

Connections to *Aistear* and *Síolta*

Aistear

Themes: Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking
Guidelines for good practice: Learning and developing through interactions (pp.27-51)

Síolta Standards

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

5: *Interactions*, C5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5

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 interactions either as an individual practitioner or as a team working with **babies and toddlers**.

1. This tool is divided into **3 elements**.

- Building relationships
- Facilitating learning
- Directing and leading learning

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

DD/MM/YY

Element 1: Building relationships

Building relationships is about supporting babies and toddlers to be comfortable with and enjoy being with other people. It includes creating an environment in which babies and toddlers feel secure and confident to interact, take risks, explore, participate in challenging experiences, and to direct and co-direct their own learning.

	When building relationships in the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1	we use a Key Person system where each practitioner works with the same small group of children daily.					
2	we ensure that babies and toddlers spend most of their time with familiar groups of children and practitioners so that they can build strong relationships. Babies, in particular, receive lots of one-to-one interaction.					
3	we show babies and toddlers that we enjoy being with them and understand them by interacting in a warm, caring, playful, patient manner and by using a gentle tone of voice and welcoming body language .					
4	we tailor interactions to respect different temperaments , for example, we use tickles and giggles with some babies and toddlers and not with others who may be startled by these actions.					
5	we foster positive interactions with and between babies and toddlers by supporting them to interact with peers and with children of different ages including siblings in pairs, small groups and sometimes, in large groups.					

Element 1: Building relationships

When building relationships in the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6 we respect a baby's and toddler's choice to play alone or alongside each other and we encourage older toddlers as they begin to play with each other .					
7 we recognise and respect individual abilities, needs, interests, routines and special belongings and involve babies and toddlers in decisions that affect them such as who they play with, objects they want to explore.					
8 we respect, become familiar with and respond to non-verbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, body movements, sounds, cries, touch, and eye contact.					
9 we keep eye contact with babies and toddlers during interactions while being mindful that some cultures do not do this.					
10 we sometimes use visuals such as pictures, objects, labels and colours alongside words to communicate with babies and toddlers.					
11 we use the daily routine and care routines to interact respectfully, consistently and appropriately with babies and toddlers, for example, we talk to them during nappy-changing, and we use songs and words from their home environment as well as from the setting.					

Element 1: Building relationships

	When building relationships in the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
12	we learn and use some words from the child's home environment to provide comfort or familiarity for the baby or toddler, for example, we understand and respond to words the child uses for familiar objects.					
13	we join babies and toddlers in their play , follow their lead and extend play experiences to support their learning and development, for example, the disposition of taking initiative, acting on curiosity and being independent.					
14	we choose adult-led activities carefully ensuring they reflect babies' and toddlers' interests and support a particular aspect of their learning and development such as their thinking, memory and imagination.					
15	we support babies and toddlers during times of separation, anxiety or when things go wrong by comforting them with words and positive touch helping them to build resilience.					
16	we encourage babies and toddlers to express how they're feeling by helping them to name emotions, for example, <i>I see you are feeling angry</i> or <i>Look at your beaming smile! You are very happy to be outside.</i>					
17	we help babies and toddlers to develop language, listening skills and thinking skills by using daily experiences and routine events to talk to them about what is happening around them.					

Element 1: Building relationships

	When building relationships in the setting,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
18	we acknowledge and encourage babies' and toddlers' problem-solving skills by commenting on what's happening, for example, <i>Oh, I see you have pulled up your sleeve to play with the water. Can you help me to pull mine up please?</i>					
19	we encourage babies and toddlers to try new things and we acknowledge their persistence giving non-verbal and verbal feedback, for example, we clap hands when they try to stand, we cheer them on when they grab for something just out of reach.					
20	we reinforce positive behaviour by responding with positive actions and words, for example, <i>Thank you for sharing your blocks with Joe.</i>					
21	we use 'I statements' to focus on a problem and not on the baby or toddler, for example, <i>I worry that you will get hurt when you push each other.</i>					
22	we support toddlers by modelling and giving clear and consistent messages about socially-accepted behaviour while having realistic expectations reflecting their developmental stage.					
23	we model respectful language for babies and toddlers when interacting with them, their parents and other adults by saying <i>please, thank you, sorry and excuse me.</i>					

Element 1: Building relationships

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to building relationships with babies and toddlers.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced with building relationships with babies and toddlers.
- 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: Facilitating learning

Facilitating learning enables babies and toddlers to take the lead or to share the lead in their learning. It is also about involving them in making choices and decisions and feeling in control. When children challenge themselves through child-initiated activities and use, extend and build on existing knowledge, understanding and skills, learning is enjoyable, motivating and rewarding for them.

When facilitating babies' and toddlers' learning,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1 we keep transitions to a minimum throughout the day. We notify and support children before and during essential transitions, for example, we wave goodbye or describe what is going to happen and give extra help to those who find transitions unsettling or difficult.					
2 we ensure that each day focuses mainly on child-initiated experiences which can be extended to challenge babies' and toddlers' thinking or involve them in developing new skills and develop their imagination.					
3 we value babies' and toddlers' opinions by involving them in decision-making and respecting their choices , for example, which story they would like to listen to.					
4 we provide choices for babies and toddlers throughout the day adapting activities they choose to suit differing abilities and needs while helping each child to progress in his/her learning and development.					
5 we see babies and toddlers as capable and competent and encourage them to do things for themselves such as feed, dress, take objects for play, and we give them time to show or describe what they are doing or thinking.					

Element 2: Facilitating learning

	When facilitating babies' and toddlers' learning,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6	we encourage babies and toddlers to take part in conversations about what they are doing and thinking, for example, we invite them to share their ideas about stories and we use open-ended questions to help them clarify their thinking.					
7	we assist babies and toddlers with special educational needs by supporting them to interact and communicate in their own way using assistive technology if needed.					
8	we pause and think to ensure that we enter into babies' and toddlers' play and interactions with sensitivity . Sometimes, it may be appropriate to wait and give more time before becoming involved.					
9	we facilitate babies' and toddlers' exploration and thinking by acting as a secure base while they explore new objects or meet new people.					
10	we watch what interests babies and toddlers, name and describe what is happening, offer new resources , and suggest or show new ways to do something.					
11	we encourage babies and toddlers to help each other during activities, to use each other's names while we describe who is present and what others are doing.					

Element 2: Facilitating learning

When facilitating babies' and toddlers' learning,		Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
12	we are aware of babies' and toddlers' developing self-identity at this early stage and encourage boys and girls to explore a variety of topics and activities avoiding gender stereotypes.					
13	we describe the dispositions, skills and strengths we see in each baby and toddler to help him/her begin to identify and respect diversity and personal achievement .					
14	we nurture emerging social and emotional competencies , for example, we tell babies and toddlers that they are a great help and we show and encourage empathy when a child is upset.					
15	we ensure there are sufficient resources so that babies and toddlers have short wait-times for getting their turn with an item and we offer alternatives if and when issues arise especially with babies and younger toddlers.					
16	we create opportunities for, and encourage babies and toddlers to share their stories and ideas with others throughout the daily routine and we provide language support if needed.					
17	we encourage babies and toddlers to communicate throughout the day using gestures, sounds, words, sentences, drawings or mark-making allowing them to choose.					

Element 2: Facilitating learning

When facilitating babies' and toddlers' learning,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
18 we use babies' and toddlers' drawings and mark-making for further conversation as we invite and encourage them to share their experiences and develop their imagination.					
19 we recognise the importance of imparting a sense of pride and achievement in children in order to preserve the Irish language and the heritage of the Gaeltacht regions.					

Element 2: Facilitating learning

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in facilitating learning with babies and toddlers.

- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced with facilitating learning with babies and toddlers.

- 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: Directing and leading learning

Directing and leading learning involves helping babies and toddlers to learn through planned and guided activities which build on their interests and experiences and which focus on developing particular dispositions, values and attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding.

When directing and leading learning,	Never/Rarely	Some-times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
1 we ask questions to introduce new topics and extend what babies and toddlers are interested in, for example, <i>I see you are looking at Amy playing with the water, would you like to play with the water too?</i>					
2 we plan learning experiences that build upon what babies and toddlers already know thereby encouraging them to use their memory, for example, we add new materials to water play such as a sponge, food colouring or bubbles.					
3 we lead activities that involve taking turns and we model this in our practice. We ensure, depending on the age of the babies and toddlers, that the waiting period for their turn is appropriate to keep their interest.					
4 we introduce new learning through hands-on experiences with concrete items so that babies and toddlers can explore these and build new ideas and thinking based on their explorations.					
5 we introduce new words and phrases in a playful, informal way using books, objects, rhymes, action songs, games and play and we provide opportunities to use these words regularly so babies and toddlers understand them.					

Element 3: Directing and leading learning

When directing and leading learning,	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Regularly	Almost Always	Notes / Examples
6 we model correct word pronunciation for babies and toddlers by saying words correctly rather than telling children they are wrong, for example, <i>boon? Yes, you can have a spoon.</i>					
7 we lead conversations and activities with older toddlers to raise awareness of, and nurture respect for difference , for example, we use books, toys and objects that show children with special educational needs, different backgrounds and cultures.					
8 we use actions, pictures and gestures to help babies and toddlers understand as we explain to them what will happen during planned activities.					
9 we model thinking aloud when making choices or decisions showing babies and toddlers the reasons for actions or gestures, for example, <i>Look at the sun shine, I wonder should we have our lunch outside today.</i>					
10 we use positive language as well as modelling instruction, for example, <i>Let's use our hands gently instead of Don't hurt each other.</i>					

Element 3: Directing and leading learning

Prompts for Reflection

- Think about what is **working well** in relation to directing and leading learning with babies and toddlers.
- Think about the **challenges** you have experienced with directing and leading learning with babies and toddlers.
- 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.