Updating *Aistear*

Written submission template for organisations, groups and individuals

This template is intended to help you (and your colleagues) develop a written submission in relation to Updating *Aistear*. Please e-mail your completed submission to aistearsubmissions@ncca.ie

Individual submission details

Name	
Date	
E-mail	

Organisation submission details

Name	Childcare Committees Ireland (CCI)
Position	
Organisation	
Date	
E-mail	

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation*?

Yes   X   No

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

Childcare Committees Ireland was established in 2012 at the request of the DCEDIY, formerly the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. It is a national network of the 30 County and City Childcare Committees. CCI operates under an agreed Terms of Reference, ensuring consistency within CCC communications and delivery of DCEDIY funding programmes, policy and quality initiatives. CCC teams underwent two national programmes (i) pilot Aistear mentoring and (ii) National Síolta and Aistear (NSAI) TOT which supported delivery of Aistear Introductory and Awareness Raising workshops to the Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) sectors.

The remainder of the template includes two sections. Section 1 invites your overall comments and observations on *Aistear*: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Section 2 is structured according to the Principles, Themes and Guidelines for Good Practice. Each section is briefly summarised as a support for working on the submission.

Section 1

Please outline your overall comments and observations on updating *Aistear*: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

POLICY IMPACTS ON THE SECTOR

Since the publication of Aistear in 2009 there have been some major policy and legislative developments in the Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) sector. These must now be considered when updating the curriculum Framework for the ELC and SAC sector.

These include:

- Universal 2 year Preschool Programme, Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE)
- Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) funding to support children's access to the ECCE programme.
- Quality Regulatory Framework (QRF and QRF E-Learning Programme)
- The Department of Education Inspections for ELC's (Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) Guide) and *Insights to Quality* webinars
- National Childminding Action Plan (NCAP)
- School Age Childcare Guidelines
- First 5, A Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their families,
- The Workforce development plan due to be published in 2023
- Diversity Equality and Inclusion (DEI) guidelines, training and Inclusion Charter.
- Universal Design Guidelines (UDG)
- Code of Professional Responsibilities and Code of Ethics for Early Years Educators

The appendices need to be aligned to all updated and relevant ELC and SAC legislation, regulation, guidelines and best practice research which has occurred since 2009.

Connections need to be strengthened between Aistear and the Aistear Síolta Framework. This has been achieved successfully in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (ASPG) and these developments should be consolidated in an updated Aistear. The development of the universal design guidelines should be referenced throughout, as the environment is an integral part of quality ELC and SAC provision and promote opportunity particularly for pre-development services to get design right from the start.

SUGGESTIONS ON THE PUBLICATION

The images in the publication do not always reflect what is being said in the text, there are now more opportunities for Irish practice to be captured in the resources. Scenarios should reflect and depict real life ELC and SAC practices and challenges, which will encourage the readers to connect more and use such scenarios as resource and reference tools which can help them to deal with and prepare for similar situations. Reflective questions in all scenarios should be specific, inclusive of; (i) conveying through reaffirming statements the key messages that are being portrayed, (ii) promote practitioner critical reflection and (iii) promote reader engagement to relevant resources that can be accessed to support this situation, such as ASPG, legislation/regulation and best practice research etc.

Make reference to the EYEI consultation draft inspection for Birth to 6 years with greater emphasis on care of the under 3's. The updated Aistear publication will need to reflect the changes that may come from this which needs to be a collective approach.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The sector needs to be supported to understand and implement the Aistear Framework, particularly in the context of the impending ECCE legislation.

There should be more focus on the principles of Aistear, understanding of the terminology that underpins the Themes, Aims and Learnings Goals. CCI believes that if there was ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for the sector, that the aims and goals would be achieved as a secondary outcome, as a deeper understanding would be achieved by all.

A Professional Training Plan for the sector, implemented at a national level is very important. The initial training on the updated Framework should be rolled out at a national level to coincide with the publication. This will give all ELC and SAC services the opportunity to engage with training and CPD from the very start.

A planned approach needs to be developed on how Aistear can be communicated to parents/guardians, agencies and the wider community from the earliest opportunity. This will support key messages of the Framework to be relayed effectively.

Consideration should be given to the use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – the ASPG or even Aistear itself would be more engaging if set up as a VLE like a college course. The Virtual Learning Environment could be set up, each person logs in and then they work through the material, with activities to complete which allow them to track their progress through the material. This could be complimented with webinars, communities of practice, forums both online and face to face peer learning opportunities.

The VLE could have numerous modules (e.g. each pillar, the AIM and LG) and each term participants sign up to a module of their choosing, which is facilitated by Better Start/CCC staff, though there would also be an element of self-directed learning.

In its current format on the website, it is a great tool but not being fully utilised. If it was set up as a VLE with interactions, classes, forums for professionals etc. it would support a deeper understanding of Aistear for effective implementation into ELC and SAC practice.

The current options are either completely self-directed (website or manual) or completely classroom based (sign up to a specific programme), a structured combination of the two would make it far more accessible and achievable.

Section 2

Principles of *Aistear*

Aistear is based on 12 Principles of early learning and development. Each principle is presented using a short statement. This is followed by an explanation of the Principle from the child's perspective. This explanation highlights the adult's role in supporting children's early learning and development. The Principles can be accessed here.

Please give your feedback in relation to updating the Principles of *Aistear*. Please indicate what is working well with the principles and what might need to be enhanced or updated.

The Aistear principles are a strong foundation for the culture that should be promoted when working with children in the birth to six age range. The suggestions made below are points that CCI would like to be considered to emphasise the meaning of certain principles. It is hoped that by adding this information people will gain a further understanding of the meaning of each principle. Careful consideration needs to be given to the balance of information that could be included in the principles and the guidelines for good practice.

THE CHILD'S UNIQUENESS:
- Explore further how a child develops a sense of identity and how we can support the child to do this. Explore further how a child develops a sense of belonging nested within family and community and how we can support the child to do this.
- The principle could explore how provision needs to be diverse and tailored to suit the individual needs of the child.
- Consider the inclusion of incorporating children's unique learning styles.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY:
- Further emphasis needs to be put on the importance of inclusion and equity.
- The importance of celebrating the richness of diversity.

CHILDREN AS CITIZENS:
- Further emphasis needs to be put on what is the active participation of the child and the importance of the voice of the child. Include the various aspects of Lundy's model Space, Voice, Audience and Influence to ensure that their voices can make a difference or have an impact on decision-making, being cognisant of all types of communication.
- Explore the value of promoting and supporting children's ability to negotiate, debate, philosophise and collaborate.

RELATIONSHIPS:
- This principle needs to emphasise the importance that all learning takes place in the context of relationships in a warm stimulating environment that is well resourced.
- Explore further what are positive relationships and positive interactions. Emphasise how meaningful interactions impacts on children's learning and development.
- Understand and value the importance of relationship with self and how it impacts on one's own development and relationship with others.
- Highlight the importance of the practitioner- guardian relationship and maintaining the integrity of relationships throughout the progression of the child's time in the service.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY:
The explanation of the principles is written in the voice of the child. In this section it would be useful to include the voice of the parent/guardians and the community to explore this principle further.

- The principle needs to emphasise the holistic development of the child and the role families and communities play in this process.
- The principle could explore the responsibility parents/guardians and communities have in children's learning and development and the importance of children's participation in society and in the home.
- Align more closely with the ideas of 'Funds of Knowledge' as a bedrock for learning and the idea of children's 'Working theories' being a useful way to acknowledge existing knowledge and understanding within an emergent and inquiry based approach.
- Understanding and respecting diverse families

THE ADULTS ROLE: -
- There should be an emphasis on the professionalism of this role and linking it to professional standards within the sector.
- The significance of competent and confident adults scaffolding young children, in reaching their fullest potential
- Align this more closely with the principle of Síolta which emphasises the role of the adult as integral to the child's holistic learning and development and reinforces the relationship of a learning transaction where adult and child are learning together.
- Support the importance of the ongoing development of the critical reflective practitioner.

HOLISTIC LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:
- Emphasise the importance of how opportunities for learning and development are experienced outside of the ELC and SAC setting.

ACTIVE LEARNING:
- Explore the meaning of active and passive learning and the difference it makes to the children's learning experience and the impact on lifelong learning.
- Explore the valuable input parents/guardians have in relation to their own child's learning.
- Emphasize that active learning takes place from birth
- Explore the Role of the Adult in children's active learning
- Ensuring the environments is conducive to active and participatory learning

PLAY AND HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES:
- Further information should be provided here to explore what play is and an emphasis on free play. Explore child led, adult led and a combination of both , that is adult and child led play.
- Emphasise children's right to play.
- Emphasise the role of the adult in supporting play and exploring the meaning of the playful adult.
- In the last bulletin point under play and hands on experience consider including the word "mind".
-

RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES:
- Consider the use of the word assessment and consider the use of the word measure and the use of this language needs to be further explored by the NCCA. There was different views from CCI and consensus was not reached. Assessment can be seen as

more of a tool for the adult where the word measure describes how the adult can support and plan for a child's learning.

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE:
- Consider emphasising again the importance of a language rich environment.
- Explore what is meaningful engagement and sustained shared thinking.
- Question the meaning and relevance of the last statement in terms of children's language use. "My parents will be keen for me to learn English and/or Irish if I have a different home language. Remember to tell my parents that it is important for me to maintain my home language too. Reassure them that I can learn English and/or Irish as well as keeping my home language." There needs to be clear communication to parents the benefits of a child being proficient in their first language and ensuring that their ELC and SAC service incorporates their first language.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:
- Consider how the learning environment needs to change and be flexible to adapt to group and individual learning needs.
- Aistear describes the environment as being stimulating, challenging and empowering could natural and engaging also be added to describe the environment.
- The voice of the child needs to be reflected and incorporated into the ongoing development of the learning environment.
- Consider the use of the (UDG) when developing the learning environment.

Section 3

Themes of *Aistear*

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework presents children's learning and development using four Themes. These are:
1. Well-being
2. Identity and Belonging
3. Communicating
4. Exploring and Thinking.

The themes describe what children learn—the dispositions, attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and understanding. Each theme begins with a short overview of its importance for children as young learners. The theme is then presented using four aims. Each aim is divided into six learning goals. Aistear's Themes can be accessed here

Please give your overall feedback in relation to the themes of *Aistear*. Please indicate what is working well with the themes and what might need to be enhanced or updated.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL

- It is a strengths based model more than a development assessment model.
- Inclusive of all curriculums- the breadth of the themes allows all curriculums to fit in.
- Themes are very well inter-connected and support how the children learn and develop.
- The themes allow the services to reflect on child-centred learning and support the child in tailoring experiences to meet their individual needs.
- Themes have supported practitioners in moving away from, 'schoolifying' children.

- Themes provide practitioners with knowledge around dispositions, attitudes, values, and skills.
- They support practitioners in knowing why / how/ when they plan.
- They encourage communication/ partnership with parents/guardians.
- The learning goals given under each of the aims allow practitioners to see the learning that is important for children.
- The physical book should remain as an accessible reference tool, especially for students
- Theme Posters; these provide visual resource for practitioners - in view in rooms - colour coded- themes broken down.

SUGGESTED UPDATES

- As highlighted above continuous professional development needs to be provided nationally and consistently to the ELC and SAC sector.
- Consider how links could be made between the themes and guidelines for good practice. This could be done through referencing or further colour coding.
- Development of A4 style key message tip sheets could be produced for settings to display, inclusive of provision of posters/shorter version for quick referral
- Further consideration needs to be given on how themes and learning goals are being used for documentation of evidence of children's learning.

- Support with Planning their curriculum under these themes.
    - Practitioners need examples over a 2 year period (ECCE Programme) of how these themes can be seen through medium / short term planning and emerging ideas to extend learning.
    - Specifics within the plan, show practical examples -Why/ how/when
    - Contingency within planning to follow emergent interests and enquiry based curriculum.
    - More reference to emergent and inquiry-based curriculum and linking this with ASPG. As already noted, the importance of planning cannot be under-estimated, however needs to be balanced with children's emergent and inquiry based interests and learnings.
    - Importance for under 3's may need to be highlighted further.
- Is Aistear considerate of sustainability, climate justice, global impact etc. Care must be taken in the imagery used, whether the images used depict consumer products or sustainable materials in the ELC and SAC setting.
- Examples of planning for babies and how practitioners can map their learning and can document progress over a period of time.
- Examples of how to link in planning under themes using ASPG pillars of practice and standards.
- Practical themes for specific age/ability groups- based on children's individuality (homeless/ Travellers/ emphasis on disabilities).
- Use of hyperlinks throughout to link with dispositions/ ASPG CPD.
- Examples of how practitioners can be supported through CCC and Better Start with one to one and/or group mentoring.

Well being
- Provide examples / scenarios under each aim & learning goal of different age groups from an Irish context.
- In AIM 2 include child safeguarding/children being safe from harm. Consider the support pathways in place for children.
- Include references to homelife, health & wellbeing, diverse communities.
- References to support podcasts.
- Inclusion of wellbeing tip sheets for varying age ranges.

Communication
- Include examples of various types of communication.
- Unpack strategies to acknowledge non-verbal communication and extend learning.
- Emphasis on consultation with child so they have a voice in what happens in their daily lives within their community.
- Provide link to tip sheet for story sack, making links to F5 Little Books national initiative

Exploring and Thinking
- Sample learning opportunities to be more prescriptive with more direction in the science, technology, arts and maths (STEM) areas.
- Lots of practical activities have been generated from National initiatives for early years during maths week and science week, these should be included in Aistear. Explore how these examples could be included in an emergent curriculum. Think about body science/biology and how our body works and affects our development emotionally, socially, physically- explore all the connections in our bodies nerves, cells, muscle, bone all separate parts that contribute to the whole person.
- Does STEM need to now become STEAM (looking at the wider arts areas).

Identity and belonging –
- Belonging is not well understood within Aistear. Perhaps some additional understanding could be included, referencing relevant research.
- Suggesting that there needs to be greater links with the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion training and sample learning opportunities need to be more prescriptive including Irish examples.
- Consider further emphasise on dispositions and how can we support practitioners awareness and understanding of dispositions.
- Extend learning stories to focus more on;
  - Planning and assessment
  - Emergent inquiry based
  - Examples of planning (long/medium/short)
  - Dispositions

Section 4

Guidelines for Good Practice

Aistear has four sets of guidelines, focusing on different aspects of practice:

1. Building partnerships between parents and practitioners
2. Learning and developing through interactions
3. Learning and developing through play
4. Supporting learning and development through assessment

These describe how the adult can support children's learning and development across *Aistear's* principles and themes. *Aistear's* Guidelines for Good Practice can be accessed [here](#)

Please give your overall feedback in relation to updating *Aistear's* Guidelines for Good Practice. Please indicate what is working well with the guidelines and what might need to be enhanced or updated.

INTRODUCTION

While the Guidelines for Good Practice is an important resource, it may not be utilised to its maximum potential by ELC and SAC educators and parents/guardians alike. The guidelines content should ensure alignment and links back to the ASPG.

Consideration should be given to using new technologies (such as apps) to support educators and parents/guardians to access and navigate relevant information and support that they require from the Guidelines for Good Practice. This should be considered as a two-pronged resource and reference tool, working in tandem to the key messaging being delivered. This approach would support effective professional guidance from a educator's perspective towards
(i) implementing best and enhanced practices under each of the identified quality areas and
(ii) equipping them with clear guidance to confidently communicate such practices when working in partnership with parents/guardians.

Likewise, communicating the same quality elements within the guidelines for parental/guardian understanding and from a parent/guardian's perspective will reinforce the learning and development that occurs for young children, from birth to junior infants, within the ECEC and primary sectors. This will strengthen societal attitude towards

(i)   valuing parents/guardians as primary carer givers of their children,
(ii)   valuing early years education as essential to children's learning and development and
(iii)   valuing the professional role of early years educators and teachers as educational contributors to supporting children to gain lifelong learning skills towards active citizenship.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The overall content and key messages are still highlighted as relevant within the introduction and all areas of building partnerships between parents/guardians and educators. The information concepts build upon each other which provides a clear overview of the key messaging for the reader and scenarios used backs up such messages. However, there is a need to update content to reflect diversity within children and families, use of digital technology and ELC regulatory and policy developments in today's society.

- o In the introduction (pg. 7), consider the term *Guardians* where the term Parents is used, to reflect today's diverse families.
- o Consider commencing the introduction with relevant national and international research excerpt findings that reinforce the key messages of 'Parents role as primary teachers/role models to their children and the importance of the Home Learning Environment' for example; citing up to date research from longitudinal studies such as Growing Up in Ireland and/or Sylva, Blatchford et al
- o Rephrase 2nd sentence in the introduction to commence with what 'makes it difficult for parents to participate in their children's learning and development …. time constraints etc. inclusive of reflecting additional parental difficulties such as; to reflect our multi-cultural society, there may be language barriers, children living in direct provision, difficult home situations and homelessness.
- o Definition of partnership all relevant but need to include new emerging issues faced by parents today, ensuring it is aligned to ASPG definitions and relevant links.
- o Table 1 Benefits of Parents and Practitioners – include a point under practitioners planning for children's learning and development experiences/activities more effectively. Children – include a reference point about their identity and belonging being reaffirmed as a result of parent's/guardians interest/engagement in their learning and development.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT;
- o In mentioning the key milestones that parents/guardians support – make links on how these promote essential development opportunities such as independence and social skills. Introduce the concept and meaning of dispositions as a separate sentence/paragraph, as parents/guardians may not be aware of what is meant when discussing dispositions, give examples. Consideration should be given to educating and discussing schemas i.e. How children learn e.g. clarity is needed on what dispositions means and the importance of them
- o Pg. 9 – Parents - expand on and bring up to date ways for parents/guardians to support their children's learning and development (i.e. link reading of books/environmental signage/print to early literacy/numeracy, promoting play engagement especially outdoors, refer to digital technology etc.). Highlight importance of being present/quality time from parents/guardians who may be time poor.
- o Images used need to reflect concepts being conveyed in points above and should include a caption/quote from child to reinforce image message – family tree concept would be useful here, parent and child reading etc.
- o Pg. 9/10 Practitioners – bring up to date parental/guardian sessions/sharing can occur virtually/website links/ASPG tip sheets etc.
- o Focus on importance of professional relationships of preschool and primary to supporting positive transitions of children moving onto primary school, and within daily routine activities.
- o Scenarios - Identifying the theme, aim and learning goal at the beginning of scenarios is appliable to scenario key messaging; whilst the focus is to active referral to relevant learning goals, to reinforces the learning goal connection – it should be noted that stating the aim and learning goal in full within the scenario may reinforce the concept more firmly for the reader.
- o Introducing scenarios that reflect more real-life situations that might be more challenging for practitioners, may increase reader reference engagement. Example

scenarios such as; Children in care situations, supporting conversations with parent in sensitive situations e.g. Child Safeguarding, learning supports/referrals; parents moving from a family home (leaving a carer behind e.g. Grandparent).

- o Likewise identifying the links to relevant learning goals and ASPG will reinforce best practice understanding along with critical reflective questions.
- o Tips/video on facilitating/ encouraging children's participation

SHARING INFORMATION –MAKE REFERENCE TO GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

- o Pg. 12 - when referring to confidentiality but not in the case of child protection, refer to services use of own child protection/child safeguarding policies with reference to discussing these with parents/guardians.
- o Pg. 13 – The setting – need to update for parents - explain what is meant by a settings vision, setting, curriculum – links to relevant sections of ASPG, fees and early years funding programmes such as NCS and ECCE, alignment of policies to childcare regulations etc.
- o Children's experiences and progress pg. 13 – bring up to date with diversity of today's families and circumstances.
- o Pg. 15 – reference to special effort to include Dads, perhaps this is a bit dated and not relevant in today's society. Need to reflect today's society including same sex families.
- o Specific reflective questioning is evident at the end of information content however would be beneficial to have these aligned to relevant pillars of ASPG.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH INTERACTIONS

The overall messaging and flow of the concepts of good interaction strategies is still very relevant throughout this section, however it needs to ensure it is aligned greatly to relevant ASPG interaction pillars of practice sections, for both babies and toddlers and young children. Consideration should be given to highlighting the implications for the child where there are poor relationships and negative interactions.

SUGGESTIONS
- o Pg. 27 This introduction needs to commence with good practice guidelines of referencing relevant UNCRC Articles i.e.. 3 & 12 ensuring the child's voice is paramount in their learning and developing through an environment of supportive interactions.
- o Considerations should be inclusive of promoting children's rights to active participation in decision-making processes in all areas of ELC learning and development that affects them. Introduction of the Lundy Model should be considered here, as officially adopted by Tusla (2016) and used widely within government policy and strategy (DCEDIY).
- o Reflective questioning needs to be expanded more to support incorporation of such practices into learning environments and where to source more associated professional development opportunities.
- o Ensure interaction strategies are all relevant to ASPG with content of Tables 3-6 brought up to date and relevant to current best practice.

- Pg. 31 Reflective questions need to refer back to ASPG pillars of where to find relevant information/support resources to implement such practice.
- Promotion of beneficial use of open-ended questioning needs to be stronger, examples need to be given and warrants a separate content piece, outlying advantages to expanding children's language and interaction engagement.
- Consider referencing the impact of limited child-initiated conversation opportunities and/or continuous adult-led/directed interactions, inhibiting language development of young children, might be useful to note prior to introducing/moving into explaining the supportive interaction strategies.
- Consider including a section on supportive interaction strategies to conflicts, for example High Scope problem-solving approach to conflict resolution strategies (High Scope) – these are very effective to supporting practitioner understanding of children's involvement in problem-solving opportunities and viewing conflict as a social norm.
- Promotion of Irish language in day-to-day activities.
- Promote use of basic vocabulary/ key words from the child's language of origin.
- Encouragement of children's decision making and child led activities, refer to a rights based approach and the UNCRC referring back to play and themes.
- Promote practitioner/service's continuous engagement with ASPG, interaction self-assessment for both under 3's and over.
- Bring scenarios up to date and expand on links to Aistear learning goals.
- Include specific questions that encourage more critical reflection from practitioners as a team that will support enhancement of current practice and promote positive interactions.
- Inclusion of the language of infant mental health such as serve and return, rupture, and repair etc.

PLAY

The Characteristics of Play table gives a comprehensive overview as does the Description table. Table 9: Enriching and extending learning through play is also an excellent tool for planning resourcing and supporting play.

SUGGESTIONS

- Use a colour or symbol code to reference other sections in Guidelines for Good practice similar to the way Themes are referenced through colour.
- In Organising pg. 57 Add Tabletop Areas; Literacy and Numeracy Reading, STEM to *Areas of Interest.*
- Table 10; Pg. 58 Include encourages literacy and numeracy skills to each section Babies (birth to 18 months); Toddlers (12 months to 3 years); Young children (2½ to 6 years).
- Add emotional regulation to toddler section of Table 10; pg. 58. Reference also needs to be made to the importance of developing and fostering emotional intelligence.
- The age ranges at the bottom of page 58 are confusing and there is no need to have them there.
- Suggestion for the inclusion of a section in the Guidelines on learning and developing through the learning environment.
- Further focus on transitions and consideration of the number of transitions a child experiences daily.

SUGGESTIONS RE SCENARIOS.

Add scenarios for the following situations.
- o Children who do not live in their own home and have limited exposure to outdoor play, or have different needs regarding the indoor space. e.g. living in a Refuge Centre; living in a Reception Centre, homeless families.
- o Getting reluctant children ready for outdoor play Helping parents to understand the importance of outdoor play (reference back to partnership with parent).
- o Helping children to deal with conflict situations.
- o Keeping children aware of schedules and preparing them for it.
- o Practitioners supporting children's play choices and participating in parallel play (shared control).

ASSESSMENT

Consider including children's own assessment of their learning – e.g. a child who insists that they can do something themselves asserts a knowledge of their own learning which should be captured.

- o The features of good assessment are an excellent reminder. The rational for *assessing* children gives explanations of the different types of assessment. Could this link back to use of open-ended materials on pg. 81 and include the use of open-ended questions "can you tell me about…"
- o The use of a reflection piece at the end of each observation is great as it prompts Practitioners to reflect on what they have observed and helps to plan for further learning based on the child's interests.
- o The Challenges and Strengths (table 14 pg. 102) is a great way for practitioners to see the benefits of observation for both themselves, in terms of planning activities and for the children to see the progression of learning, it would be good to stress that testing is not usually something ELC Practitioners do and can be very misleading.

SUGGESTIONS

- o Add the focus is on what the child can do rather than where there are gaps in learning.
- o In Documenting the Learning Pg. 74 it would be good to include the time, date and room area in observation as it contextualises the observations. Also add Parental/Guardian permission to observations.
- o Give further examples of why certain aspects of the child is being captured in observation and why this information is important.
- o There needs to be more of a focus on assessment for learning then of learning.

CCI Concluding Points to Submission

- How can we embed Aistear in practice- how can we make CPD consistent, accessible, and equitable?
- Continue to ensure Aistear is a strengths-based approach to learning.
- Focusing on a strengths-based approach, review current templates and supporting documentation to reflect this e.g. observation record.
- Ensure legislation, policy and data is relevant in the current context.
- Ensure all new initiatives supporting the sector are included.
- Ensure terms and terminology are up to date when we are looking at the sector now in 2021 as opposed to 2009, what has changed, are we using different terminology?
- Ensure images and graphics used depict families and settings in the current context.
- Ensure family circumstances are depicted sensitively, homelessness, families living in direct provision, families fleeing conflict in home countries, families who are separated etc.
- Ensure current Irish research and data has been considered for inclusion where relevant within the publication.
- To realise the full potential of Aistear, ELC and SAC sector along with their primary school colleagues need the same level of access to CPD and resources.
- The updated Aistear Framework should be rolled out on a national basis accompanied by CPD.

Data Protection
The NCCA fully respects your right to privacy. Any personal information which you volunteer to the NCCA will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts. If you require further information related to data protection please visit https://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement or you can contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at dpo@ncca.i