

# Helping young children to develop positive learning dispositions

## 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), Learning and developing through play (pp.57 and 103-106), Supporting learning and development through assessment (pp.72-102)

### *Síolta* Standards

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

6: Play, C6.7

7: Curriculum, C7.2, 7.6

Research Digests linked to the above *Standards*

*Aistear's* themes describe what children need to learn from birth onwards and outlines learning in **four interconnected aspects: skills, attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and dispositions.** **Skills** for children like communicating, mark-making, cutting, climbing, and problem-solving, **attitudes and values** like respect for themselves and others, care for the environment, and positive attitudes to learning and to life, **knowledge and understanding** like classifying objects using colour and size, or learning that symbols such as letters or numbers have meaning.



## What is a disposition?

*Aistear* defines dispositions as 'enduring habits of mind and action. A disposition is the tendency to respond to situations in characteristic ways' (*Aistear*, 2009, p.54).

Positive **dispositions** mentioned in *Aistear* are **independence, curiosity, concentration, creativity, responsibility, resilience, patience, perseverance, playfulness, imagination, being interested in things, enjoying problem-solving, being a good listener, assessing and taking risks, being friendly, wanting to communicate, being accepting of others and of differences, being considerate, being happy, cooperating with others.**









## Assessing dispositions

*Aistear's* guidelines on *Supporting learning and development through assessment* (2009, pp72-102) discuss the importance of observing what children do, make and say over time, and using this information to plan for future experiences. The Guidelines (p. 74) suggest that the adult should look for evidence of the child's progress across **four interconnected aspects as outlined above: skills, attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding and dispositions.**

Dispositions can be difficult to assess and it may only become clear that a child possesses a certain disposition after getting to know a child over a period of time. Observing children as they interact and play allows us to see how they demonstrate their dispositions and it is important to include dispositions in assessment as **positive dispositions** are being increasingly recognised as being crucial for children's learning and development!