

Updating *Aistear*

Written submission template for organisations, groups and individuals

This template is intended to help you (and your colleagues) develop a written submission in relation to Updating *Aistear*. Please e-mail your completed submission to aistearsubmissions@ncca.ie

Individual submission details

Name	Dr Róisín Ní Ghairbhí
Date	
E-mail	

Organisation submission details

Name	
Position	
Organisation	
Date	
E-mail	

Do you consent to this submission being posted online including your name and organisation*?

Yes

No

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

I am involved in various organisations This is a personal submission, as a parent who is concerned with equity.

The remainder of the template includes two sections. Section 1 invites your overall comments and observations on *Aistear*: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Section 2 is structured according to the Principles, Themes and Guidelines for Good Practice. Each section is briefly summarised as a support for working on the submission.

Please email your submission to aistearsubmissions@ncca.ie

Section 1

Please outline your overall comments and observations on updating *Aistear*: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

I am writing this in English for absolute clarity.

Section 2

Principles of *Aistear*

Aistear is based on 12 Principles of early learning and development. Each principle is presented using a short statement. This is followed by an explanation of the Principle from the child's perspective. This explanation highlights the adult's role in supporting children's early learning and development. The Principles can be accessed [here](#).

Please give your feedback in relation to updating the Principles of *Aistear*. Please indicate what is working well with the principles and what might need to be enhanced or updated.

Section 3

Themes of *Aistear*

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework presents children’s learning and development using four Themes. These are:

1. Well-being
2. Identity and Belonging
3. Communicating
4. Exploring and Thinking.

The themes describe what children learn—the dispositions, attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and understanding. Each theme begins with a short overview of its importance for children as young learners. The theme is then presented using four aims. Each aim is divided into six learning goals. *Aistear*’s Themes can be accessed [here](#)

Please give your overall feedback in relation to the themes of *Aistear*. Please indicate what is working well with the themes and what might need to be enhanced or updated.

For all of the above themes, the Irish language has a rich role to play. Astonishingly, there is no mention of the Irish language in *Aistear* (outside of the niche and geographically restricted Naíonra system). This is extraordinary and unacceptable: Irish is formally recognised as an intrinsic part of Irish culture at all other curricular levels, from primary to third-level. It is our first official language,. It needs to be formally mentioned in the framework, given the emphasis the framework places on identity, well-being, belonging and communicating.

Furthermore it is vital that the role the Irish language can play in integrating new citizens (and their parents) is acknowledged. A newcomer to the country, or a family who is spending a period of time here will benefit from exposure to Irish language culture, through simple songs and rhymes.

Children will also benefit from experiences of bilingualism, or for many, and additional language in their multilingual environment.

For reasons of equity, all children should have some positive exposure to the richness of the Irish language as *Aistear* prepares them for primary school entry. Learning a simple song or phrase brings pride and a sense of achievement and belonging. This is especially

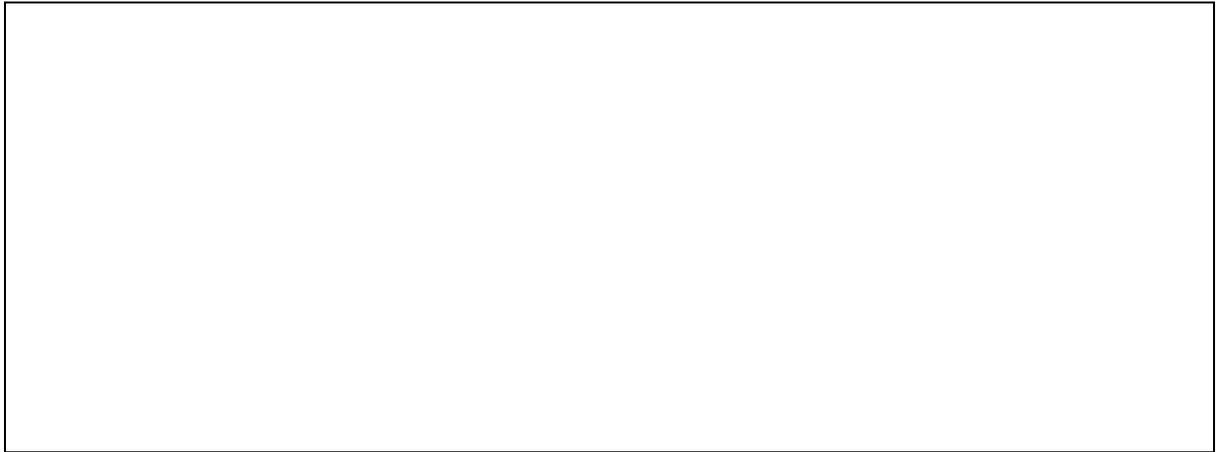
important for certain groups, including Mincéir children, newcomer Irish children and disadvantaged children or children with a disability. In the case of the Mincéir community, this is a case of restoring the language to a group who played a leading role in sharing Irish language songs and stories.

Where there is no naíonra in the vicinity (they are an urban and Gaeltacht phenomenon) there are also parents using Irish in the home whose rights are being infringed by the lack of provision of the most basic language appropriate service for their children.

Finally, some of the richest arts experiences are available through the Irish language, and Irish language networks, including a world class children's rhyme and song repertoire and attendant resources and world class children's theatre, eg through Branar Téatar do Pháistí.

Personel should be aware of these networks and resources, and differentiated training at a level appropriate to needs and ability should be provided to practitioners, managers and those leading at a government level to ensure that all citizens can access aspects of Irish language culture at preschool level, as they already should be able to do at primary, secondary and third level. At present, Irish language culture is not on the curriculum of many third level education programmes for early years (with notable exceptions such as Montessori). The expertise of the Naíonra network is available also.

All involved in planning in education should be aware of the risks involved in treating the Irish language as a niche area, which has often operated at a remove from the mainstream and whose needs are not always attended to – eg in educating educators and staff. Furthermore, in an increasingly polarised world, where the politics of identity are being appropriated and misused by right wing groups with their own agenda, leadership in curricular change should have one message – Irish language identity belongs to every young citizen, and the right to access the richness of that culture will be upheld for all on an equitable basis. These rights extend to those seeking to make a career in the important area of early years' education.



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Section 4

Guidelines for Good Practice

Aistear has four sets of guidelines, focusing on different aspects of practice:

1. Building partnerships between parents and practitioners
2. Learning and developing through interactions
3. Learning and developing through play
4. Supporting learning and development through assessment

These describe how the adult can support children's learning and development across *Aistear's* principles and themes. *Aistear's* Guidelines for Good Practice can be accessed [here](#)

Please give your overall feedback in relation to updating *Aistear's* Guidelines for Good Practice. Please indicate what is working well with the guidelines and what might need to be enhanced or updated.

These are all admirable in themselves, and could be harnessed also for informal and fun language learning.

Data Protection

The NCCA fully respects your right to privacy. Any personal information which you volunteer to the NCCA will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts. If you require further information related to data protection please visit <https://www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement> or you can contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at dpo@ncca.ie.

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