

Package Two: Leading Inclusive Early Learning and Care Settings: The Role of the Inclusion Coordinator

Package Duration: 10 hours

Objectives:

- To understand the concept of distributed leadership in an early learning and care setting.
- To explore the concept of leadership as a relational, interactive, mutual, reciprocal and dialogical process.
- To develop pedagogical leadership for inclusion through interrogating the role of the INCLUSION COordinator as partner, facilitator, observer, and co-learner with educators, children, families, other professionals and the broader community.

Summary of Content:

Research suggests that distributed leadership practice is associated with improved organisational effectiveness, which in turn impact positively on children's outcomes (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson and Wahlstrom 2004; Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon and Yashkina 2007). O'Donovan (2016) identifies the essential components of distributed leadership as; moving the focus from the manager to include other potential formal and informal leaders; a concept of leadership as a relational, interactive, mutual, reciprocal and dialogical process; and a commitment to cultivating leadership practice and synergistic relations. As trust remains central to distributed leadership, a re-conceptualisation of traditional power structures to include 'lateral, flatter decision-making processes' (Harris and Spillane 2008, p.31) becomes necessary. However, Harris and Spillane (p.33) caution that collapsing hierarchical structures in itself will not equate with improved outcomes, pointing out that it is both 'the nature and quality of leadership practice that matters'. The complexity and efficacy of distributed leadership in early learning and care (ELC) settings will be explored through interrogating theory and exploring the application of theory through case-study analysis. Providing effectively for children in ELC settings requires effective administrative, management and pedagogical leadership. Administrative and management leadership require an understanding of relevant structures and processes combined with the competency to lead, while pedagogical leadership is concerned with 'leading or guiding the study of the teaching

and learning process', which requires an 'understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports the understanding of learning' (Coughlin and Baird 2013). The role of a pedagogical leader has been described as a partner, facilitator, observer and co-learner with educators, children and families underpinned by a commitment to building a culture of reflective practice, which supports colleagues in becoming researchers in pedagogical practice (ibid).

Key References/Sources:

Bays, D.A. and Crockett, J.B. (2007). 'Investigating Instructional Leadership for Special Education', *Exceptionality*, 15 (3), 143-161.

Breen, F., Ring, E., Stapleton, S. and Kelleher, S. (2018). 'LINC Programme: Enabling Leadership for Inclusion through an Innovative Competency-based Blended Adult Continuing Professional Learning Programme', *The Adult Learner* 2018, 99-115.

Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2006), *Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*, Dublin: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.

Coughlin, A.M. and Baird, L. (2013). *Pedagogical Leadership*, Ontario: Ministry of Education, http://edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/Baird_Coughlin.pdf, accessed 05 February 2020.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2016). *Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education*, Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs, <https://assets.gov.ie/38186/c9e90d89d94b41d3bf00201c98b2ef6a.pdf>, accessed 20 January 2020.

Department of Education and Skills. (2019). *Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Professional Education (Level 7 and Level 8) Degree Programmes for the Early Learning and Care (ELC) Sector in Ireland*, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/EarlyChildhood/professionalaward-criteria-and-guidelines-for-initial-professional-educationl7-8-degreeprogrammes-elc-ireland.pdf>, accessed 30 January 2020.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2017a). *Inclusive Early Childhood Education: New Insights and Tools – Contributions from a European Study*. (M. Kyriazopoulou, P. Bartolo, E. Björck-Åkesson, C. Giné and F. Bellour, eds.), Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education,

<https://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/inclusive-earlychildhoodeducation-new-insights-and-tools-contributions>, accessed 21 January 2020.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2017b). Inclusive Early Childhood Education: New Insights and Tools – Final Summary Report. (M. Kyriazopoulou, P. Bartolo, E. Björck-Åkesson, C. Giné and F. Bellour, eds.), Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/IECE-Summary-ENElectronic.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2020.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2017c). Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Literature Review. (F. Bellour, P. Bartolo and M. Kyriazopoulou, eds.). Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, <https://www.europeanagency.org/sites/default/files/IECE%20Literature%20Review.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2020.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2017d). Inclusive Early Childhood Education Environment Self-Reflection Tool. (E. Björck-Åkesson, M. Kyriazopoulou, C. Giné and P. Bartolo, eds.), Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, <https://www.europeanagency.org/sites/default/files/IECE%20Environment%20Self-Reflection%20Tool.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2020.

Fitzgerald, J. (2018) 'Leading learning for children with autism spectrum difference' in Ring, E., Daly, P. and Wall, E., eds., *Autism from the Inside out: Signposts for parents, early childhood, primary, post-primary and special school settings*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 243 – 264.

Government of Ireland. (2018a). *First Five: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028*, Dublin: The Government Publications Office, <https://assets.gov.ie/31184/62acc54f4bdf4405b74e53a4afb8e71b.pdf>, accessed 12 January 2020.

Government of Ireland. (2018b). *First Five: Report on the National Consultation with Young Children*, Dublin: The Government Publications Office, <https://assets.gov.ie/34574/2b9355febe2542ac871aa69d2fc4a96a.pdf> accessed 12 January 2020.

Hallet, E. (2014). *Leadership of Learning in Early Years Practice*, London: Institute of Education, University of London. Harris, A. and Spillane, J. (2016). 'Distributed Leadership through the Looking Glass', *Management in Education*, 22(1), 31-34, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.469.5942&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, accessed 05 February 2020.

Heaney, S., Ring, E., Breen, F. and Heaney, T. (2019). 'The efficacy of Communal Leadership for Inclusion: Interim Evaluation Findings from the LINC Programme', Presented at the 8th International Research Methods' Summer School, May 24-25, 2019, Limerick: Mary Immaculate College.

Leithwood, K., Seashore-Louis, K., Anderson, S. and Wahlstrom, K. (2004); How Leadership influences Student Learning: A Review of Research for the Learning from Leadership Project, New York: Wallace Foundation.

Leithwood, K., Mascal, B., Strauss, T., Sacks, R., Memon, N. and Yashkina, A. (2007). Distributing Leadership to make Schools Smarter, University of Toronto, OISE.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009). Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, Dublin: The Stationery Office.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2015). Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide, Dublin, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, www.ncca.ie/en/PracticeGuide , accessed 19 January 2020.

O'Donovan, M. (2016). Distributed Leadership. Professional Development Service for Teachers, <https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Distributed%20Leadership%20Web%20Version.pptx> , accessed 05 February 2020.

Ring, E. O'Sullivan, L., Ryan, M. and Daly, P. (2020). Leading Inclusion from the Inside Out: A Handbook for Parents and Early Childhood Teachers in Early Learning and Care, Primary and Special School Settings, Oxford: Peter Lang.