

From Conflict to Peace-building the Power of an Early Childhood Initiative in Northern Ireland

Starting Early/Fostering Positive Attitudes in Young Children

Siobhán Fitzpatrick, July 2015, Washington
Multiculturalism, identity and diversity in
early years.

early years
the organisation for young children
media initiative for children



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AN ROINN
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MÁNSYSTRE O
Lear

“Ready for peace prepared for war!”

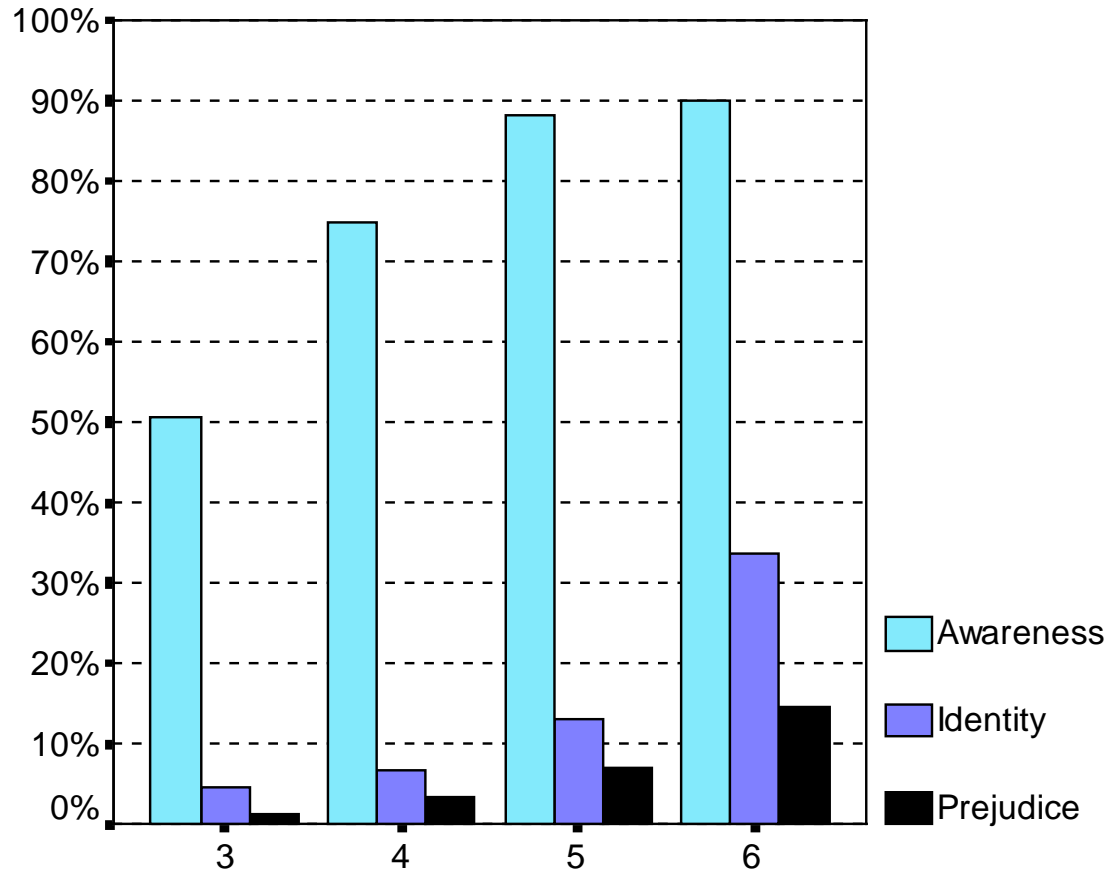


Research - Too Young to Notice?

Connolly (2001)

Percentage of three year olds who show:	Catholics	Protestants
Ethnic Preferences	18%	3%
Ethnic Awareness	34%	15%
Ethnic Identity	36%	60%
Ethnic Prejudices	64%	40%

Concerning data - a challenge to the sector



Pilot Media Initiative Respecting Difference Programme 2003

Service Design Components

- 6 x 60 second cartoons.
- Respecting Difference curriculum.
- Resource pack for early years services and parents.
- Training programme for teachers, parents and management boards/actors of change.
- Support for implementation by Early Years Specialist staff who act as critical friend/agent of change.



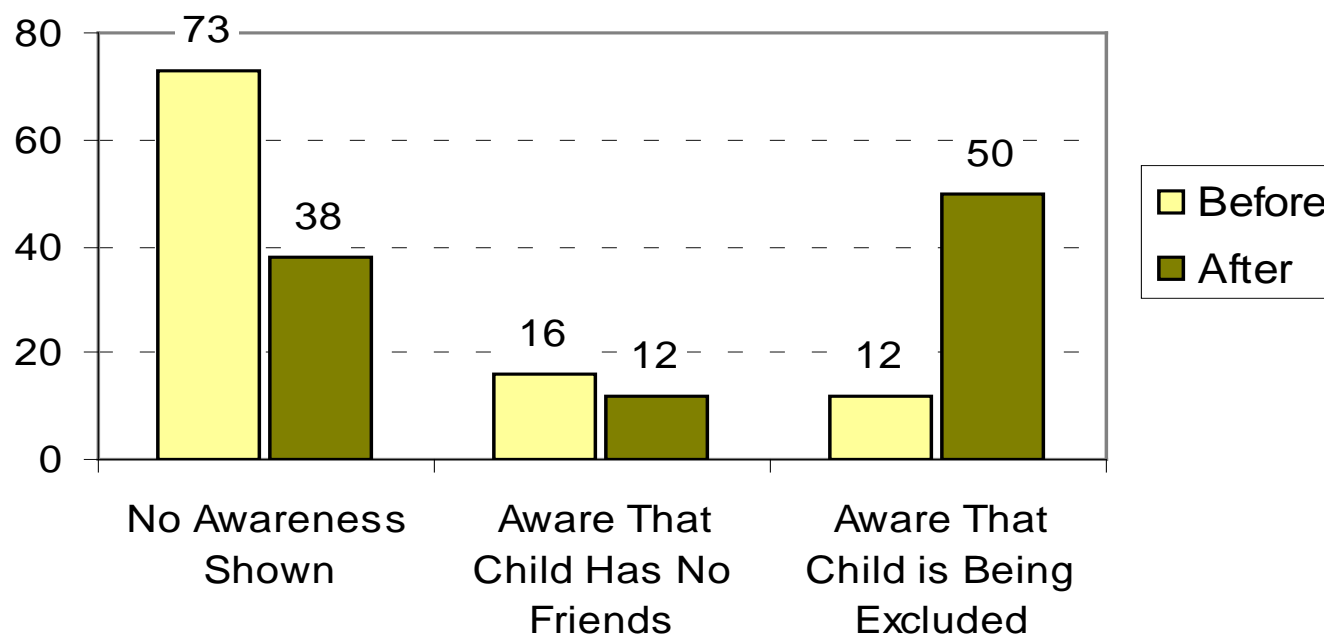
Pilot Programme 2003



- Quasi experimental design with 10 pre-school settings.
- Five received the programme, five were in a control group.
- Measured children's attitudes before and after the programme:
 - ✓ ability to understand how being excluded made someone feel;
 - ✓ ability to recognise instances of exclusion;
 - ✓ willingness to play with others who were different.

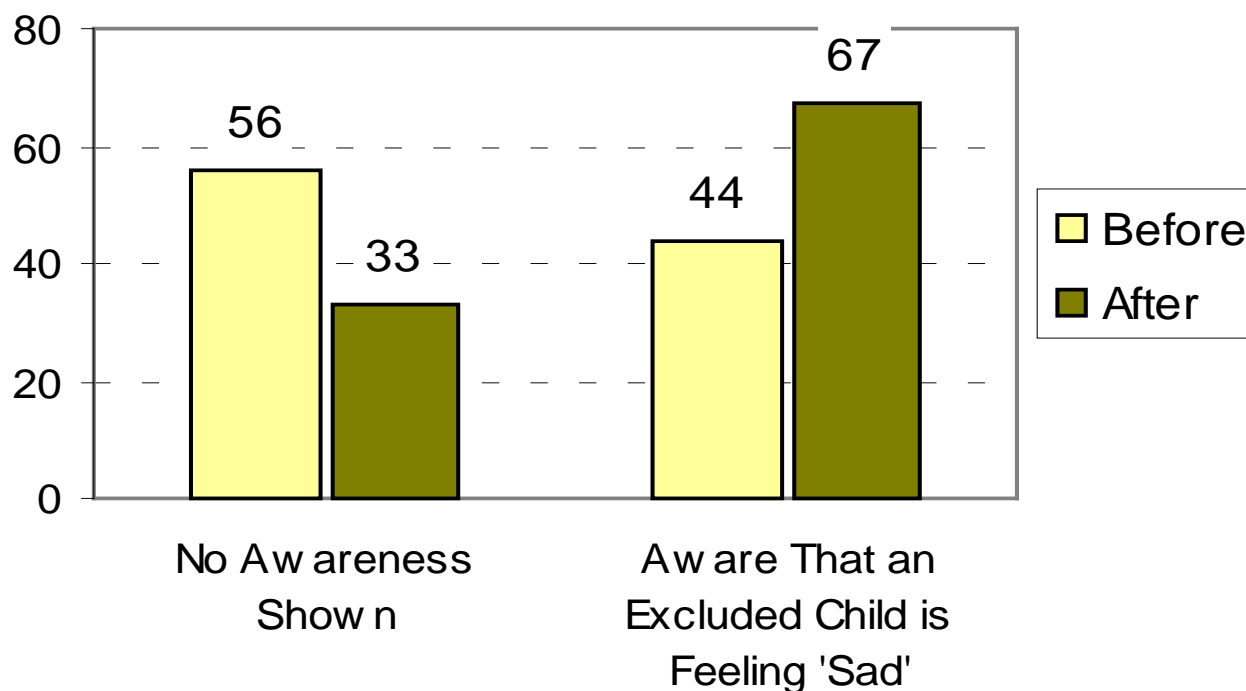
Pilot Programme Results

1. Ability to recognise instances of exclusion without prompting



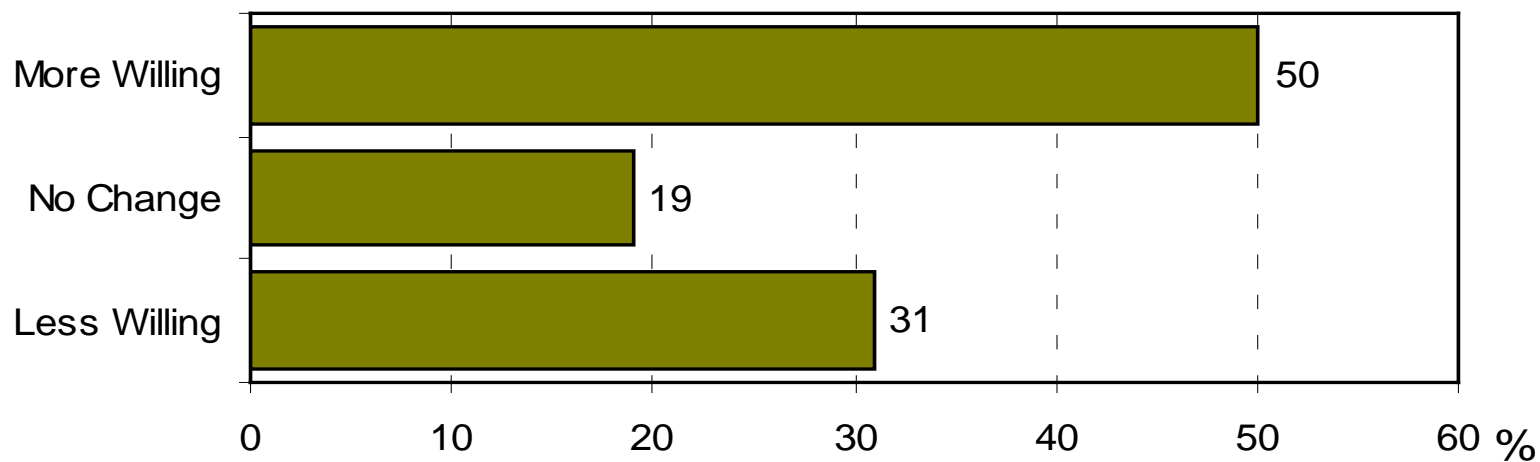
Pilot Programme Results

2. Ability to understand how being excluded makes someone feel



Pilot Programme Results

3. Willingness to play with others, including those who are different



Pilot Programme Results



Summary of Results

After just three weeks, the pilot programme was found to increase children's:

- willingness to play with others including some of those who are different to themselves;
- ability to understand how being excluded makes someone feel;
- ability to recognise instances of exclusion without prompting;
- 2005 follow up, 1,000 children study published in the International Journal of Early Education.

Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme Full Programme Development

- Development of 6 x 60 second cartoons (racism, sectarianism, physical discrimination, Irish Travellers and bullying) new message on rural discrimination recently launched.
- National TV coverage on adult/children's programming three times per year/three weeks.
- Recognition of the power and role of the media.
- Awareness, ownership and safety.



Resources

- Help children learn about and express feelings/breaking the culture of silence and growing emotional resilience and self-regulation.
- Open up conversations in a developmentally appropriate way about some of the symbols which have caused, and are still causing, conflict in Northern Ireland in an effort to normalise these.
- Create a model of empowering children (children as actors) to take part in discussions about inclusion rather than waiting until they are 'old enough to communicate' according to adult expectations.
- Local relevance, culturally and contextually appropriate.

Resources are designed to:

Help children talk about symbols which have caused, and still cause, conflict in Northern Ireland.



Training for Teachers, Parents and Management Teams

- Four days initial training.
- One day follow-up training.
- Cluster support training seven x five hours support visits and three x three hour cluster training.
- Three x two hour parents' workshops.
- One x two hour training workshop for management committee.



Reflecting on Prejudices

- An important part of the training is enabling participants (teachers and parents) to reflect on their first memories of difference.
- Providing a safe training environment for people to have a meaningful dialogue about culture and ethnicity.
- Encourage dialogue around symbols and issues of conflict.



Parents as Key Partners

- Home activities
- Parent workshops
- Outreach programmes



Community engagement and empowerment

- A community development approach.
- Social justice, participation, self-determination, sustainable communities.
- Community change model.



Programme roll out – going to scale

- 80 pre-school settings per year in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- 5,000 children per year involved in the Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme.
- 240 pre-school staff trained annually.
- Rigorous implementation coupled with randomised controlled evaluation, qualitative process evaluation and participatory evaluation.
- Outcomes focus/measurement of changes in the behaviour and attitudes of children, parents and teachers.
- Research results involving further 3,000 children in 2008/09, published in October 2010.
- Advocacy programme with likely and unlikely allies.
- Evidence-based practice leading to changes in education policy

2010 Research findings

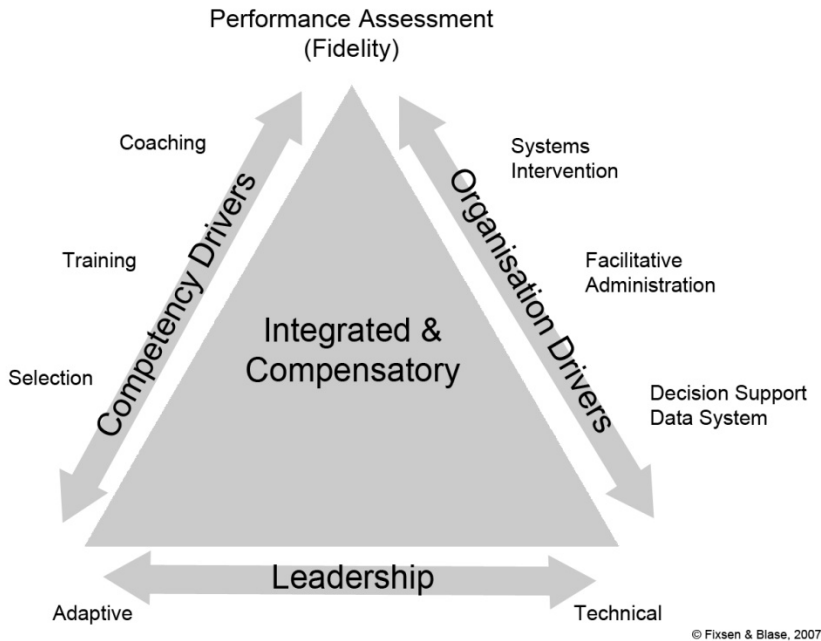
Randomised controlled trial and qualitative case study approach:

- 80 pre-school settings, 40 in control and 40 in implementation both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- Key findings (randomised controlled trial involving 1,181 children, 868 parents, 232 teachers).
- Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme achieved positive effects regarding children's attitudes and awareness in relation to:
 - Socio emotional development.
 - Cultural awareness.
 - Inclusive behaviour.
 - No differences in effect were found between boys and girls.
 - Catholic and Protestant children.
 - Children from different socio economic backgrounds.
 - Children in Northern Ireland and children in the Republic of Ireland.
 - Positive changes in the attitudes of parents and practitioners.
 - Positive changes in their confidence and ability to address diversity work with young children.

Key findings

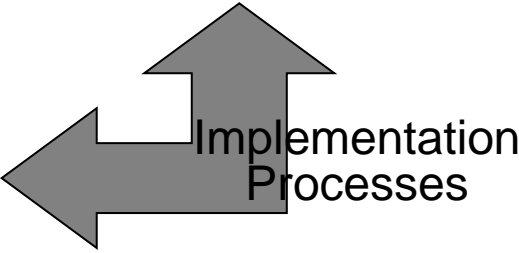
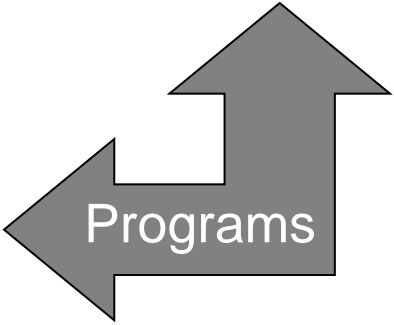
Qualitative Case Study

- Key to successful implementation.
- Quality of the experiential and content-based training.
- Ongoing support by the Early Years Specialist to support implementation.
- Contextually appropriate resources reflecting real issues for children.
- The focus on socio emotional development and emotional intelligence as the precursor for targeted diversity and inclusion work.
- Engaging meaningfully with parents and the local community.
- Effective and committed leadership from the setting management team.



Early Years Organisational Logframe

Media Initiative Respecting Difference Outcomes for Children



Implementation Teams

- Professional Content Team

Implementation Fidelity

- Connect System
- Participatory Evaluation

Intervention Fidelity

- MIFC Service Design
- EYS Support Form
- Programme Components

Exploration
Installation
Initial Implementation
Full Implementation



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Local

Hope and History Rhyme

“History says don’t hope on this side of the grave.

**But then once in a lifetime, the longed for tidal wave of justice can rise up
and hope and history rhyme.**

**So hope for a great sea change on the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore is reachable from this place.
Believe in miracles and cures and healing wells.”**

Seamus Heaney (Fila) (Poet) Nobel Laureate

The Cure at Troy

Contacts

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or visit our website www.early-years.org

