Early Education Alignment
Reflecting on Context, Curriculum and Pedagogy

Halpern (2013) observes that in the US ‘…. the idea of joining Early Childhood Education and schooling has gained currency in the educational reform arena’ (p. 1). This trend can be seen in Ireland also. *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* (2009) prompted greater attention to the educational dimension of provision for children from birth to 6 years. It also created a bridge between the variety of early childhood settings, which had grown over the previous decade and the infant classes of the primary school. More recently, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has begun the redevelopment of the primary school curriculum. This work focuses initially on language, mathematics, and Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics for children in junior infants to second class (4-8/9 years of age).

These developments provide an important impetus for discussion on what early childhood education means and looks like for children and teachers, and what implications this has for curriculum development and practice. In partnership with the NCCA, the Researching Early Childhood Education Collaborative at the School of Education in Trinity College is hosting a symposium entitled ‘Early Education Alignment’. The symposium is organised around four key topics:

- Does Terminology Matter?
- Professional Identity
- Learning Environments
- Multiple Transition

Each topic is contextualised by a short research paper.

The symposium is one of a series of RECEC activities critically interrogating and reflecting on research in early childhood education. This work will contribute to children’s early learning and development through supporting and enriching the emerging research community, informing policy decisions, and enhancing early years pedagogy.