

Connections to *Aistear* and *Síolta*

Aistear

Themes: Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating

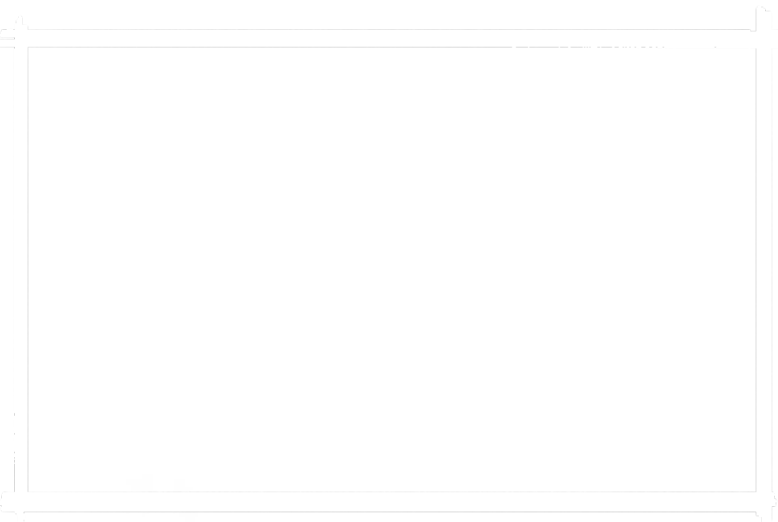
Guidelines for good practice: Building partnerships between parents and practitioners (pp.6-25)

Síolta Standards

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

3: *Parents and Families* C3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Research Digests linked to the above *Standards*



Using the Self-evaluation Tool

This **Self-evaluation Tool** supports you to reflect on the quality of your partnership with parents, either as an individual practitioner or as a team. The term parents refers to the child's primary caregivers and educators. These include the father and mother and/or guardians.

1. This tool is divided into **6 elements**.

- Supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected
- Sharing information about the setting and the curriculum
- Sharing information about children's learning and development with parents
- Helping parents to support learning and development at home
- Consulting with parents
- Parents being involved and contributing to the setting

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. Make a note of 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 on *Curriculum Foundations*.

Practitioners' names

Date

Element 1: Supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected

Accepting and valuing children's families and communities is an important aspect of partnership.

	When supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we invite families to visit our setting and we provide information to help them decide if this is the right setting for their child.					
2	we use settling-in time to get to know parents by making a special effort to chat with them regularly and we warmly greet and say goodbye every day.					
3	we work hard to ensure each child and family has a smooth transition into our setting , for example, we ask parents to complete an information form to help us get to know them.					
4	we invite parents to bring in family photos or objects from home and explain the importance of these for their child's comfort and developing sense of identity and belonging.					
5	we value and support children's home cultures, backgrounds and languages , for example, we learn important words or songs in languages other than that of the setting and we provide books in the home languages of the children where possible.					

Element 1: Supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected

	When supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6	we invite parents to share information about their culture, background and traditions , for example, we consult with families to find ways to represent or celebrate their cultures.					
7	we actively encourage parents and extended family to become involved in the setting in different ways and at a pace that suits them.					
8	we use plain English in all our written communication with parents and avoid jargon to make information accessible.					
9	we work hard to build partnerships with parents who don't visit the setting on a regular basis , for example, we phone, email and text, we share information through secure social media, and we invite them to special events such as Grandparent or Family Days.					
10	we encourage and help parents to attend events in the setting by having them at times that suit them.					
11	we ensure equipment, materials and displays reflect the diversity of families using the setting including family structure, disability, Traveller community and new communities.					

Element 1: Supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected

	When supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
12	we have welcome signs in English, Irish and other home languages of the families in the setting.					
13	we make time to listen to parents and we take their concerns and views on board.					
14	we provide opportunities for parents to meet each other , for example, we organise coffee mornings or other social eventst and we introduce parents to the parents of their children’s friends.					

Element 1: Supporting families to feel welcome, valued and respected

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to supporting parents to feel welcome, valued and respected.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced in supporting parents to feel welcome, valued and respected.
- 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 2: Sharing information about the setting and curriculum

Parents are provided with all the information they need to understand the setting and the curriculum.

	When sharing information about the setting and curriculum,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we share information about the types of experiences we provide for children, why these are important and how we support learning and development through these experiences, for example, we organise an information session on the curriculum at the start of the year and we use wall displays.					
2	we make a special effort to communicate with parents who have English or Irish as a second language , for example, we use photos and encourage parents to help translate materials.					
3	we introduce parents to the key people working directly with their child on a day-to-day basis and explain if there is a change in staffing or in routines for their child.					
4	we share information on staff training and qualifications and on further training and continuing professional development.					
5	we explain adult/child ratios to parents and let them know the maximum number and age range of children in their child's room in the setting.					

Element 2: Sharing information about the setting and curriculum

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to sharing information with parents about the setting and curriculum.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced in sharing information with parents about the setting and curriculum.
- 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 3: Sharing information about children's learning and development

Parents have opportunities to share information about their child and are regularly given information on their child's progress, interests, needs, efforts, achievements and daily experiences. Information is shared in a variety of ways – verbally, through documentation and electronically such as email, text, and digital photos. Where possible, the key person shares information with the parent.

When sharing information about children's learning and development with parents,	Never/Rarely	Some-times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1 we provide parents with informal opportunities to chat as well as formal opportunities to meet a staff member on their own to discuss their child.					
2 we actively seek information from parents , for example, we find out from them what interests their children and we build on these interests in the setting.					
3 we ask parents about the types of information they want about their child's experiences in our setting and we provide this as much as possible.					
4 we share examples of children's experiences with parents when they visit the setting, for example, we show photos with captions describing what children did and learned and we use lots of these to help parents who have English or Irish as an additional language.					
5 we send material on children's experiences home , for example, a portfolio showing the child's experiences over time and we provide a mechanism for parent feedback and questions.					

Element 3: Sharing information about children's learning and development

	When sharing information about children's learning and development with parents,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6	we use a notice-board to let parents know what children do and learn during the day.					
7	we use parent-practitioner diaries that travel to and from home to support babies and toddlers, and young children with additional needs.					
8	we use text messages to remind parents of special events.					
9	we translate information for parents who have English or Irish as an additional language with help, where appropriate, from parents/staff who speak the families' home languages.					
10	we make special efforts to work with and support parents in situations that may make it difficult for them to participate in their children's learning and development as much as they would like.					
11	we are honest with parents and let them know, in person, about potential issues of concern as early as possible and in a sensitive and confidential manner.					

Element 3: Sharing information about children's learning and development

When sharing information about children's learning and development with parents,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
12 we present a compilation of some of the child's experiences to parents when moving on from their room or setting, for example, in a portfolio.					

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to sharing information with parents about their children's learning and development.

- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced in sharing information with parents about their children's learning and development.

- 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

DD/MM/YY

Element 4: Helping parents to support learning and development at home

Staff are responsive and sensitive in providing information and support to parents to help them, in turn, help their children learn and develop at home.

When helping parents to support learning and development at home,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1 we organise information sessions on topics such as play, early maths, enjoying books, being physically active.					
2 we share leaflets, tip sheets, DVDs and other resources with parents.					
3 we provide information in the home languages of parents where possible, for example, the NCCA play tip sheets.					
4 we lend picture books and CDs of songs and nursery rhymes to parents.					
5 we invite parents to spend time in the setting so they can join in and learn about what their children do.					

Element 4: Helping parents to support learning and development at home

	When helping parents to support learning and development at home,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6	we distribute a newsletter regularly to provide information on children’s experiences including birthdays, outings, topics being explored and ideas to extend learning at home, and addresses of useful websites.					
7	we work alongside parents to co-operate with outside agencies and other professionals to help children reach their potential, for example, working with speech and language therapists, public health nurses, social workers and so on.					
8	we share information on local services and amenities , for example, the local City or County Childcare Committee, library, parent support programmes, local parks, museums and community events.					

Element 4: Helping parents to support learning and development at home

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to helping parents support their children's learning and development at home.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced in helping parents support their children's learning and development at home.
- 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

DD/MM/YY

Element 5: Consulting with parents

The views and ideas of parents are gathered and acted upon.

When consulting with parents,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1 we ask, during enrolment, about their expectations of the setting and hopes for their children during their time with us and we check in on this during the year.					
2 we provide opportunities for them to give informal feedback on children's experiences when we talk to them.					
3 we use a parent survey at the end of each academic year inviting feedback on children's experiences and ideas for improvement.					
4 we ask parents of children moving to another setting about their experience with us and invite them to suggest how our work could be improved.					
5 we regularly ask for ideas such as places for trips and projects to research.					

Element 5: Consulting with parents

When consulting with parents,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6 we have a suggestion-box which is especially useful for parents who may not have time to stop and chat as they drop or pick up their children.					

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to consulting with parents.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced in consulting with parents.
- 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 6: Parents being involved with and contributing to the setting

There are a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in activities within the setting, taking into account the range of parents' interests and time constraints. Parents are invited to be as involved as they can be, to enrich the learning experiences for children.

	To encourage parents to be involved and contribute to the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we regularly invite parents to share their time with us, for example, to accompany us on trips and help with activities in the setting.					
2	we invite parents to share experiences , for example, to tell us about their job, places they have been, interesting aspects of their culture.					
3	we encourage parents to share talents and interests , for example, music, gardening, cooking, story-telling, bringing in pets.					

Element 6: Parents being involved with and contributing to the setting

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to to parental involvement in, and contribution the setting.

- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced with encouraging parental involvement in, and contribution the setting.

- 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.