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University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

1. Title

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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3. Abstract

This article will explore the use of visual participatory research methods with young children. These methods have been utilised to add young children's voices to research on the impact of a quality improvement strategy in an early years' settings involved in a community-based prevention and early intervention programme. The main objective of the intervention programme is to measurably improve the lives of children (pre-birth to six years) and families through universal and targeted services in an urban community which experiences high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The quality improvement strategy included the introduction of Highscope curriculum training and onsite staff mentoring. This was a participatory project and the research questions emerged from the photographs and subsequent narratives which the children produced. Children were offered the opportunity to share their views with the

researchers through a variety of participatory rights-based approaches including drawing, photo-elicitation, photography, and conversations. In adding children's voices to the programme evaluation the research can help us to understand children's experiences and produces better policy and better services and also to interrogate the adult-centric quantitative data and adult perspectives generated in the ongoing project evaluation.

4. Key words

Early intervention, participatory research with children, Photovoice

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6. **Biographical note.**

Dr Shirley Martin is the Co-Director of the Early Years and Childhood Studies programme in University College Cork and a lecturer in the School of Applied Social Studies in University College Cork since 2004. Her research interests relate to early years care and education and partnership with parents in educational settings. She has also conducted a number of research projects in the area of child and youth participation and has developed a number of youth-led research projects.

Lynn Buckley is a Research Assistant and Information Officer with the Young Knocknaheeny Area based Childcare Programme and a graduate of the Masters in Public Health Programme, University College Cork.