

## Element 3: *Aistear's* Themes

### Activity A: Thinking about *Aistear's* themes

This activity will support you to explore *Aistear's* four themes of *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating* and *Exploring and Thinking*. It will also provide an opportunity for you to discuss how the themes connect to the curriculum in your setting.

*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.

- Working in pairs or small groups, think about children's *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating and Exploring and Thinking*.
- What experiences, ideas, conversations, events, practices, or daily routines from your setting spring to mind for babies/ toddlers /young children in each of the themes?
- Discuss for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Take feedback on a flip chart or use the boxes provided below.

**Well-being**

**Identity and Belonging**

**Communicating**

**Exploring and Thinking**

**Reviewing responses. Which themes were easy to find examples for?  
Which were difficult and why?**

Now that you have begun to make links between your practice and *Aistear*'s themes review the poster of the themes on the next page for more detailed information. Alternatively, watch the short videos on the right for examples of the themes in practice.

- These presentations show the theme of Well-being in action for children from Birth-3 years and 3-6 years old
- These presentations show the theme of Identity and Belonging in action for children from Birth-3 years and 3-6 years old
- These presentations show the theme of Communicating in action for children from Birth-3 years and 3-6 years old
- These presentations show the theme of Exploring and Thinking in action for children from Birth-3 years and 3-6 years old.


HOLISTIC LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
PLAY AND HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES

THE ADULT'S ROLE
RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

CHILDREN AS CITIZENS
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

THE CHILD'S UNIQUENESS
RELATIONSHIPS
PARENTS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
ACTIVE LEARNING



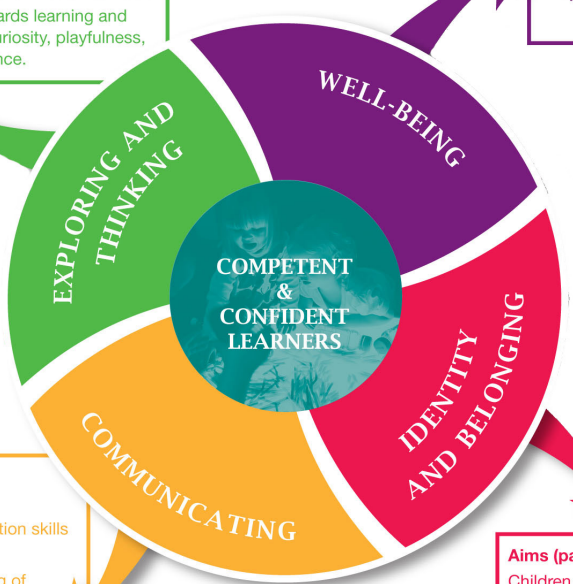
Aistear is the curriculum framework for all children from birth to six years. It describes learning and development using four themes.

**Aims (page 44)**  
Children will

- learn about and make sense of the world around them
- develop and use skills and strategies for observing, questioning, investigating, understanding, and problem-solving
- explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects, and actions through symbols
- have positive attitudes towards learning and develop dispositions like curiosity, playfulness, perseverance, and confidence.

**Aims (page 17)**  
Children will

- be strong psychologically and socially
- be as healthy and fit as they can be
- be creative and spiritual
- have positive outlooks on learning and on life.



**Aims (page 35)**  
Children will

- use non-verbal communication skills
- use language
- broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language
- will express themselves creatively and imaginatively.

**Aims (page 26)**  
Children will


- have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed
- have a sense of group identity
- be able to express their rights and show regard for the identity, rights and views of others
- see themselves as capable learners.

Aistear complements and connects with

- *The Free Pre-school Year in Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme*
- *Siolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*
- *The Revised Child Care (Pre-School) Regulations* (in particular Article 5)
- *The Primary School Curriculum*
- *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life.*

**Aistear Toolkit**

The on-line Aistear Toolkit provides a range of resources including video clips, tip sheets, information leaflets, and podcasts to help you use *Aistear* in your setting. You can find the Toolkit at [www.ncca.ie/aistear toolkit](http://www.ncca.ie/aistear toolkit).



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