



Early Childhood Education and Care: Policy and Practice

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'A much needed book that uniquely brings together policy and practice in early childhood education and care across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It offers a wealth of information and useful websites and addresses so that, importantly, readers can keep abreast of the rapidly changing external environment in these countries... An essential read for those wishing to understand the background to policy and practice in early childhood education and care' - *Linda Miller, The Open University*

'This book is long overdue; it provides effective cameos of developments in each country, highlighting key legislation, the underlying philosophy, the formation of policies and their implementation in state, voluntary and private provision' - *The International Journal of Early Childhood*

'This unique resource will be invaluable in helping students and others trying to understand the context of current early years provision. The case studies bring the book to life and ground it in the stories of real children and their families. They highlight how the similarities and differences in support for children and their families are more dependent on where they live than what they need' - *Lesley Staggs*

Early childhood education and care policy has an impact on the daily lives of early years practitioners and the families and children they work with, and practising and trainee early childhood professionals need to have an understanding of current policy as well as the contexts for policy-making and implementation. Currently, the majority of textbooks for early years education and early childhood students in the UK focus on the situation in England. As a result, readers may have a skewed perspective on policy and practice, and not be aware of the varying and different contexts in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Also, those working in settings not in England have to work hard to apply texts to their own contexts.

In contrast, this book gives the reader easy access to information on the policies and practices in ECEC across each of the countries in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Each chapter covers:

- o background information

- o policy and practice in early childhood education and care

- o transition

- o schooling and curriculum

- o quality assurance, examination and inspection

- o professional development and training

- o future and imminent changes

- o case studies of children's lives.

In addition to describing the legislative, political and practical situation in each country, the book enables comparisons to be drawn, and helps readers interpret the data critically.

It will be essential reading for modules on comparative education and international perspectives, but will also form a foundation for all modules involving policy and provision on Early Years Education, Early Childhood or Childhood Studies courses. Practitioners undertaking CPD modules or foundation degrees, and international students looking for comparative data will also find the book useful.

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