be the greatest source of support for children but also – under unfortunate circumstances – the greatest source of harm. Children's well-being is inextricably linked to parental well-being, and thus investment in all families, complemented by targeted support for the most vulnerable, is of paramount importance (Daly et al 2015)



Tusla Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS)

- The best way to improve outcomes for families is to intervene at an early stage to resolve problems and prevent harm
- The PPFS Programme is a comprehensive programme of early intervention and preventative work,
- which has been undertaken by Tusla, with the support of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI, Galway

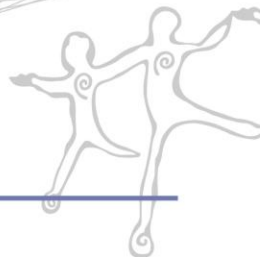
The aim of the programme is to:

- Embed **prevention and early intervention** within Tusla
- To build capacity to perform early intervention work. Resulting in the prevention of risk to children and young people



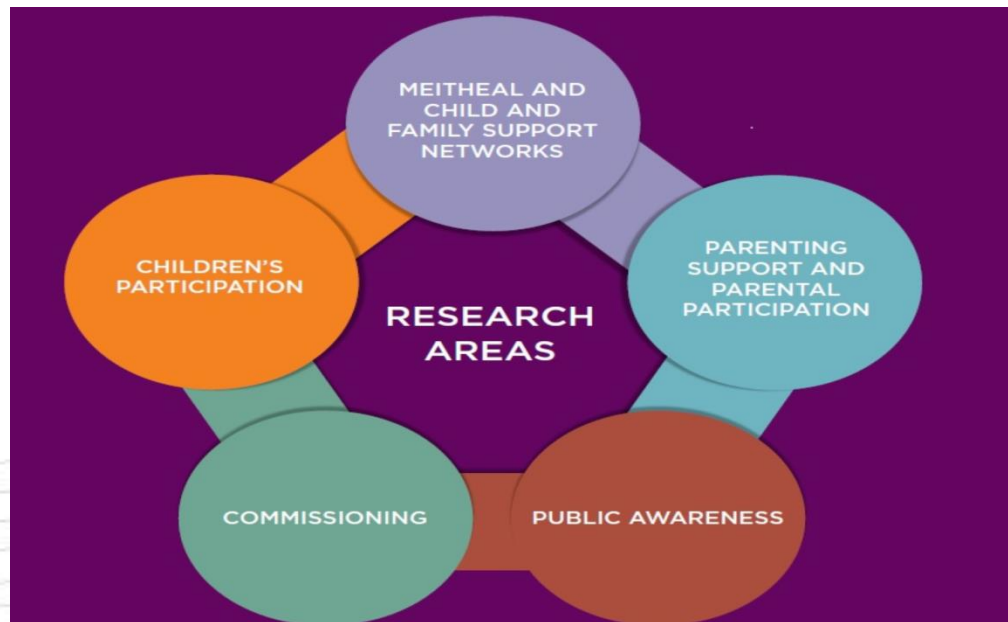
UNESCO CFRC Research and Evaluation Study

Is the organisational culture and practice in Tusla changing such that services are more integrated, preventative, evidence informed and more inclusive of children and parents? If so, is this contributing to improved outcomes for children and their families?

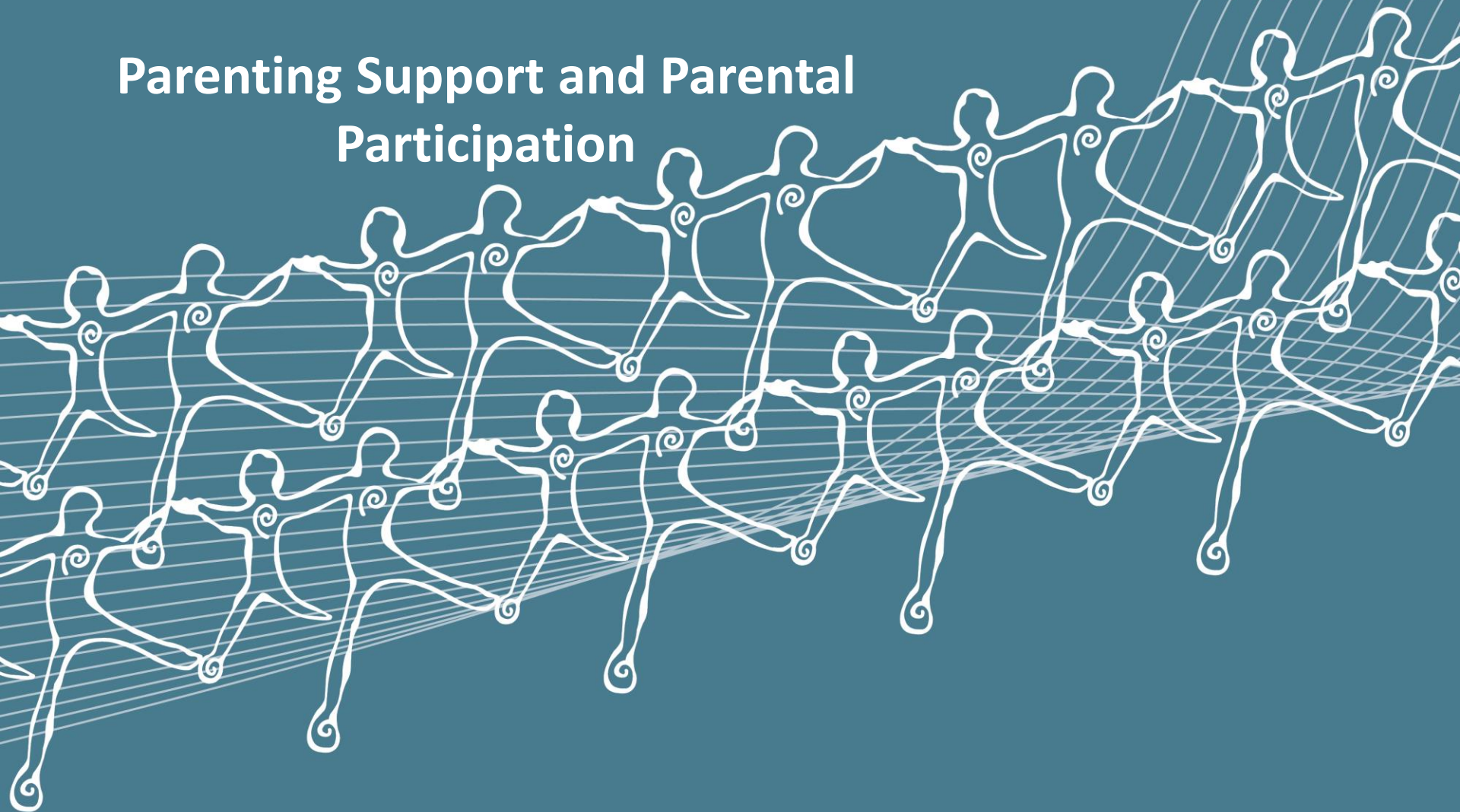


PPFS Programme

- The Programme has five components one of which is the Parenting Support and Parental Participation Work Stream.



Parenting Support and Parental Participation



Why Support Parents?

Benefits for Children

- Positive behaviour and academic achievement (O Connor and Scott, 2007)
- Mediates the effects of poverty/disadvantage (ESRC, 2012)
- Influences well-being and social mobility (Allen, 2011)
- Positive social, emotional, cognitive and physical development (Davies and Ward 2012; Heckman, 2011).

Benefits for Parents

- Better family relationships
- Better mental and emotional health
- Better socio-economic prospects
- More active community participation (Ghate, 2009).



Why Support Parents?

Benefits for Society

- Reduced social costs
- Effective use of resources
- Productive, well-educated workforce
- Reduction of inequalities
- Promoting Active Citizenship
- Developing Human and Social Capital (Ghate,2009).



Policy Context

DMP PPFS programme is underpinned by Irish State Policy and informed by the overall strategic direction of the DCYA:

- DCYA Statement of Strategy 2011-2014
- Investing in Families - Supporting parents to improve outcomes for children (Parenting Support Strategy) (Gillen et al, 2013)
- The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (DCYA, 2014)
 - Transformative Goals – E.g. ABC Programmes (DCYA, AP)
- High Level Policy Statement on Parenting and Family Support (DCYA, 2015)



Parenting Support and Parental Participation Programme of Work

Work plan is:

- Multi-stranded
- Innovative
- Collaborative
- Partnership Approach

Prevention Partnership and
Family Support - Parenting





One of the key initiatives of the parenting element of PPFS is:

- 50 Key messages relating to parenting
- Parenting 24/7 is the name of the campaign that promotes the following 31 messages:
 - ✓ 7 General messages – Parenting of children at all ages
 - ✓ 24 messages – Specific to stages across the lifecourse
- An additional 19 messages relate to parenting in specific contexts

www.parenting24seven.ie





Vision

- Promote parenting knowledge and key messages in their own areas of practice
- That PSCs become the 'go to' people within their own areas who can offer advice and guidance on parenting
- Promote and engage parents in parental participation initiatives and parenting learning communities.

Supported through

- Regional Learning Groups
- Learning Communities
- Learning Journals
- Training
- PSC Newsletter



Parental Participation

- The aim of the Parental Participation work programme:
 - Encourage parents' to participate in their children's care and education;
 - Enable parents' to participate in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services.
- Tusla has ring-fenced a budget to fund local projects that are focused on parental participation – known as Seed funded projects
- Development of Parental Participation Toolkit (2015)



Why is Research and Evaluation Important?

- Growing evidence of the importance of effective parenting in generating positive outcomes for children and young people, parents and society in general
- Approaches based on reliable and robust evidence and the undertaking of high-quality evaluations ... are vital to ensure the greatest possible social and economic returns and avoid adverse outcomes and costly investments (Centre for Effective Services, 2012).



The Role of the UNESCO CFRC

To evaluate the parenting support and parental participation programme of work through a variety of methods:

- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Desk research



Parenting Support and Parental Participation

Overarching Research Questions:

Is there a strategic approach to parenting in place within Tusla? Is it resulting in cost-effective better practice? Is participation by parents embedded in the structures and culture of Tusla?

Key intended outcomes for this work package:

- A strategic approach to parenting support is increasingly delivering cost-effective better practice and better outcomes for parents and children, thus reducing inequalities.
- The participation of children and parents is embedded in Tusla's culture and operations.



Research Activity to Date

- ✓ Working with Families: A Review of the Literature on Parental Participation
- ✓ Mapping Parenting Support in the Irish Context
- ✓ Parental Participation baseline survey
- ✓ Parent Support Champions baseline questionnaire



Working with Families: A Review of the Literature on Parental Participation – Key Messages

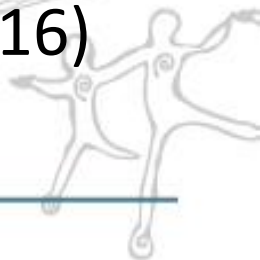
Barriers to participation may stem from a service, a professional or a user perspective and include:

- Working with large caseloads and limited resources, constrained by the nature of their role and agency imperatives, cultural or language barriers.

Key factors towards successful engagement include:

- Recognising parents as having a right to participate;
- Actively encouraging parents' to voice their opinions;
- Respecting their views and competencies;
- Being culturally responsive.

(Connolly and Devaney, 2016)



Mapping Parenting Support in the Irish Context

- The delivery of parenting supports in Ireland is multi-faceted
- Indirect supports for parents and families are fundamental to the delivery of parenting support
- Interagency working at a national and local level is an important element in the delivery of services
- Ongoing assessment of need is key to the planning of services (Connolly et al, 2017)



Parental Participation Survey

A baseline study of parental participation practice in Tusla and Tusla partner organisations

- Good levels of knowledge around certain elements of Tusla's programme of work in this area
- Some utilise participatory practices as part of their approach to working with parents
- Over half of all respondents identified challenges to working in participatory ways with parents



Parent Support Champions Questionnaire

Developed to ascertain expectations for the PSC role, views on the role to date, suggestions for role of PSC

- Many of the view that increased knowledge will enhance parenting support
- Main reasons for volunteering to become a PSC – to enhance knowledge and practice, support and empower parents

However, local area structures for parenting support are needed



Future Research Activity

- Parenting Support Champions
- Parental participation
- Overall impact of the parenting support and parental participation programme of work



Thank you!

Email: rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie

