

Element 3: *Aistear's* Themes

Introduction

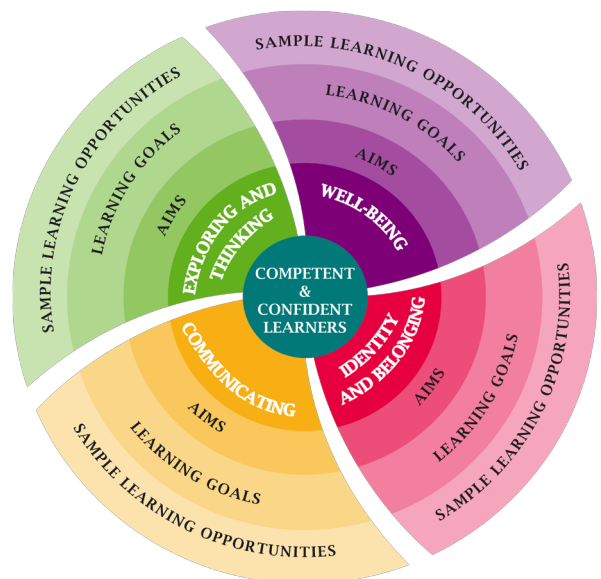
Using the themes of *Aistear* in your planning and assessing helps to ensure that the curriculum you provide supports each child reach his/her full potential. The Practice Guide includes a number of activities to help you think about the themes and their connection to your curriculum work.

Aistear describes what children learn through four interconnected themes:

1. *Well-being* is about children being confident, happy and healthy.
2. *Identity and Belonging* is about children having a positive sense of who they are, developing a sense of their culture and heritage and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community.
3. *Communicating* is about children sharing their experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings with growing confidence and competence in a variety of ways and for different purposes.
4. *Exploring and Thinking* is about children making sense of the things, places and people in their world.

As shown in Figure 1, each theme has four aims (sixteen in total) and six learning goals (ninety-six in total). Together, these aims and goals describe the dispositions¹, skills, attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding that are important for children from birth to six years.

Figure 1: *Aistear's* Themes



These provide the basis for the experiences you provide to support children's learning and development. There are a number of activities to help you become familiar with the themes. The themes are linked to all pillars of practice as well as being an important part of the foundations section.

1. Dispositions are 'habits of mind and action'. They are tendencies to behave and respond to situations in particular ways. *Aistear* highlights the importance of supporting children to develop positive learning dispositions such as perseverance, independence, resilience and curiosity.