

Curriculum Foundations: Overview

Connections to *Aistear* and *Síolta*

Aistear

Themes: *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking,*
All Guidelines for good practice

Síolta Standards

1: Rights of the Child, 2: Environments,
3: Parents and Families, 5: Interactions,
6: Play, 7: Curriculum, 11: Professional Practice,
13: Transitions, 14: Identity and Belonging,
16: Community Involvement
Research Digests linked to the above *Standards*

The *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* is intended to help you in your role as curriculum-developer to build, reflect on and extend your curriculum to support babies', toddlers' and young children's early learning and development. Drawing on the early childhood sector's experiences of using *Aistear* and *Síolta*, the Practice Guide includes:

- **Curriculum Foundations** and
- six interconnected **Curriculum Pillars**:
 1. Building Partnerships with Parents
 2. Creating and Using the Learning Environment
 3. Learning through Play
 4. Nurturing and Extending Interactions
 5. Planning and Assessing using *Aistear's* Themes
 6. Supporting Transitions.

This document gives an overview of **Curriculum Foundations**. These Foundations are an important starting point when thinking about curriculum.

Curriculum Foundations are rooted in the principles, values and attitudes that shape each practitioner's work and that of the setting. The Foundations include the following four elements:

Element 1: Developing your Curriculum and Curriculum Statement

This element looks at the meaning of curriculum and in particular, an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum. It helps you to think about your own curriculum and develop a statement about it which you can share with others. This statement can become the basis for your long-term curriculum planning and can be updated as necessary.

The activities within this element help practitioners to think about their current curriculum and to develop a curriculum statement before they begin work on the Practice Guide. They also support practitioners to develop a more emergent and inquiry-based curriculum and invite them to revisit their curriculum statement at a later stage to ensure it reflects changes made as a result of working with the Practice Guide.

Element 2: Principles including Rights of the Child and Practitioner Image of the Child

This element looks at the principles underpinning *Aistear* and *Síolta*. In particular, it focuses on the rights of the child and practitioner image of the child and helps you to think about the principles that underpin your curriculum. These activities are designed to be completed over time, and provide reflective questions, prompts and scenarios to encourage practitioners to think about the principles which underpin their work with children.

Element 3: Themes in Aistear

This element focuses on the themes of *Aistear* which describe learning and development and help to support the holistic development of all children. The activities provided aim to help practitioners to become familiar with *Aistear's* themes.

Element 4: Professional Practice

This element looks at professional practice including the concept of pedagogical leadership. It provides activities that aim to support practitioners to think about their role as reflective, pedagogical leaders.