



WE DO...

Aistear

Creatchuraclam na Luath-Óige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

ENABLING CHILDREN TO BE READY, WILLING AND ABLE TO LEARN

Information for Parents



D.C.C.C.

Donegal County Childcare Committee Ltd.
Coiste Cúram Páistí Chontae Dhún na nGall Teo.

NEYAI National Early Years
Access Initiative
Promoting Better Outcomes for Children & Families



SHARING INFORMATION WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Sharing information about your child's experiences, interests and progress in the setting and at home can help make learning more enjoyable and meaningful for him/her, for example:

- Give educators feedback i.e. if your child wants to try out an activity at home or showed excitement about a particular activity.
- Let educators know about anything that might be affecting your child's mood or behaviour, such as the the expected arrival of a new sibling, moving house or special family events.
- Share information about ways to support your child's needs to help them participate in activities, for example, recommendations or suggestions from other professionals (i.e. Speech and Language Therapist).

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING?

As a parent, you can make a valuable contribution to your child's learning and development:

- Share your experiences and talents, for example, help with sports, drama or musical activities.
- Share information about your work, culture and background, for example, talk about your family values and traditions and festivals you celebrate.
- Support play by providing props that can be added to the pretend play area, for example, dress up clothes, empty shopping containers, cooking utensils, etc.
- Suggest or organise places for the children to visit or interesting people to talk to.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT HOME?

Providing opportunities for play and interactions enables your child to explore, engage, question and discover, for example:

- Involve your child in everyday activities like cooking, shopping, working in the garden. This will enable your child to develop positive dispositions such as independence, confidence, resourcefulness, imagination, etc.
- Be aware of the topics covered in the setting. Talk to your child about what he/she is doing in the setting and at home. Encourage him/her to ask questions and find things out together. This will help to develop communication skills, etc.
- Give your child opportunities to use his/her senses - to see, smell, taste, touch and hear different things.
- Read to your child, sing songs, tell stories, play games and have fun together. This will support your child's awareness of sound, rhyme and repetition which provide a foundation for literacy development.



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THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Aistear is the Irish curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. An early childhood service that follows the Aistear curriculum will ensure that your child is exposed to meaningful and appropriate learning experiences and opportunities. Aistear will help your child to grow and develop as a competent and confident learner through relationships, communication, exploration and play. Learning opportunities are planned and organised under the following four themes:

Well-being

Identity and Belonging

Communicating

Exploring and Thinking

The theme of **Well-being** is about providing play and learning experiences that enable your child to be confident, happy and healthy. The theme of **Identity and Belonging** promotes your child's sense of who they are so that they feel valued and respected as a unique individual. The **Communicating** theme involves your child learning to communicate and share his/her experiences, thoughts and ideas with others in a variety of ways. The theme of **Exploring and Thinking** enables your child to make sense of what he/she sees, feels and experiences in the world by thinking, questioning, experimenting, discussing and through practical hands-on experiences.

By experiencing learning opportunities organised under Aistear's four learning themes, your child will learn and develop:

DISPOSITIONS, SKILLS, ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.



WHY ARE DISPOSITIONS IMPORTANT?

Through the use of Aistear, the early childhood service will nurture your child's learning dispositions so that they are ready, willing and able to learn. Positive dispositions such as confidence, curiosity, imagination, concentration, responsibility and independence will be nurtured, developed and strengthened through caring and responsive relationships with adults in the setting. Positive dispositions enable your child to deal with challenges, take risks, set realistic expectations, develop positive relationships with others and can have an impact on their lifelong learning.

WHAT SKILLS WILL MY CHILD LEARN?

Through playing games and interactions with others, your child will develop skills such as turn-taking, sharing, listening, language and communication, problem-solving and negotiating. These are important for building relationships and social skills. Play will also enable your child to practice and refine physical skills, for example, hopping, balancing and manipulating objects and materials.

WHAT ATTITUDES WILL BE NURTURED IN THIS SETTING?

Early childhood education will enable your child to experience success and develop a positive attitude towards learning and to life by trying out something new, being responsible for themselves, caring for their environment and coping with frustrations and challenges. Developing positive attitudes will help your child to understand, respect and appreciate the similarities and differences between themselves and others.



WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING WILL MY CHILD DEVELOP?

Play is your child's way of exploring ideas and investigating how the world works. An engaging play environment both, indoors and outdoors, will provide your child with developmentally appropriate opportunities and resources to extend his/her sense of wonder, discovery and imagination. Your child will learn to express his/her feelings and thoughts through story-telling, music, drama and art. Your child will use books for enjoyment, as a source of information and to develop early reading skills (e.g. predicting the story from the pictures, turning pages, reading from left to right and from top to bottom). Your child will develop an awareness and understanding of numbers, size, shape, pattern and colour through matching, sequencing and sorting activities.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD THROUGH THE PRE-SCHOOL TO PRIMARY SCHOOL TRANSITION

- **Discuss the transition** of moving from a pre-school to a primary school with your child. Explain when this will happen and highlight the differences between attending pre-school and primary school. Encourage your child to discuss any fears about the transition process.
- **Talk with your child about the primary school** they will attend; where it is, if they wear a uniform and how they will get to school each day. Share this information with the pre-school staff.
- **Meet with staff of the pre-school** to discuss your child's progress throughout their time at pre-school.
- **Ask the pre-school staff for some tips and ideas to continue the child's learning experience at home**, for example, fastening and unfastening their coat, knowing their name and address and developing other self help skills.
- If possible **take your child to visit the primary school**, take photos on the day and encourage your child to share these with their peers and pre-school staff.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE TRANSITIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Transition describes the process that children experience when they move to a new setting. This can include moving from home to a pre-school or creche, or from pre-school to primary school.

Starting primary school is a major transition in a child's life. It is important that there is collaboration and cooperation between all parties to help make transitions as smooth as possible. It is also important that children understand what the transition will involve, and that they are able to ask questions, seek explanations and express their views.

The development of positive dispositions such as strength, resilience, independence and self-confidence will not only support children's transitions from pre-school to primary school, but transitions throughout their lives.





professional
pedagogy
project

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WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGY PROJECT?

The Professional Pedagogy Project (PPP) is a framework of professional development and practical supports encompassing a training programme and a variety of follow-up supports aimed at enabling early childhood service providers to make steady, quantifiable changes and improvements to their practice. The PPP

is targeted at whole staff teams to enable consistency of practice and approach across the early childhood service to enhance learning outcomes for young children.

The PPP aspires to enable early childhood service providers and their staff to recognise, value and engage with legislative and practice frameworks in their day to day work enabling them to take a strategic, consistent approach to the enhancement of quality early childhood and education provision. The PPP provides an in-depth focus on the areas of Early Childhood Play and Curriculum, Planning and Reflective Practice, Assessment for Learning and Transitions.

The PPP will also provide information sessions for parents. The active participation of parents aims to build an appreciation of the importance of learning through play and supporting transitions.

This innovative 3-year professional development project is one of 11 projects nationally funded under the National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI). The NEYAI was devised for the advancement of early childhood care and education and to contribute to the ongoing development of early years' policy.



Aistear is available in English and Irish at www.ncca.ie/earlylearning



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