



Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland

Community Action Research: Validity ????

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*Supporting parents, communities and schools
in the education of children*

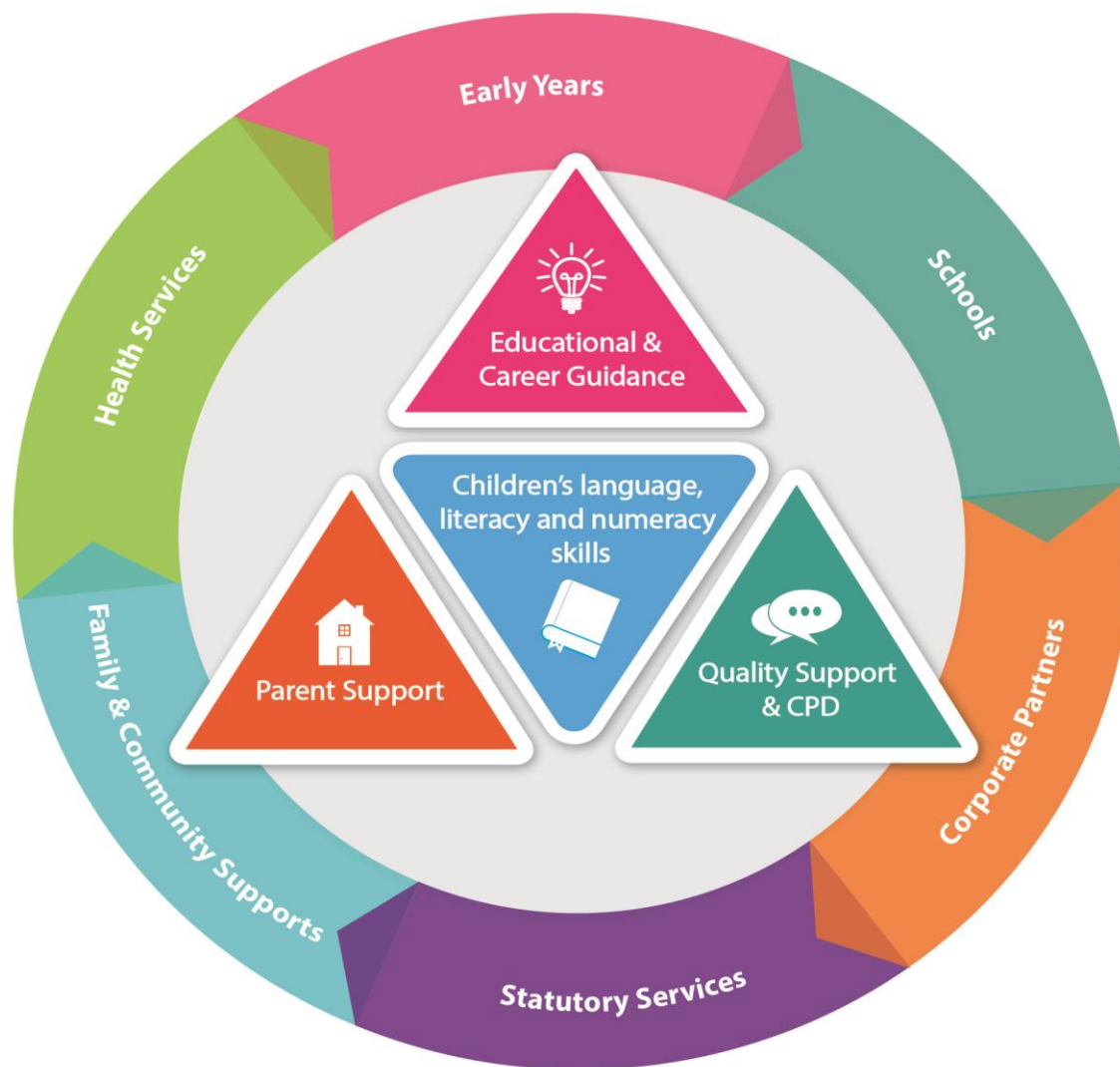


Working in
partnership,

to enable **children,
young people and
their families**

to develop the
**dispositions, skills
and knowledge**
needed

to achieve their
**educational,
career and life
goals**



Community Action Research

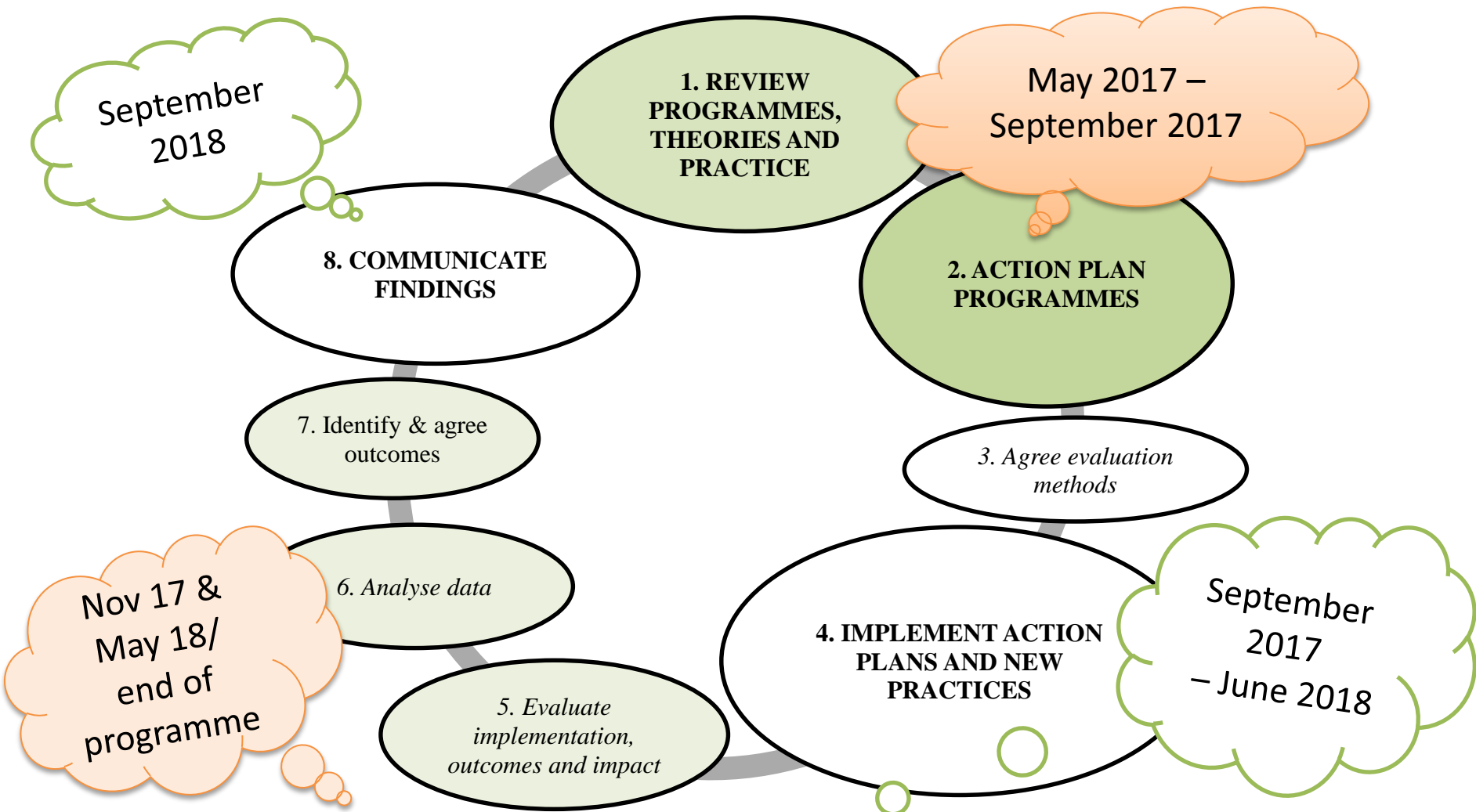
Create a learning community that works together to ‘nurture and sustain a knowledge-creating system’, based on valuing equally each other and the following three interacting domains of activity:

- ✓ **Research:** a discipline approach to discovery and understanding, with a commitment to share what is learned.
- ✓ **Capacity-building:** enhancing people’s awareness and capabilities, individually and collectively, to produce results they truly care about.
- ✓ **Practice:** people working together to achieve practical outcomes.

(Senge and Scharmer 2001, 240)



Community Action Research Process



External Evaluation

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Endorse the programme• Highlight future directions• Independent & objective• Avail of expertise in research & evaluation methods• Recognition and prestige• Satisfies external scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliance mechanism• Gaps - key issues/results overlooked or misunderstood• Little flexibility - unable to respond to development & changes• Cost – service v evaluation; high stakes• Voice & ownership factors

Internal Evaluation – Community Action Research

Advantages

- Infrastructure for continuous development
- Capacity building – growth in understanding and ownership
- Flexibility – alter programme to meet needs
- Cost-effective – integrated within service

Disadvantages

- Lack evaluation knowledge and skills
- Bias - wood v trees; blinkered; people pleasers
- Difficult & time consuming
- Questionable value externally

Evidenced- Based Evaluation

(Adapted from Veerman and van Yperen 2007)

Levels of Evidence	Parameters of Evidence	Effectiveness
4. Causal	Sound and substantial evidence that the outcomes are as a result of the programme	Efficacious
3. Indicative	Systematic evaluation with evidence showing that the desired changes have occurred	Functional
2. Theoretical	Sound, plausible programme rationale or theory to explain why it should work and with whom	Plausible
1. Descriptive	Clear specification of essential elements of programme: goals, target groups, methods and activities	Potential

Indicative Long-term Evidence of Impact

(Veerman and van Yperen 2007)

- ✓ 9,188 children, parents and educators took part in 2016-17 with satisfaction rates of 97%
- ✓ **Children are performing at levels expected of their age unlike children in similar disadvantaged areas. Educational aspirations have also increased**
- ✓ Positive **impact on the home learning environment** of families. Parents are more engaged in their children's development and are developing the understanding, skills and knowledge required to support their children's developmental and educational journeys
- ✓ Practitioners more skilled in supporting children's development and are actively contributing to the **development of quality practice** in their setting and community
- ✓ **Ripple effect throughout the community** due to the networks of supports and knowledge sharing. The social and educational capital of the community has increased with more people interested in and knowledgeable about supporting children to achieve their developmental, educational and life goals.