



10th Annual
Research
Conference
2018

NDA: research to policy and back again

Dr Gráinne Collins & Dharragh Hunt
National Disability Authority



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council for Special Education

Educational Experiences and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs

A Secondary Analysis of Data from
the Growing Up in Ireland Study

Jude Cosgrove, Caroline McKeown, Joseph Travers, Zita Lysaght, Órla Ní Bhroin and Peter Archer

NCSE RESEARCH REPORTS NO: 17





Expectations of parents

- On page 137 “Table 5.3 shows, ..., that children in all other SEN groups are substantially and significantly less likely to be expected to study for a degree.”
- We know that one of the biggest predictors of educational (therefore work) outcomes are parental expectations
 - E.g Smyth (2010) Understanding Parental Influence on Educational Outcomes Among 9 Year Olds in Ireland: The Mediating Role of Resources, Attitudes and Children’s Own Perspectives
- Red light flashed for the NDA

Parental Educational Expectations of Children with Disabilities

Joanne Banks, Bertrand Maître,
Selina McCoy and Dorothy Watson

RESEARCH SERIES
NUMBER 50



Expectations

- Banks et al found that, in some cases, parental expectations were lower than might be expected based on the actual academic achievement of the child
- Expectations were influenced by:
 - Child's academic development (lower scores lower expectations)
 - Gender (expect less of boys)
 - Educational attainment of the parents (less expectation if you haven't gone to third level)
 - Parent-child relationship (conflict lowers expectations)



Expectations

- I was working with the HSE on a completely unrelated project and mentioned this research to the person I was working with – Anne Melly
- For Anne that was a ‘Ha!’ moment because in parallel the HSE was engaging in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy and were trying to increase the employment of people with a disability
- Anne convened a group of Allied Health Professionals who conducted research among their HSE members. This showed:
 - Employment came up when AHP were dealing with PWD but a) AHP didn’t know how to guide people but b) AHP were happy to talk about future careers
- Result will be guidelines on signposting people for careers guidance.



- That wasn't a straight line from research top policy making but it's even more nebulous than that:
 - Every time the NDA interacts with education or parents groups we know that the ability of children with a disability is being underestimated
 - Every time the NDA interacts with the media or communications companies we'll stress the need for positive representations of people with disability



Review of Overage Exemptions for ECCE

- ECCE 'free pre-school year' introduced in 2010
- No supports for children with disabilities in ECCE
- Some flexibility on attendance pattern (spreading 'year' over 2 years) and on starting age - **ECCE 'Overage Exemptions'**
- Approx. **500** apply & receive 'Overage Exemptions'
- AIM (Access and Inclusion Model) rolled out in September 2016
- ECCE expanding to 2 years from September 2018
- Decision to cease offering 'Overage Exemptions'
- Decision paused, review, hear from parents
- DCYA and DES asked NDA to conduct the review

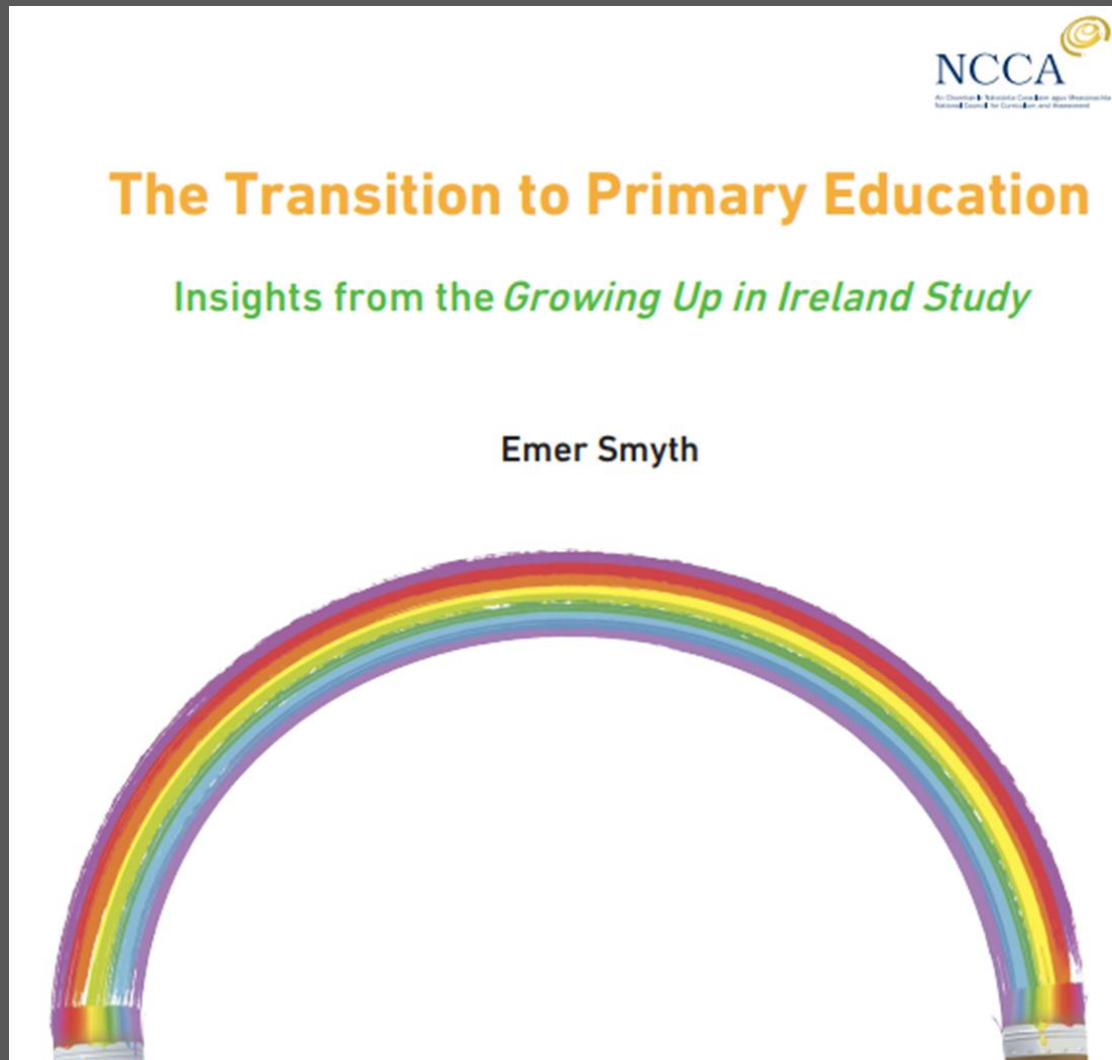


Review of Overage Exemptions for ECCE

- Initially considered using GUI data
- Reviewed admin data, redacted OE application files, available literature
- Investigated administrative procedures in other countries
- Engaged with stakeholders, Open Policy Debate
- Surveyed parents who had received an OE in 2017 – 2018
- Conducted interviews with some of these parents
- **Strengths** - information on a very specific issue; very rich information on parents' views and experiences. **Limitations** - small nos., no comparison, point in time
- **Transitions** emerged as a key issue



Smyth, The Transition to Primary Education: Insights from GUI Study, 2018

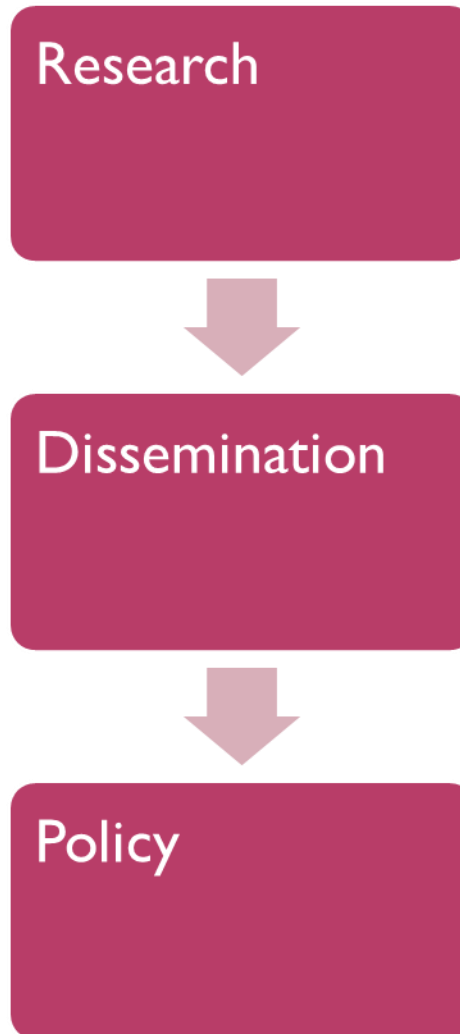




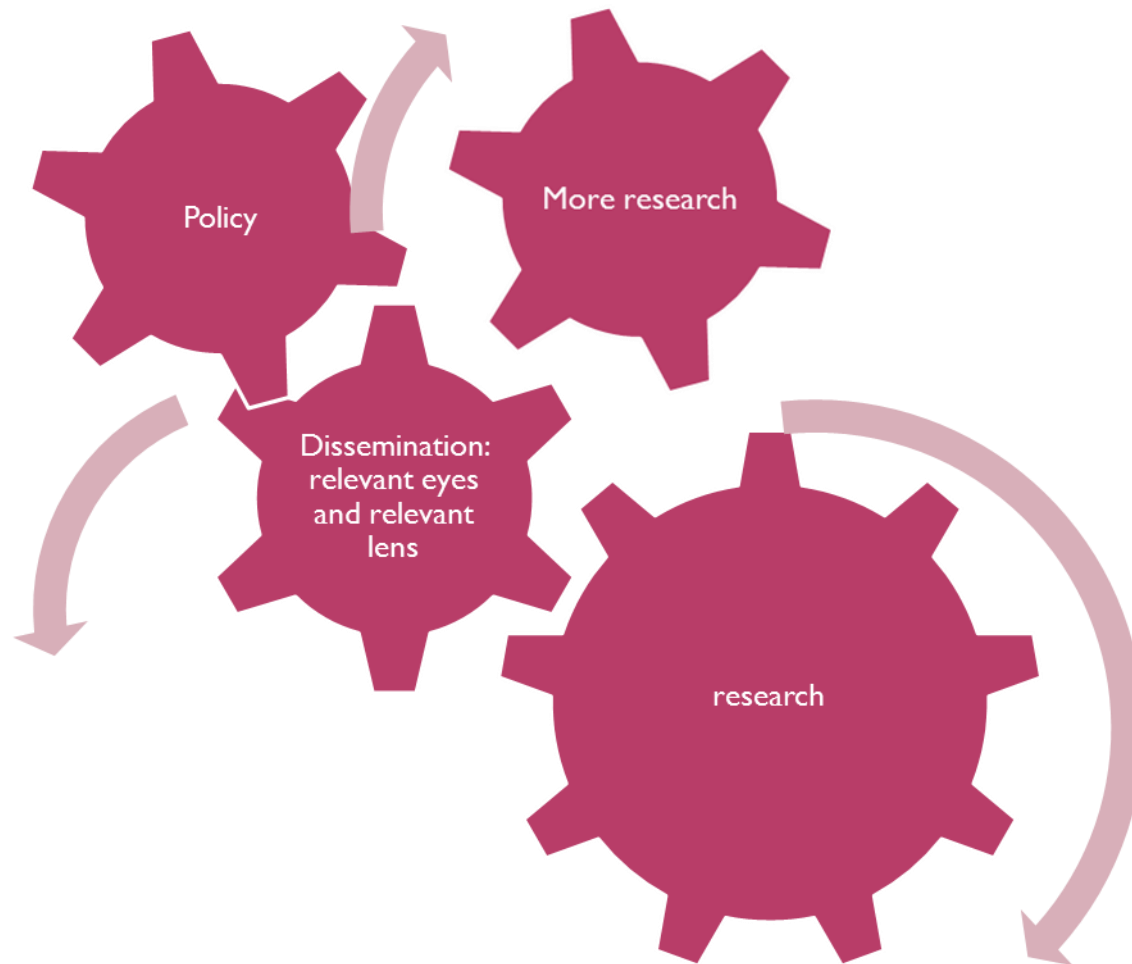
Smyth, The Transition to Primary Education: Insights from GUI Study, 2018

- Other factors being equal, those with disabilities start school significantly later than other children (pg. 27)
- **The greatest transition difficulties are found among children with disabilities (pg. 57)**
- Did we come full circle on relevance of GUI to Review questions?
- NCCA / Smyth report emerges as an important source of evidence for framing the Review's findings in a broader context
- Research – policy relationship? Non-linear, emergent

Linear policy making



Actual policy making





Critical factors

- Research gets to the right desk
- Timeliness
- Personal contacts
- Often a need to triangulate original research
- or a need to narrow the focus