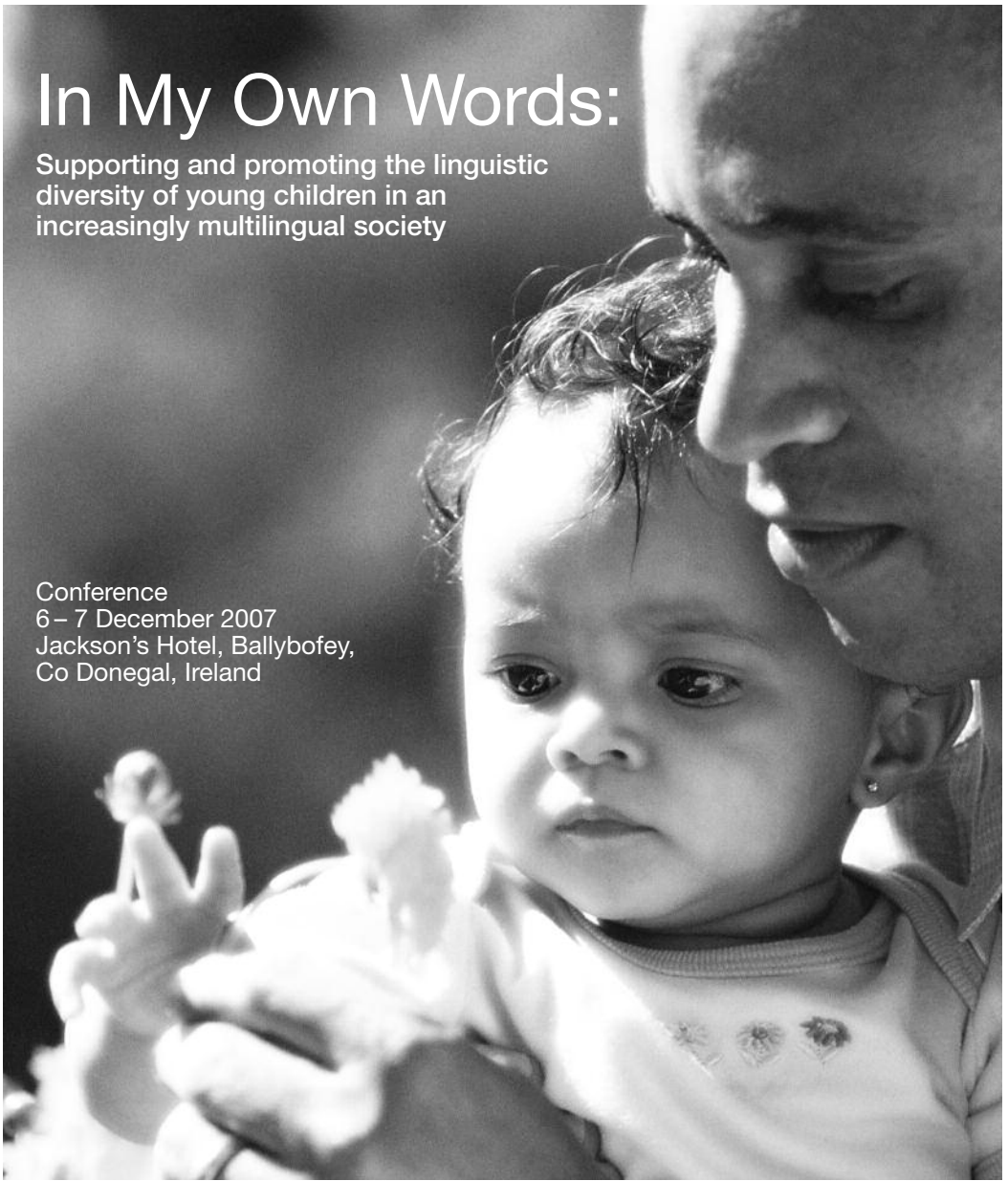


In My Own Words:

Supporting and promoting the linguistic diversity of young children in an increasingly multilingual society

Conference
6 – 7 December 2007
Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey,
Co Donegal, Ireland



CiNI
Children in Northern Ireland



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Globalisation, migration patterns and diminishing borders have contributed to an increase in 'multilingual' societies in which, according to latest estimates, more than half of the world's population now live. Europe itself has a rich diversity of languages: 23 official languages, over 60 regional minority languages and hundreds of immigrant minority languages.

Language learning is recognised as being important for identity, culture, and economic success. But these same reasons can put different languages, and those who speak them, into different hierarchies, leaving minority language speakers feeling isolated and devalued. Indigenous and minority languages are considered culturally valuable but economically of little worth, and education focuses on languages perceived to have economic value – Arabic, Mandarin and Urdu being introduced alongside French, German and Spanish.

This growing emphasis on language diversity places additional demands on children's services in the support they offer to children. Whilst knowing more than one language is generally considered beneficial, if proficiency is in a language other than the one of instruction, it can prove a challenge both to the child and the educator. This conference will question whether services for young children are geared up to cope with the demands of a multilingual society and are able to best support the multilingual children this produces.

Key themes include:

- Advocating for children's linguistic rights
- Discussing the role of language in educating for peace
- Models for promoting early bilingual experiences
- Supporting identity, diversity and language in the early years
- Creating user-friendly language learning environments
- Supporting indigenous and minority languages in increasingly multilingual societies

This conference will focus on how services for children can support and nurture linguistic diversity and embrace its many positive influences.

County Donegal, in the northwest of Ireland has a unique linguistic heritage. In the north and west of the region is a thriving Gaeltacht area, where Gaelic is spoken as a first language. In the east of the County and along the border there is a tradition of Ulster Scots spoken. This conference is an opportunity to discuss and celebrate this diversity in a local, regional and global context.

Who should attend?

All those working with children and their families who speak more than one language or whose first language is not English. The event will be of particular relevance to those working in education, social work and health services, local government education officials, teachers and head teachers, classroom assistants, early years practitioners as well as those that work with programmes that advocate for diversity and peace, specialist teachers, EAL teachers and anyone with an interest in multilingual acquisition skills.

Day I – Thursday 6 December 2007

9.00 Registration and refreshments

9.30 Chair's introduction

Dr Martin Gormley,

chair - Donegal County Childcare Committee/Coiste Curam Páistí

Chontae Dhún na nGall Teo

9.45 An introduction to Children in Europe,

Bronwen Cohen, chief executive, Children in Scotland

10.00 Official opening by Brendan Smith, TD, minister for children

10.30 Refreshments

11.00 SESSION I: Advocating for children's linguistic rights

Keynote speaker: Priscilla Clarke,

executive director, FKA Children's Services, Australia

Understanding, accepting and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity in the early years assists all children to participate equally in education. If the home language and culture are ignored or devalued, this leads to the loss of feelings of self-worth; a loss of motivation for learning; the breakdown of family relationships; the loss of values, beliefs and family wisdom; the loss of intimacy that comes from shared interactions and the loss of opportunities for continued cognitive development.

12.00 Open panel discussion and questions

12.30 Lunch

1.30 SESSION II: Models for promoting early bilingual experiences

The Geiriau Bach (Small words) project

Keynote speaker: Siân Wyn Siencyn, head of the School of Early Years Education, Trinity College, Carmarthen, Wales

The *Geiriau Bach* project has been running at Trinity College, Carmarthen for two years. Its key principles are: bilingualism is good, bilingualism is achievable, all children have the right to be bilingual, developing bilingualism is consistent with good practice in early years provision. The aim of the project is to extend the use of Welsh and bilingualism in predominantly English medium early years provision whilst promoting good practice.

2.15 Irish, music and movement and the early years

Áine O'Dulaing

Music and movement is a vital tool in the development of second language acquisition. Experienced practitioner Áine O'Dulaing will discuss the introduction of the Irish language in the early years, looking particularly at the importance of the arts, from a High/Scope model perspective.

3.00 The Silent Stage – progress or problem? - Group discussions

The pre-production stage in second language acquisition (known as the 'silent

Programme:

stage) is a period of non-verbal production and is often viewed as problematic. But is this really the case or should it be recognised as a processing stage, essential in the developmental process? Delegates are invited to debate this important question with session speakers.

4.00 Plenary panel discussion and questions arising from working groups

4.30 Closing remarks from the Chair

**4.45 Day 1 Conference close
Gala Dinner @ 7pm**

Day 2 – Friday 7 December 2007

9:00 Tea and coffee

9.30 Chairs introduction and synopsis

9.45 SESSION III: Cultural diversity and language development

Nichole Leigh Mosty, Múlaborg Pre-school, Reykjavík, Iceland

This project being developed in Iceland highlights the fact that language is one of the strongest traits related to a child's culture and aims to bring the child's home culture into the classroom in addition to bringing the classroom home to the child, using a variety of tools.

10.30 Refreshments

11.00 SESSION IV: Creating user-friendly language learning environments

Dr Daithí Ó Murchú, principal, Gaelscoil Ó Doghair, Ireland

Creating user-friendly, authentic learning environments to support multilingualism can be achieved using new technologies and is vital in the creation of personalised, user-friendly material for children in language learning settings.

11.30 SESSION V: Educating for peace in the early years

Dr Priscilla Clarke, executive director, FKA Children's Services, Australia

Peace education in the early years has special relevance as, around the world, children in early childhood services reflect diversity of culture and language. Teachers and children face each day with a challenge – to learn to work and play together in harmony, how to resolve conflicts and how to live together with respect for difference.

12.00 Questions

12.15 CLOSING PANEL DISCUSSION

12.45 Closing remarks from the chair

1.00 Conference close and lunch

To book please complete, photocopy and return one form for each delegate to: **Children in Scotland**, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG t: +44 (0)131 222 2438 f: 0131 228 8585 e: conferences@childreninscotland.org.uk **for Sterling bookings**
Donegal County Childcare Committee, Glenview Business Park, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal Ireland t: +353 (0) 74 91 32416 info@donegalchildcare.com **for Euro bookings**
 t: +353 (0)7491 32416 f: 353 (0)7491 30314 e: angelamcginty@donegalcountychildcare.com
 Book online at **www.childreninscotland.org.uk/eur** (for £ bookings only)

Registration fees and booking:

I wish to book a place at the following rate, please tick:
Cost: £120 (Payments to be made to Children in Scotland)
€175 (Payments to be made to Donegal County Childcare Committee)
Discount rates: 15% discount for CiE/CiS/NCB/CiW/CiNI
*** Prices include a FREE copy of Children in Europe magazine - issue 12**

Booking

Please book a place for the following person at the conference (photocopy if necessary)
 (Accommodation should be booked directly with Jackson's Hotel www.jacksons-hotel.ie)
 Delegates are entitled to a discounted rate on accommodation at the Jackson's Hotel
 t: +353 (0)74 91 31021. Special conference bursaries may be available to practitioners or students who wish to attend. Please contact the DCCC office as above for more information at least 4 weeks prior to the conference.

Name: _____ position: _____
 organisation: _____
 Address: _____
 _____ Postcode: _____
 tel: _____ fax: _____ email: _____

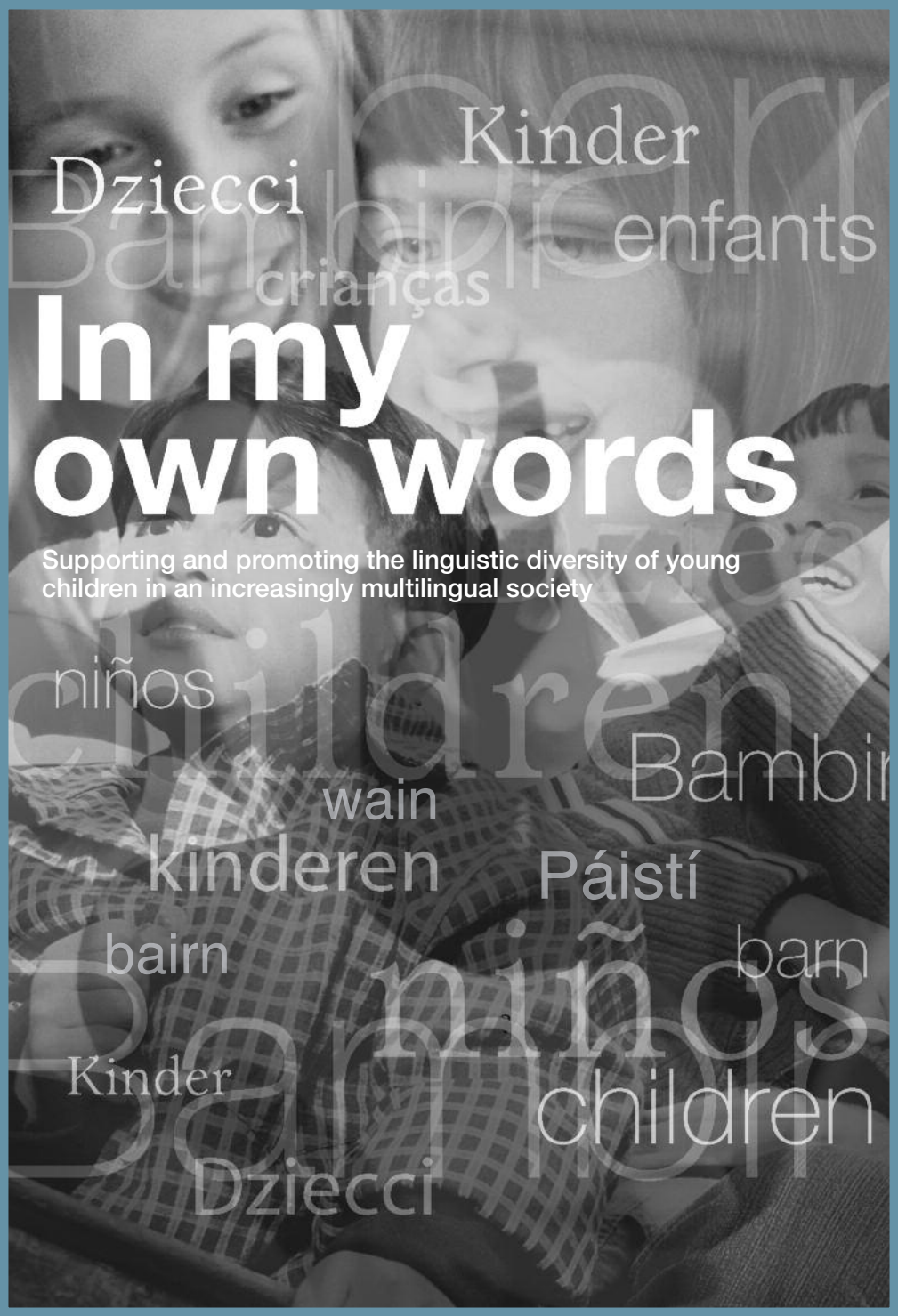
Vegetarian food will be provided. If you have any specific dietary or access requirements, please tick here and let Children in Scotland know the details three weeks before the event

Payment

- I qualify for a discount (CiE/CiS/NCB/CiW/CiNI) member's discount
- I enclose a cheque for £ _____ (made payable to Children in Scotland)
- I enclose a cheque for € _____ (made payable to DCCC)
- Please invoice me at the address above
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Name: _____ position: _____
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From time to time we may approach you with information about other projects, events, publications and magazines that the partner organisations produce or organise. If you do not wish to be contacted please tick this box . We may occasionally wish to make your details available to other carefully selected organisations. Please tick this box if you do not wish us to do this . Cancellations received three weeks before the event will be refunded less a £20 processing charge. No refunds can be made after this date, although substitutions may be made. Cancellations must be received in writing.



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In my own words

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