

Sharing our School Focus



April 25th 2016.

Aistear, the Irish word for a journey, is the name of the early Irish curriculum framework published in 2009 by the NCCA. We introduced Aistear in Holy Trinity NS in 2012. Since then we have fitted out our Aistear Room, and junior and senior infants have timetabled Aistear Room allocated each week.

Some of the Key Components

Nurturing Your Child's Development

Children learn to talk in order to communicate what they want and need. All language was created on this basis. Yet often children approach reading, writing and problem-solving with caution rather than enthusiasm, afraid that they will 'get it wrong'. This can lead to a loss of confidence which often results in literacy and numeracy difficulties. **The power of play** in overcoming literacy and numeracy difficulties is rarely explored. Integrating writing and problem-solving into play allows children to see the purpose of literacy and numeracy. They see, for example, that all writing is created with a reader in mind (food orders, shopping lists, recipes, police records, patient notes etc.)

Literacy, Numeracy and Play

Research shows that developing literacy and numeracy skills in young children through play has lifelong benefits. Children are provided with literacy and numeracy experiences that are real and rewarding. These experiences instill a feeling of pride and ownership within all children, enticing them to participate enthusiastically in literacy and numeracy practices throughout their lives.

Implementing the Aistear Framework

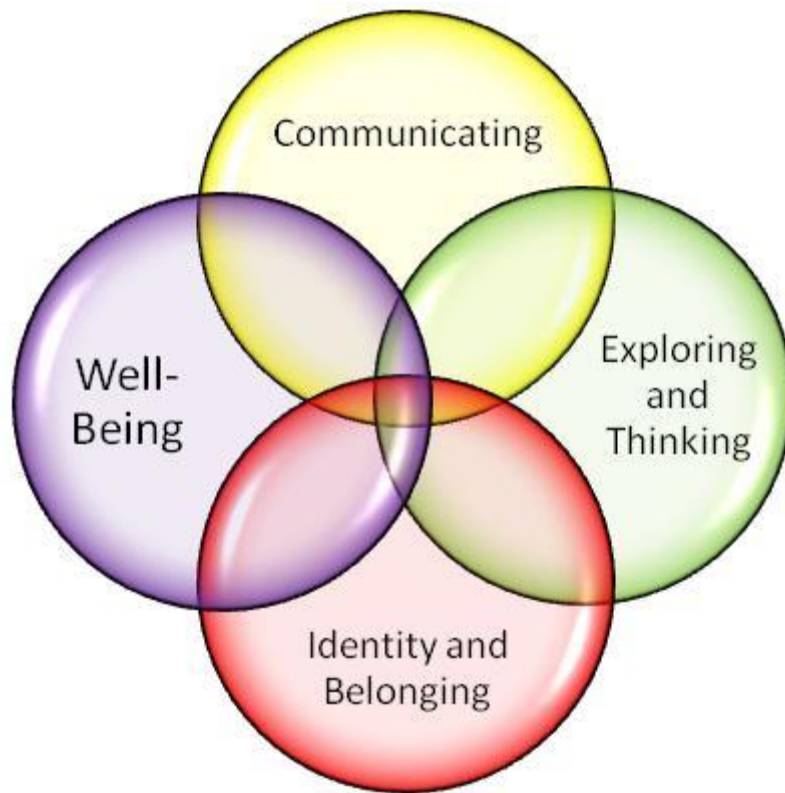
The Aistear Framework for Early Childhood Learning is based on the fact that children (from 0-6 years) learn many different things at the same time throughout their lives. The Framework uses four interconnected themes to describe the content of children's learning and development:

Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, and Exploring and Thinking.

Aistear highlights the critical role of play, relationships and language for young children's learning. The Aistear Framework has been integrated easily with our primary school curriculum here in Holy Trinity National School. We understand and appreciate the importance of children's literacy and numeracy skills during all types of play (pretend, language, small-world, physical etc.) thus fusing the essential elements of our curriculum with the lives of the children.

The current theme is 'Shopping' - What are we learning?

- Developing vocabulary and finding opportunities to use new language in shopping activities
- Emergent Writing- Making shopping lists
- Maths- Counting and adding at the check-out.



Learning for Life Across the Curriculum

The opportunity to learn through play is not confined to playtime alone but can be easily integrated with all curricular areas (Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, PE, Music, Art, Drama and SPHE). In fact, using dramatic play, small world play, language play etc. as a teaching tool makes the topics taught more meaningful for children as they can make connections between their own experience and the wider world. The purpose of learning becomes clearer to them and, as a result, motivation and enthusiasm levels increase, thus improving standards across the curriculum.

Continuing with Aistear

The Aistear framework doesn't have to end once a child goes into the middle or senior classes. In fact our First Class pupils have a time-tabled slot in the Aistear Room each week. Learning opportunities emerge all the time at home during Imaginary play-time. The Aistear framework reminds us to grasp those opportunities to develop children's confidence, social skills, language and curiosity.

Active Homework Diary

This week, each pupil will again have an Active Homework Diary. Last week was an amazing success. We congratulate all the winners of our diary raffle on Friday last... Art & Hobby materials were given to the winners this morning.

Just before lunch-time each day, our weekly focus is highlighted. This week, in our 'Food for Thought' announcement, we draw attention to the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Ask your child if they can remember any of the Food for Thought facts.

Did you know how many bananas we eat in Ireland every year?