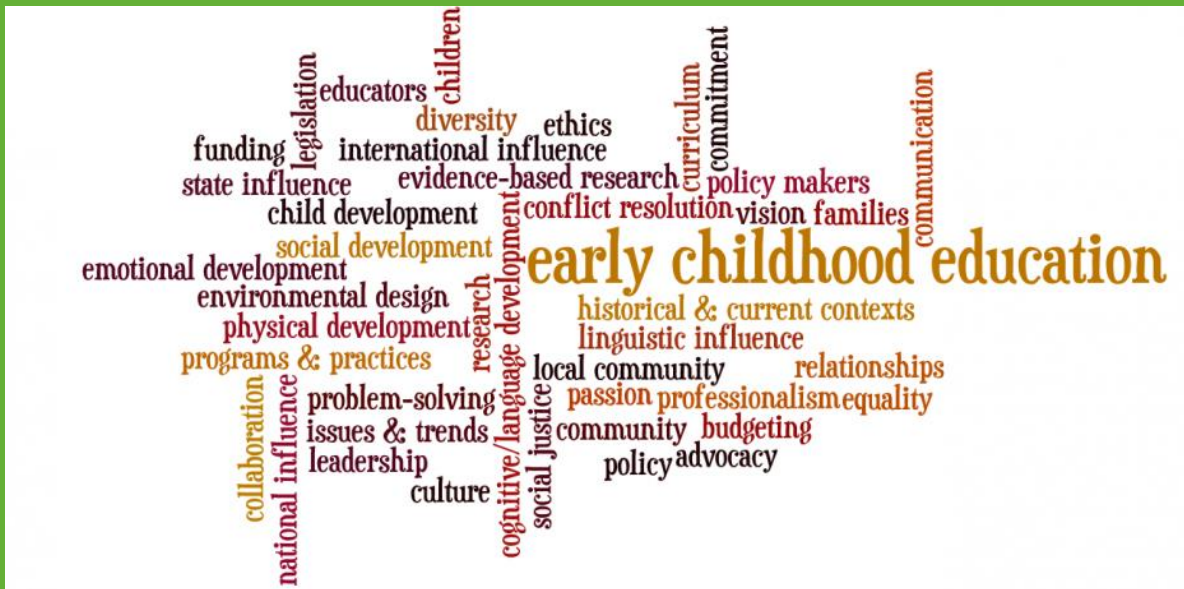


# Professionalism in the Early Years

An Exploration



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# Overview

- What is 'professionalism'?
- The training and qualification of early years practitioners
- Professional registration and regulation
- Un-registered early years services (childminding)
- A Code of Ethics
- Professional practice
- Next steps

**Professional** is not a label you give yourself- it's a description you hope others will apply to you.

- David Maister



# What is 'professionalism'?

Back in the nineteenth century, the professions were defined as law, religion, and medicine. Nowadays, the number of professions is much wider and ever-increasing, as occupations become more specialised in nature and more 'professionalised' in terms of requiring certain standards of initial and ongoing education

# What is 'professionalism'?

**A profession is something a little more than a job, it is a career for someone that wants to be part of society, who becomes competent in their chosen sector through training; maintains their skills through continuing professional development (CPD); and commits to behaving ethically, to protect the interests of the public.**

# A Profession...



Sexton, 2007

# What is 'professionalism'?

“He/She was soooo unprofessional!”

- Lack of knowledge and skill
- Disrespect for others
- Lack of reflection
- Lack of objectivity and distance
- No empathy and altruism



# The training and qualification of early years practitioners

- Until recently no minimum qualification
- Now level 5, for increased funding higher levels
- Unregistered services (childminding, school age) no minimum qualification
- No clear standards for training and qualifications

# Un-registered early years services (childminding)

- We don't know who they are
- Only a tiny proportion are registered
- Programme for Government
- Childminding Reform Group
- The loneliness of childminding
- Barnardos' response



# Early Years Forum professionalisation sub-group

- Name
- Pay and conditions
- Professional body
- Apprenticeships
- Code of Ethics

# A Code of Ethics

- United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child
- Síolta
- Extensive consultation
- Early Years Forum – DCYA
- Short: preamble, values and principles
- Read in current ChildLinks

# What is Reflective Practice?

Reflective practice, as a concept for learning, was introduced into many professions in the 1980's. It is seen as one of the ways that professionals learn from experience in order to understand and develop their practice. Basically reflective practice means that we learn by thinking about things that have happened to us and looking at them in a different way, which enables us to take some kind of action.

# Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice

Practising in a professional manner requires that individuals have skills, knowledge, values and attitudes appropriate to their role and responsibility within the setting. In addition, it requires regular reflection upon practice and engagement in supported, ongoing professional development.

## Síolta Component 11.3

The setting supports and promotes regular opportunity for practitioners to reflect upon and review their practice and contribute positively to the development of quality practice in the setting

# Education Focussed Inspections

“... Co-professional dialogue and two-way engagement with practitioners in ECCE settings will be a foundation stone of the relationship between the Inspectorate and centres... and with the wider groups of Early Years stakeholders”

# Benefits of professional practice

- A deeper understanding by practitioners of their own practice
- Greater effectiveness
- Validation of the practitioner's ideals
- Beneficial challenges to traditional approaches
- Recognition of practice as 'professional'
- Respect for diversity and inclusion

# Next steps

- Workforce development
- Code of ethics
- Childminding reform







Any Questions?