

Including children's voices in a multiple stakeholder study on a community wide approach to improving quality in early years setting



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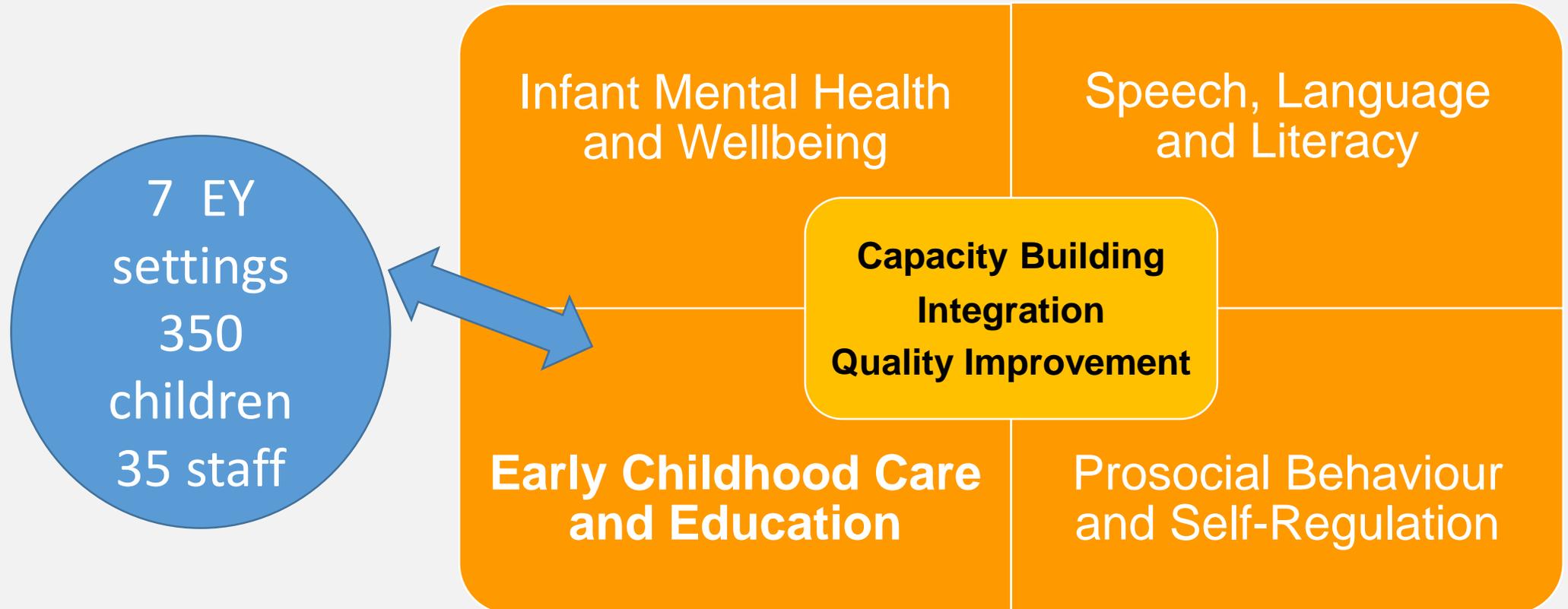
Research aims and overview



- This paper will present research findings on the impact of a **quality improvement strategy** enacted in 7 early years' settings in a community-wide early intervention project.
- It will present **multiple stakeholder perspectives including children.**
- This paper will focus specifically on the findings related to **adult-child interactions** and quality improvements.

What is the Young Knocknaheeny Area Based Childhood Programme (YK)?

Irish Government funded multi-disciplinary area-based prevention and early intervention programme.



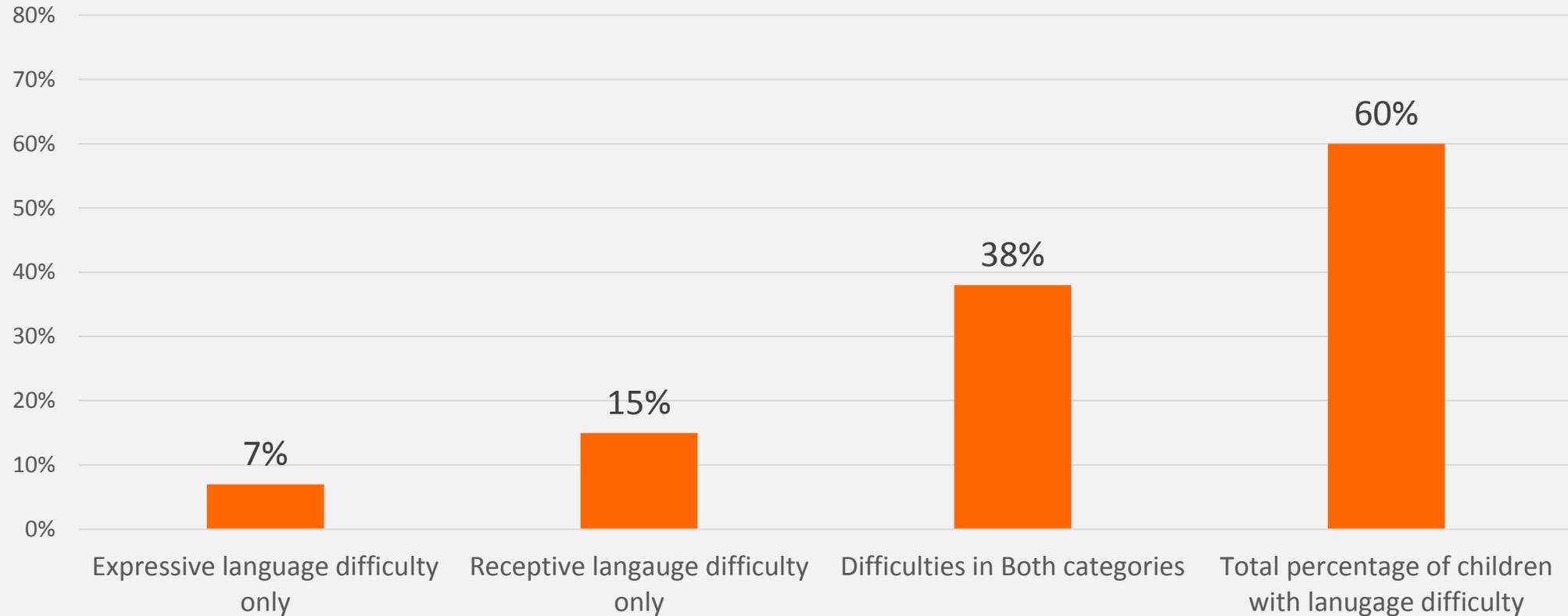
YK catchment area demographic profile

(Total population 12,000)

	YK catchment area (% population)	Ireland (% population)
Post secondary education (≥15 years)	17%	44%
Unemployed	30%	15%
Renting from Local Authority	38%	8%
Ethnicity – White Irish	90%	85%
Private households with Children	52%	49%
Children under 15	21%	21%
Families with children under 15:		
Couples with Children	45%	78%
Lone mothers	54%	21%
Lone Fathers	1.5%	1.5%

Speech & Language Difficulties

PLS5 May/June 2015 (n=117 Junior Infants in 4 schools)





What is our Early Years Care and Education quality improvement strategy

- High/Scope curriculum training, Montessori curriculum enhancement
- Hanen Learning Language and Loving It training
- On Site specialist mentoring- focus on implementation
- Environmental enhancement fund
- Increased Parental Engagement and supports
- Within Aistear/Siolta Framework

Staff Participation in training:

- 28 practitioners from 7 EY centres participated in training programmes 2015-2017
- 700 children benefitted from the implementation of language training, curriculum training, and environmental enhancement programmes across the 7 EY centres over a two year period

Evaluation: Mixed methods approach



Quantitative methods

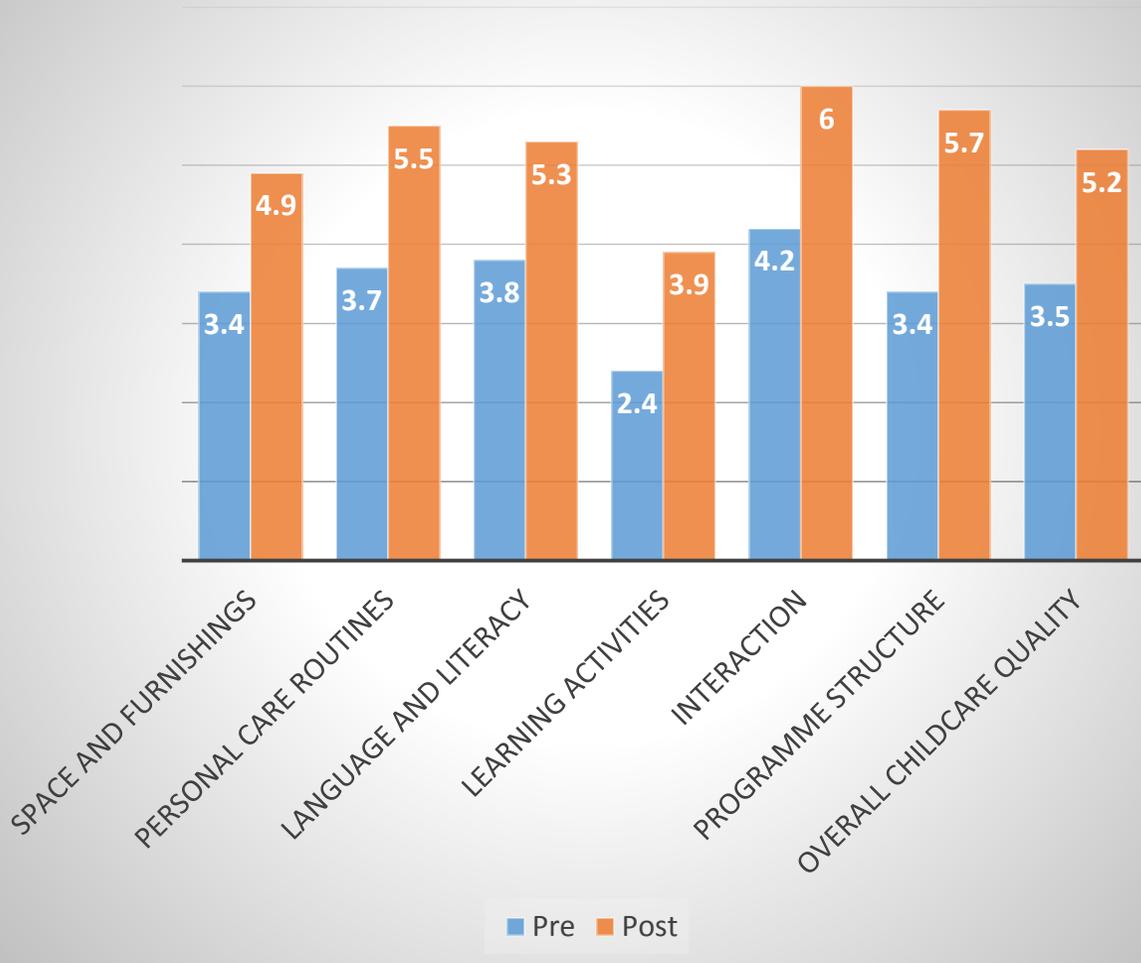
- **ECERS-3 and ITERS-R** assessments were conducted at each of the chosen 7 EY centres at baseline (2015) and post-programme (2017).

Qualitative methods

- ***Staff voice***: Semi-structured *Interviews*: Small group and individual interviews with EY educators (n=9). 1 *Focus Group* with 5 service managers.
- ***Children's' voices***: participatory research with 3-4 years old children (N=12). Participatory and visual methods and methodology informed by Article 12 UN CRC and draws on the “*Mosaic approach*” (Clark and Moss, 2011).
- Ethics considerations

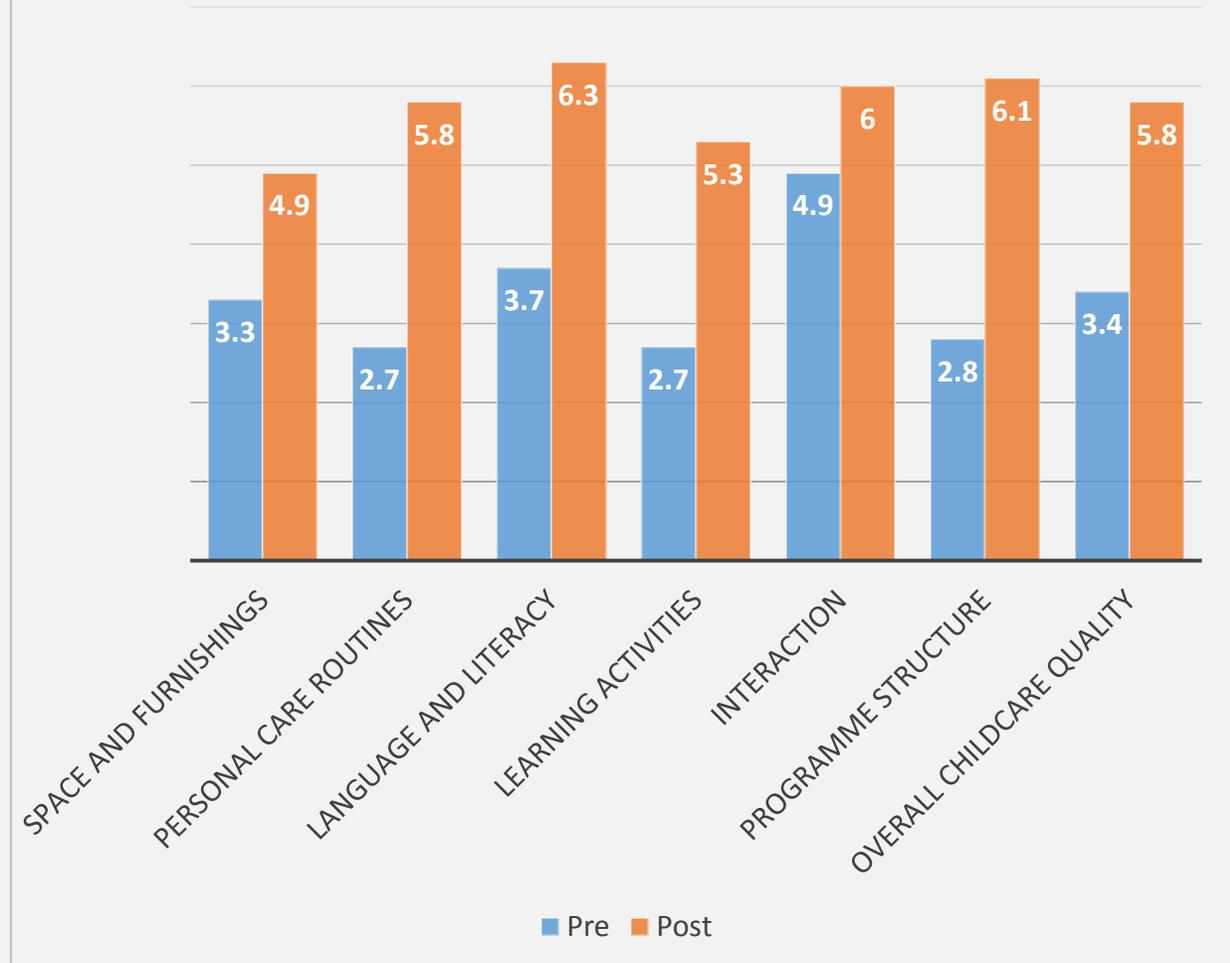
Pre and post intervention ECERS

Overall ECERS-3 Results by Subscale



Pre and Post Intervention ITERS

Overall ITERS-R Results by Subscale



Staff voice findings:



- Staff capacity building was a major theme, and recognition of positive impact on children as a result
- Empowerment, increased confidence, a stronger sense of being valued and better relationships with managers all noted
- Managers noted service delivery changed for the better, especially in regard to improved child behaviour
- Environmental enhancement work and onsite mentor support were crucial to effective implementation
- Outside area was recognized as an equally important part of classroom by staff

Children's voices; participatory research methods



- **Picture Book and Story Telling for informed consent:** Picture book about the research project; 'Narrative non-fiction' approach (Mayne et al 2016).
- **Photo elicitation methods** (Alaca, B. et al. 2017)
- **Talk and draw methods**
- **Photovoice methods** -digital cameras and discussion of photos with children. Children's photos act as basis for interviews (Einarsdottir ,2014)
- Facilitation of non-verbal children

Photo elicitation and talk and draw



Photo Voice



Key themes emerging from children's data

- Peer friendships
- Emotions/feelings/self-regulation
- Positive view of staff (Key Worker)
- Indoor play and spaces
- Materials and activities
- Selfies
- Transitions and structure in the daily routine
- Food and the kitchen space



Are ITERs and ECERs results reflected in child-led data gathering?

Activities and materials in the setting

- many interesting materials for children to choose.
- good provision for fine motor development

Interactions

- **Staff were fully involved** with children throughout the entire session.



Children's Peer Interactions

ITERS: **Children's peer** interactions are supported and staff encourage them to play together and to be considerate towards others.

'I found my voice, I found how to talk to children and how to solve problems by talking. They have found their voice too, how to solve their own problems. This morning I watched as two children began to fight, they actually apologised to each other... before they would have just thumped each other and walked away'. EY worker with 20 years experience



Socio-emotional language and regulation; 'good choices' and 'bad choices'

Example 1

Child 1: That is our school where the library is, that is Sean trying to get some Lego. He was making bad choices.

Researcher: Why?

Child 1: Because it was cleanup time.



Example 2

Child 2: He is probably making a bad choice (*boy is talking to the teacher*)

Researcher asks why is he making a bad choice?

Child 2: He probably hit Jay and Mary (teacher) would say that was a bad choice. I am good choices every day like when I am eating in my nana's.



Concluding comments on adult-child interactions and quality improvements

- Evidence of improved programme structure in staff and child data
- Evidence of positive adult-child interactions in staff and child data
- Staff recognition of outside area as equally important part of classroom not reflected in children's data
- Parents and parental involvement limited in child data



Reflection on methods

- Children liked the camera activity
- Children found it difficult to pick photos they did not like
- **Child:** *No sad face – because I hate sad faces, I like all the photos*
- Some differences emerged between *Photo-elicitation*; *Talk and draw and PhotoVoice*: Concrete versus abstract discussions and themes
- Children in setting have complex needs- participatory approach allows different voices to emerge and allows children generate their own data



References

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- Mayne, F., Howitt, C. & Rennie, L. (2016) Meaningful informed consent with young children: looking forward through an interactive narrative approach, *Early Child Development and Care*, 186:5.

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