

Connections to *Aistear* and *Síolta*

Aistear

Themes: *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking.*
Guidelines for good practice: *Building partnerships between parents and practitioners* (pp.6-25), *Learning and developing through interactions* (pp.27-30 and 46-47), *Supporting learning and development through assessment* (pp.78-79)

Síolta Standards

1: Rights of the Child, C1.1, 1.2, 1.3

6: *Transitions*, C13.1, 13.2, 13.3

Research Digests linked to the above *Standards*

Using the Self-evaluation Tool

This **Self-evaluation Tool** supports you, either as an individual practitioner or as a team, to reflect on how you manage transitions in your setting. Some aspects of supporting transitions are covered in the *Building Partnerships with Parents* pillar.

1. This tool is divided into **4 elements**.

1. Moving from home to a daycare/sessional setting
2. Transitions within the daily routine
3. Room to room transitions
4. Transition to primary school

2. Each element has a **series of statements**. For each statement, choose which of the following best reflects your current practice.

Never/Rarely	I seldom do this.
Sometimes	I do this if and when I remember.
Regularly	I try to do this as often as I can.
Almost Always	I do this most of the time.

If you would like to make notes or record examples from your practice about any of the statements, a box is provided for this.

Using the Self-evaluation Tool

3. After each element you will find **prompts for reflection**. As you consider these, think about your practice—what you do and how you do it. This will support you to identify what is working well and the challenges within each element.
4. Note changes you want to make.
5. After using the Self-evaluation Tool, you may find it useful to look at the sections, *Examples and Ideas for Practice and Resources for Sharing* at aistearsiolta.ie
6. The Action Planning Template in the section, *Action Planning Tools* can help you plan specific changes you decide to make.

Before working with this pillar, we recommend you work with *Curriculum Foundations*.

Practitioners' names

Date

Element 1: Moving from home to a daycare/sessional setting

Moving from home to the first out-of-home early childhood setting is one of the biggest transitions babies, toddlers and young children experience. This is a big milestone in a child's life, whether it be as a baby or toddler going to daycare for the first time or as a young child starting the pre-school year. Key information is shared between parents and practitioners to help ensure continuity of care, routine, and learning and development. Parents, childminders and practitioners work in partnership and strong attachments are developed between children and practitioners. Smooth transitions are facilitated and promoted by developing consistent and stable relationships. These foster a deep understanding of each child's world, including the social and cultural expectations from home, which supports a mutual understanding and a consistent approach to the care and education of the child.

	To support the initial transition from home,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we share information about our setting , such as our ethos, our image of children, mission or curriculum statement prior to enrolment to help parents decide if it is the right place for their child. We strive to provide important information in a parent's first language where that is not English/Irish.					
2	we offer to undertake a home visit , where possible, prior to the child's enrolment in the setting.					
3	we try to gain a thorough understanding of each child and his/her family. We encourage parents to share information with us (once the decision is made to enrol a child) and we explain how we will use this. We collect information about the child , his/her family, other people who have special significance for them, pets, interests, likes and dislikes. We also collect information about a child's routines, sleep preferences, eating patterns and special comfort objects , and about significant developmental milestones .					
4	we recognise that transitions are a shared responsibility that involve planning, communication and collaboration between staff and parents.					

Element 1: Moving from home to a daycare/sessional setting

	To support the initial transition from home,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
5	we recognise that personal characteristics and dispositions , family and cultural background , and previous experience of early childhood settings or transitions, all impact on children's adjustment to a new setting.					
6	we follow children's home routines as closely as possible , especially during their first months in the setting to provide comfort for them and consistency between the setting and home.					
7	we familiarise parents with our settling-in procedures prior to their child's enrolment/first day, and encourage them to explain these to their child (where appropriate). For example, procedures might include having shorter days at the beginning, inviting parents to spend time in the setting with their child initially or staggering the intake of new children.					
8	we tailor 'settling-in' periods to meet the needs of each child acknowledging that some children need more support or time to settle-in than others. We check in with parents regularly and ask for advice on how to make the process easier for their child.					
9	we provide photos of the setting and key person for parents to bring home prior to/during the settling-in period.					
10	we accommodate mothers who wish to continue breast-feeding their baby and where possible, provide a quiet, comfortable and private space to do this.					

Element 1: Moving from home to a daycare/sessional setting

To support the initial transition from home,		Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
11	we support parents during times of transition, understanding that adults may also find this process difficult. For example, we reassure them, and provide photos or videos of their child happy at play.					
12	we understand that the transition process may be particularly challenging for some children, especially those who already have a lot of change in their lives. We realise each child will respond to the transition differently in line with their age, stage of development and previous experiences.					
13	we recognise the factors that may cause stress/distress for children during transitions, for example, withdrawal, separation and anxiety. We work with children and parents to alleviate these as much as possible . For example, we talk to children about changes they might experience and help them to name how they might feel during these. We provide advice to parents on how they can help.					
14	we ask parents to provide reminders of home for their child, such as comfort blankets, soothers, special toys, books and photographs of pets and special people in the child's life.					
15	we assign a key person to each child and family and explain this in detail to parents. This practitioner has particular responsibility for liaising with the parents and supporting the child's learning and development and works hard to develop strong relationships .					

Element 1: Moving from home to a daycare/sessional setting

To support the initial transition from home,		Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
16	we provide regular opportunities for formal and informal conversations between the key person and parents to build relationships, trust and mutual understanding about the care and education of the child.					
17	we ensure that children, especially babies and toddlers, spend most of their time with familiar groups of children to form strong, stable relationships .					
18	we ensure siblings have opportunities to spend significant amounts of time together.					
19	we share written information with parents , for example, using a written baby journal, a child's learning portfolio, or a text message or email.					
20	we learn key words from the child's first language where this is a language other than English nor Irish.					
21	we strive to understand key cultural differences , speak regularly to parents about these and ask for their advice and support.					

Element 1: Moving from home to a daycare/sessional setting

	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
<p>22 we build relationships and collaborate with relevant professionals to better support a child's learning and development, for example, working with speech and language therapists, social workers, public health nurses and occupational therapists.</p>					
<p>23 when the need arises and with parental consent, we share/request information with/from relevant professionals, for example, health professionals/other early childhood settings.</p>					
<p>24 we work closely with other settings that the child attends to ensure consistency, for example, a child who attends a special unit for part of the week.</p>					
<p>25 we provide information and advice, with parental consent, when children are transferring from one setting to another, for example, to another early childhood setting, a play therapist or social worker.</p>					
<p>26 we encourage parents to tell us about transitions at home that could affect their child such as a relationship breakdown or moving house, so that we can support the child and family during this time.</p>					

Practitioners' names

Date

Element 2: Transitions within the daily routine

Transitions within the daily routine provide important structure and security for children, allowing them to predict and cope with changes during the course of the day. The daily routine, however, also remains flexible enough to meet children's ever-changing needs and interests.

	When promoting smooth transitions during the daily routine,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we ensure, to the best of our ability, that practitioners work with the same group of children each day, week and throughout the year.					
2	we minimise the movement of practitioners in and out of rooms to accommodate breaks, lunch and so on, especially in baby and toddler rooms. We ensure there is one familiar member of staff available at all times.					
3	we devise staff/holiday rosters so that babies and toddlers always have a familiar staff member in their room.					
4	we ask parents how the child is at arrival time each day .					
5	we recognise each child's temperament and disposition influences how he/she reacts to a transition.					
6	we have a structured yet flexible daily routine . We know how many transitions there are every day and keep these to a minimum .					
7	we ensure children and parents are familiar with the daily routine .					

Element 2: Transitions within the daily routine

	When promoting smooth transitions during the daily routine,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
8	we notify and support children before and during essential transitions. For example, we provide pictures of daily routines and other visual aids . We might also dim lights before quiet time, use sand-timers and/or signals such as three-, two- and one-minute verbal reminders for tidy-up time.					
9	we ensure transitions are calm, gradual and given sufficient time .					
10	we have agreed roles during transition times , for example, one practitioner supports children to tidy up after dinner while a second reads stories in the book area.					
11	we make necessary transitions playful by using books, rhymes, music, games, songs or puppets, for example, using a 'tidy-up' song at clean-up time.					
12	we respect that the amount of time children require to manage daily transitions can differ greatly , for example, some children arrive to the setting ready to play while other children may need some time to say goodbye and settle in.					
13	we support parents to understand that children need time to make transitions, for example, a child may not be ready to rush home if doing something important when his/her parent arrives.					
14	we have rituals for change-over and transition times, for example, waving goodbye, placing a favourite toy in a special place. Familiar staff are always in the room as children are dropped off and collected.					

Element 2: Transitions within the daily routine

	When promoting smooth transitions during the daily routine,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
15	we give children roles during arrival and going home times to allow them to feel in control, for example, 'signing in' when they arrive by moving their photo from one column to another on a notice-board.					
16	we provide spaces for children to store their group work or long-term projects so they can return to them later in the day, or in the following days.					
17	we plan ways to help children deal with waiting times , for example, use of a timer or sitting in a circle rather than standing in line. We also ask children for their ideas .					
18	we support children to be as independent as possible during transition times , for example, helping at clean-up time, washing their hands after the toilet or putting on their coats and hats for going outside.					
19	we ensure the routine is meeting children's needs and is adaptable for each child or group. For example, we consult with children on whether they would like to stay longer at an activity or move on.					
20	we support children to choose where to spend time . For example, they can decide to stay longer outside and don't have to go inside with the bigger group and vice versa.					

Element 2: Transitions within the daily routine

	When promoting smooth transitions during the daily routine,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
21	we are flexible about sleep time and support each child to settle in the way that suits him/her. Children who don't sleep can sit with an adult looking at a book or listening to soothing music.					
22	we ensure transition times like care-giving routines including toileting and nappy-changing, are playful and fun, and are not rushed.					
23	we ensure feeding times are enjoyable learning experiences for babies and that they don't have long wait-times for food.					
24	we ensure toddlers and young children are involved in preparations for snack- and meal-times, for example, putting out place-mats, sharing fruit and children are not sitting at a table for long periods waiting for food.					
25	we observe and reflect on children's experiences at times of transition and if necessary, we make changes to improve them.					

Practitioners' names

Date

Element 3: Room-to-room transitions

Transitions are managed sensitively and thoughtfully throughout the child's time in the setting. Changes like moving to a new room and/or adjusting to a new key person, are important and are planned for carefully and implemented gradually.

	When a child is moving from room-to-room within the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we consult with parents before a child moves , and we make a final decision in partnership with them.					
2	we discuss the process with the child prior to the move, for example, we explain the reason for the move, introduce the new key person, show the child the location of the new room and ensure that he/she is happy to move.					
3	we ensure the move is gradual and that aspects of the new room such as layout, resources and access to equipment, are similar to the old room . For example, a baby moving to a wobbler room will still have access to a soft area on the floor where he/she can play. Some toys and equipment are here, rather than on shelves, and are similar to those played with in the previous room.					
4	we explain changes in room layout and resources to children in a way that reflects their age and stage of development, and we give adequate time to them to adjust to the new room.					

Element 3: Room-to-room transitions

	When a child is moving from room-to-room within the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
5	we ensure there are enough adults in the room to support a smooth transition. This may sometimes mean having more adults than required in the Pre-school Regulations (2006). For example, an extra adult may be needed in the wobbler/toddler room as babies adjust to their new environment with older children.					
6	we introduce parents to their child's new key person when moving from one room to the next. Where possible, the key worker moves with his/her group of children.					
7	we provide opportunities for new and previous key people to meet to discuss a child and share written information before the child moves.					
8	we support children to build relationships with a new key person , for example, the new key person visits the child in the current room, the child visits the new key person in the new room and the child spends more time there each day until a full move is made.					
9	we share information about children with other team members to help ensure a move to a new room is a positive experience for children and that there is continuity and progression in their learning and development.					

Element 3: Room-to-room transitions

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to supporting room-to-room transitions within the daily routine.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced in supporting room-to-room transitions within the daily routine.
- What **aspects** of this work would you like to prioritise and focus on in the coming weeks?

You can use the *Examples and Ideas for Practice and Action Planning Tools* in the Practice Guide to help you plan this work.

Practitioners' names

Date

Element 4: Transition to primary school

The transition between an early childhood setting and a primary school is a collaborative process and includes children, parents, practitioners and setting managers, primary school teachers and principals, childminders and other professionals, where applicable. This transition is a big milestone on a child's life, and like other transitions, is supported and made smoother for children through planning, communication and collaboration. It is a process rather than a single point-in-time.

When supporting the transition to primary school,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1 we discuss children's strengths and areas where they are developing , with parents. This information helps parents to decide whether or not to send their child to school or to wait another year. A child's age is also considered when moving to school (compulsory school age is 6 years).					
2 we provide written information about children's skills, knowledge and dispositions to parents and offer formal opportunities to discuss their child's transition to school.					
3 we discuss children's transition to school with other professionals such as special needs assistants, social workers, where appropriate and with parental consent.					
4 we discuss with children, their feelings about moving to primary school. We help them to understand the kind of changes to expect by talking about the differences and similarities between the two settings.					
5 we provide particular props for their play , for example, school uniforms, school-bags, lunch-boxes, books about the transition to school, and photos of the schools they will be attending. We read books and tell stories related to the experience.					

Element 4: Transition to primary school

	When supporting the transition to primary school,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6	we provide parents with basic information about local schools such as their location and contact information, and details about upcoming open days.					
7	we support parents , understanding that they may also find this process difficult. We try to alleviate their worries by reassuring them and by talking honestly about the differences and similarities between the two settings.					
8	we liaise with feeder schools in the months preceding the move and bring children to visit the main, local primary school/s , where possible, and invite local teachers and/or principals to visit the children in our setting.					
9	we invite children who have already made the transition from our setting to school, to share their experience with children and parents.					
10	we provide written information about children's learning and development to the relevant primary school , with parental consent. For example, we share children's learning portfolios or transition forms.					
11	we recognise the transition as a shared responsibility between us, parents and the school . We plan, communicate and collaborate to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. We nurture relationships that help children make the transition to school, for example, with local teachers, home school liaison teachers and/or school principals.					
12	we provide information and advice about children's special educational needs to the primary school, upon request and with parental consent.					

