



Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

21st October 2009


 An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
 National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Dublin City Childcare Focus Group
Wednesday 21st October 2009




Outline of the session


- *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* – overview of content
- *Aistear* and *Síolta* – some connections
- Using *Aistear* – some starting points

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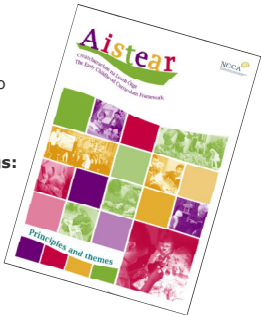
Aistear, a journey




For whom? Why?

Aistear

- is for all children from **birth to six years**.
- supports adults in helping children to grow and develop as **confident** and **competent** learners.
- can be used in the **range of settings**:
 - childminding settings
 - sessional services
 - full and part-time daycare settings
 - infant classes in primary school
 - children's own homes.



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Aistear - What's in it?

Principles and Themes	Guidelines for Good Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-being ▪ Identity and Belonging ▪ Communicating ▪ Exploring and Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnerships ▪ Interactions ▪ Play ▪ Assessment
User Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using <i>Aistear</i> alongside <i>Síolta</i>, the <i>Infant Curriculum</i> and the <i>Pre-School Regulations</i> 	
Key Messages from the Research Papers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarising key points from research which underpin <i>Aistear</i> 	

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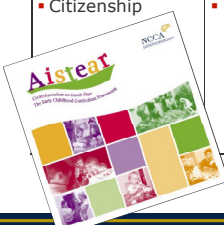
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Aistear's 12 principles

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Early childhood	Connections with others	Learning and developing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniqueness Equality and diversity Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships The role of the adult Parents and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holistic Active Play; hands-on experiences Relevant and meaningful Communication and language Learning environment



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Aistear's themes

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Well-being

Identity and Belonging



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Aistear's themes

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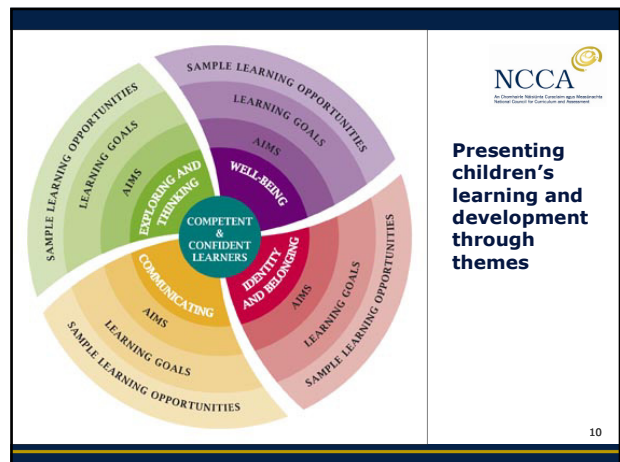


Communicating

Exploring and Thinking



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Sample learning opportunities

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Babies

The adult

- closely observes babies, knows their personalities well, respects and responds to their individual needs and preferences, and builds on care practices from home
- knows babies' natural rhythms, supports sleeping and feeding routines, and provides favourite comfort objects, for example blanket, teddy, soother
- places photographs of parents near the sleeping area and knows at least a few words in the babies' home language when that language is spoken: English not Irish
- responds appropriately to babies' feelings, for example soothes them when upset, babbles on their cooing, provides positive physical contact: such as cuddling, hugging, and holding on the lap

Identity and Belonging

Sample learning opportunities

Babies

- supports babies' emerging sense of identity:
 - helps babies understand and use their physical capabilities, for example encouraging them to clap hands, to reach, to smile, to wave, to point, and to talk using gestures and sounds
- helps babies to distinguish themselves from others, for example says the babies' names and the names of family members, looks at and points to photographs
- provides opportunities for babies to be with, to watch, and to listen to other children
- provides low level mirrors and reflective toys, such as activity cubes with safety mirrors attached, and describes what babies see to enable them to recognise their own reflection
- displays photos of babies and their work in the setting
- shows the daily routine through photographs, makes portfolios of babies' constructions and paintings as they grow

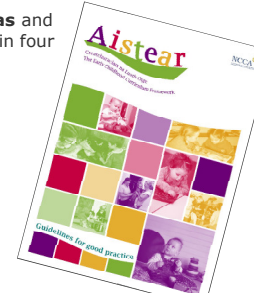
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Guidelines for good practice

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Aistear provides **information, ideas** and **examples** of learning experiences in four areas of practice:

- partnerships
- interactions
- play
- assessment



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Learning experiences ...

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- are **detailed accounts** of children learning through particular activities or events, in collaboration with other children and adults ... describe what the children **say, do and make** in the course of the activities or events ... show the **adult's important role** in supporting and extending the children's learning and development. (User guide, page 5)
- Searchable by
 - age group (3 groups)
 - setting type (5 settings)
 - theme (4 themes)




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Sample: Learning experience

Learning experience 43: The spider's web

Theme: Well-being, Aim 3 and Learning goal 3

Age group: Young children
Setting: Sessional service (playgroup)



The children in the playgroup are outside on a frosty morning. Two boys, Fiachra and James, (both 4 years) discover a large spider's web. They call the playgroup assistant, Zola, over to have a look at it. They are fascinated by the different colours. Zola explains that it is the sun's reflection on the frost that is doing this. Zola is French and she tells them that the French word for spider's web is toile d'araignée. They laugh at each other's attempts to say it! She asks the boys if they would like to take a photograph of the web and they race inside to get the camera, each trying to go faster than the other. Zola uploads the photograph to the computer. The boys study it trying to work out how the spider made the web. The boys tell Zola that they want to make a web too. They assemble a range of materials including glue, paper, markers, string, knitting wool, and tinfoil. They spend a long time making their webs and proudly take photographs of them. *Is sont magnifique, quelles couleurs (They are brilliant, what colours),* Zola says.

After lunch the boys run out to see the web but have trouble finding it because the ice has melted. They are disappointed. During circle time the group have a discussion about how ice and snow melt and how the ice melting made it difficult for Fiachra and James to find their web. The following day another child brings in a DVD about a spider. They all watch it. Over the following weeks some children do projects on spiders while others investigate ice.

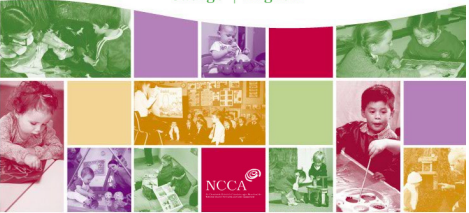
Reflection: How often do I encourage children to get involved in projects on things that interest them?

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Aistear

Creatchuracáin na Luath-Oige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Gaeilge | English



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Creatchuracáin na Luath-Oige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Download

- Aistear in full
- Principles and Themes
- Guidelines for Good Practice
- User Guide
- Key Messages from the Research Papers

Search
Learning Experiences

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Click here to download Aistear's principles and themes.

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Creatchuracáin na Luath-Oige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Principles and Themes in full

- Principles
- Theme: Well-being
- Theme: Identity and Belonging
- Theme: Communicating
- Theme: Exploring and Thinking
- Glossary

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Click here to download Aistear's guidelines for good practice.

Aistear

Creatchuracáin na Luath-Oige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Guidelines for Good Practice in full

- Building partnerships between parents and practitioners
- Learning and developing through interactions
- Learning and developing through play
- Supporting learning and development through assessment
- Bibliography

Download

- Aistear in full
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Learning Experiences

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Supporting Aistear

Publish online at www.ncca.ie/earlylearning and on CD ROM

Disseminate and support Aistear by

- integrating Aistear with other developments through continued **collaborations** at national and regional levels
 - working with **settings** to gather examples of Aistear-in-action
- developing an **Aistear toolkit**, e.g. podcasts, planning tools
- publishing **articles**, e.g. CCCs, BCCN, NCNA, IPPA, ICPN, ActiveLinks ...
- presenting at **conferences** and **seminars**

Aistear and supporting materials will be published at www.ncca.ie/earlylearning

Some starting points

- Using Aistear alongside *Síolta*
 - selecting one or more standards for review and development
- Auditing the curriculum for a particular age group or area of learning and development
- Reviewing a particular aspect of practice

Aistear and Síolta

Standards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Rights of the child 2: Environments 3: Parents and Families 4: Consultation 5: Interactions 6: Play 7: Curriculum 8: Planning and Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9: Health and Welfare 10: Organisation 11: Professional Practice 12: Communication 13: Transitions 14: Identity and Belonging 15: Legislation and Regulation 16: Community Involvement
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(See *Audit of Aistear and Síolta* [NCCA and DES, 2008])

Next steps

- Publishing Aistear **22nd October 2009**
(www.ncca.ie/earlylearning)
- Developing the Aistear Toolkit **November and December**
- Working with settings **2010 onwards**

Míle buíochas

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