

# **An Exploration of the Strengths and Abilities of Adults and Children in Urban Band 1 DEIS Primary Schools**



# INTRODUCTION

- Background
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusion and Recommendations
- Relevance to Social Care
- Bibliography



(Image 1)

# BACKGROUND

- LIT Social Care Graduate(2012 to 2015)
- Member of Social Care Ireland
- MATCC

(Masters of Arts in Therapeutic Child Care,  
Carlow College - 2015 to 2017)

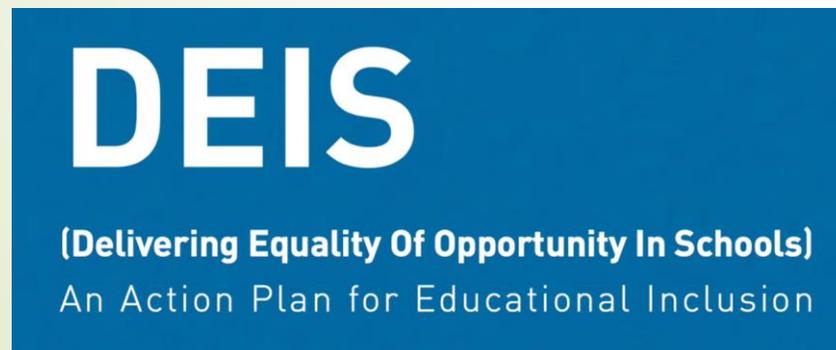


**CARLOW  
COLLEGE**  
ST. PATRICK'S

(Image 2)

# BACKGROUND

- Working as a part-time School Completion project worker in the Mid-West in Urban Band 1 DEIS schools



(Image 3)



(Image 4)

# BACKGROUND



(Image 5)

- MATCC was established to promote a child-centred and therapeutic quality of professional residential care for children and young people
- Application of these qualities in Urban Band One DEIS primary schools

# BACKGROUND

- Schools have the potential to be a place where vulnerable children's needs can be identified and where support can be offered in a consistent and reliable manner



(Image 6)



# METHODOLOGY

- Six adult women who have been working in DEIS schools for more than five years participated in semi-structured interviews



(Image 9)

# METHODOLOGY

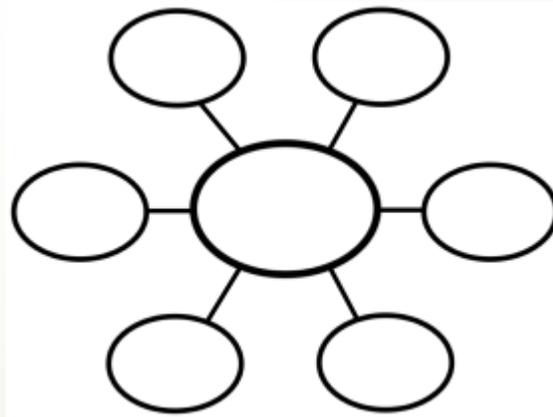
1. Mainstream Teacher
2. Resource Teacher
3. Special Needs Assistant
4. Principal of a Primary School
5. Home School Community Liaison person
6. School Completion Programme Coordinator



(Image 10)

# METHODOLOGY

- Interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed through a phenomenological framework



(Image 11)

# METHODOLOGY

- Ethical approval was sought and received from the Carlow College research ethics panel
- Participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality



(Image 12)

# METHODOLOGY

## ➤ Limitations:

As this research was a small scale/postgrad project the sample was limited to two county Dublin school communities and only women participated, which are limitations in the study.



(Image 13)

# FINDINGS

- Children's needs are being identified in DEIS schools

(Participant 4)

*"...an awful lot of children come to school not ready to learn for whatever reason...they could be leaving a house in the morning having to get themselves up, having to dress themselves, that they're anxious and stressed already and then you are expecting them to sit at a table and hold a pen and write...."*



## FINDINGS

*“They have built up a defense mechanism so that’s why maybe they come across as nearly over aggressive, they are ready to attack, they are nearly programmed to, that’s how they survive, it’s a survival technique...”* (Participant 3)

*“Your job in a school like this is to help a child repair, regulate and get in the learning zone”* (Participant 2)

# FINDINGS

- Children act out their inner world and because the adults are supportive, consistent and reliable, they are able to identify and support these needs

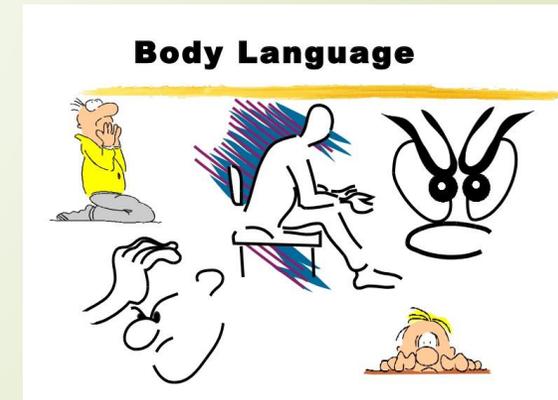


(Image 14)

# FINDINGS

*“They say that behaviour is a form of communication, and whether a child is being bold or being nice, they are communicating something to you....”*

(Participant 6)



(Image 15)

# FINDINGS



# REFLECTIVE SKILLS



(Image 16)

*“Having a degree of emotional intelligence, you need to be able to understand what is happening for you....because you will get triggered all the time, and in an area like this, you need to be able to learn to self-regulate because you will be triggered...”*

(Participant 2)

# CREATIVITY

*“One needs to be creative and to be able to think outside the box and I think rigidity will not work in a place like this...you need to be flexible, I think you need to have an optimistic approach...”*

(Participant 4)



(Image 17)

# TEAM WORK

*“I think you need to have a good team spirit to be able to lean on each other, to get the support...”*

(Participant 3)

*“...massive team players, you are not just coming in to teach a classroom, you are part of a team...”*

(Participant 5)



(Image 18)

# HAVING RESPECT FOR THE CHILDREN



(Image 19)

*“You need patience, kindness, to have respect for children, what they are coming in from...it’s not their fault...”*

(Participant 5)

*“...you need to not have a hierarchical sense of something in yourself that you are better than the people you are serving...”*

(Participant 2)

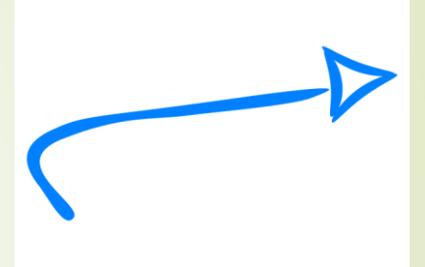


And as we let our own  
light shine, we  
unconsciously give  
other people  
permission to  
do the same.

Nelson Mandela

# UNANTICIPATED FINDING

- ▶ Turning points in the adults practice, helped them move towards a child centred therapeutic approach, where they could access their own strengths and abilities, and in turn support the children to access their own strengths and abilities too.



(Image 21)

# UNANTICIPATED FINDING

- A Turning point is:

*“...a chain of occurrences that durably transformed previous structures and practices...”*

*(Sewell, 2005, p.225)*



(Image 22)

# TURNING POINT

- ➔ *“I had a class that didn’t have a teacher for more than 3 months, most of them couldn’t read or write, most of them are now dead or in prison, after it I can handle anything. That’s when I got interested - Jenny Mosley’s circle time was coming in to the education narrative and SPHE and I really used a lot of that in terms of managing them and that was my first interest in it...”* (Participant 4)



(Image 23)



# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

- An understanding of the motivations and personal strengths and abilities of the long serving adults in a variety of DEIS schools, could assist in moving the practice of all adults in Urban Band 1 DEIS schools towards a practice that is child centred and therapeutic, a practice which fosters and supports the strengths and abilities of children.
- 



# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

- This could be done by initiating further research in schools, beyond my sample.
- Due to the limitations of this study further research is required which could also help inform Teacher Training colleges, School Completion Coordinators and Special Needs Educators of the needs of adults and children working in DEIS schools.

# RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL CARE

- The identified Strengths and Abilities of the adults in Urban Band I DEIS schools, are the same qualities that are needed for all Social Care Workers.
- Having respect for children
- Reflective skills
- Team Work
- Creativity



(Image 24)

# RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL CARE

- A large part of a child's day is spent at school
- Schools do not operate in a vacuum, they are one part of the community
- There are many Social Care workers working in School Completion Programmes, Youth Clubs, Garda Diversion projects, Family Support roles, engaged in multi-disciplinary work with schools and families



(Image 24)



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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE**



(Image 25)

**ANY QUESTIONS?**