Supporting learning and development (3-6 years)

Slide 1: Introduction:

Script:
- Welcome to this presentation which will tell you a little about what we do every day with your children.
- Today, we want to talk about children's play and why it is so important to their learning and development. It is not just a way of having fun - it is an important part of the way in which their minds and bodies develop.
- We will introduce you to Aistear; The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and explain how we use this framework to support your child’s learning.
- We will also introduce you to Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

Notes for Presenter:
Tips and ideas about how to best deliver this presentation are outlined in this section. Read through the entire slideshow carefully before you present. Make sure you have organised samples of children’s work where necessary or prepared examples of your practice. This will make the presentation come to life for parents.
Slide 2: Getting to know you...

Script:
• We know that you, (parents, guardians and extended family) are very important to this age group and we value you as the most important people in your children's lives.
• The knowledge and expertise that you have about your child is invaluable to us.
• The more you tell us about your child, their routine, likes, dislikes, how they like to play, what they are interested in, the better we can meet their needs and help support their learning and development.
• When young children feel secure and cared for, they are able to explore the world and learn what it is all about.

Notes for Presenter:
If you have a specific way for parents to share information with the setting explain it here, for example – using children’s day books to document how they slept, what they ate, whether they have been given medication: location of your parents’ notice board: frequency of newsletter: use of text message, email or social media.
Aistear is the national early childhood curriculum framework.

For all children from birth to six years.

It can be used in any early years setting, junior classes in primary school and in the home.

---

**Slide 3: Aistear’s Themes**

**Script**

- You may have seen the word Aistear in posters on our walls, or in your child’s learning journal/portfolio*.
- Aistear is the Irish word for a journey, your child started his/her learning journey from the moment he/she was born and will continue to learn throughout the rest of his/her life.
- Aistear is a curriculum Framework, designed to help all the adults in a child’s life to support learning and development. As a framework, it is flexible, and we use it as a guide to help us plan and provide experiences for your children.
- In primary school the curriculum is made up of subjects. Aistear doesn’t have subjects. It has 4 themes instead. Let’s take a look at each theme, and some examples of play experiences for children that support these themes.

**Notes for Presenter**

* Edit this text to describe whatever method you use for documenting children’s learning in your setting
Slide 4: Examples of themes in practice

Script:
- These are some examples of things we might do here in the setting and how they fit with the themes of Aistear
  - The theme of Well-being – is about child’s mental and physical health. Supporting them to be as active and outdoors as much as possible. Discussing food and healthy eating, how it is prepared, and how it is cooked and eaten. Helping children share emotions, deal with changes, conflicts, promoting positive behaviour.
  - The theme of Identity and Belonging – is about all children having a positive sense of who they are and developing a sense of their culture and heritage and feeling that their family and community are valued and respected. Talking about their families, their pets, where they live and their interests, for example, dancing, singing, dinosaurs, building things. Going on trips in the local community – castle, park, forest, supermarket, farm, post office
  - The theme of Communicating – 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; reading books together, discussing things, listening to and making music, playing language games, for example, I spy, practising language, using rhymes and songs, drawing, making marks, learning maths, counting, comparing, sequencing.
  - The theme of Exploring and Thinking – is about children making sense of the things, places and people in their lives – children using their senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing and their whole bodies to find out about and make sense of what they see, feel and experience in the world around them. Being adventurous, exploring science – floating, sinking, using magnets, touching.

Notes for presenter:
You can explain or describe examples from your own practice.
Consider asking parents whether the examples described are similar to things they might do at home?
• What types of things do you think your child might learn under the four themes in Aistear?

• Think about:
  – Well-being
  – Identity and Belonging
  – Communicating
  – Exploring and Thinking

Notes for presenter:
Give parents time to think about the four themes and ask them to share their thoughts/ideas on what these themes might mean for their child’s learning. Gather some feedback through a short discussion.
• **Síolta** is the national **quality framework** for early childhood education

• 16 broad standards

• It can be used in any **early years setting** and junior classes in primary school

---

**Slide 6: Síolta**

**Script**

• *Síolta* is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

• *Síolta* is the Irish word for *seeds* – it supports our setting to sow the seeds of quality, and nurture and tend to your precious children

• While *Aistear* looks at how children **learn and develop**, *Síolta* is much broader

• It looks at **all aspects of quality** in early childhood settings. It is divided into 16 standards including parents and families, curriculum, professional practice, community involvement and play.

**Notes for presenter:**

If you have a copy of the *Síolta* manual, share this with parents and allow them to leaf through it.
Slide 7: Do you remember?

Script:
• Aistear and Síolta both show us how important play is for children in their early years.
• Remembering our own childhoods is a good place to start in helping us to understand how important play is.
• Think back to when you were a child and consider the following questions (read through the questions on the slide).

Notes for the Presenter:
This slide is designed to help parents to begin to see the link between play and learning.
If parents are willing to share, take brief feedback on the questions from one or two volunteers.

• When you were little, what did you like to play?
• How did you feel when you were playing?
• Where did you play?
• What did you learn while you were playing?
Slide 8: The importance of play

Script:
• The reason play is included as one of the Síolta standards is because play is essential for children’s well being, and helps them to think, learn and develop.
• Children develop important skills through their play.
  • They develop their physical abilities climbing inside a box, running and jumping, learning to ride a bike or holding a pencil or crayon.
  • They develop their thinking skills as they figure out what they can use to make a roof for a barn, how to balance blocks, or estimate how many blocks will be needed to house all the toy animals.
  • They learn social skills and how to make friends. They learn what being a friend means and how it feels to wait your turn, share and work together.
  • Through play children learn new words to communicate their feelings and learn about other people’s feelings – for example scenarios like, ‘Teddy is very sad today because her daddy is gone away to work in Germany’ or ‘I was very cross when Eimear took the truck from me.’
• Sometimes, they have to deal with frustrations in their play when things don’t work out or when others do not do what they want. Learning to be patient, to understand their frustrations and to try again are skills that will benefit them now and in the future. These are skills we as adults need to have also.
• Most importantly, your child has fun when playing.

Through play, children
• develop their abilities and skills
• learn to cope with frustrations and challenges
• Gain self-confidence and a sense of achievement
• learn about the world around them
Slide 9: Role of the Adult

Script
- What is the adult’s role in play?
  - As adults, we can support play by providing materials, getting involved and encouraging them in their play and adding new ideas to extend their play, for example, adding bubbles, food colouring or items that float and sink when children are playing with water.
  - We can create great different opportunities for play by the choices we provide children, for example, real world play items such as pots, pans, phones and clothing, nature walks or trips to a local shop.
  - It is important to let children lead their play, so we can follow their interests and plan around these.
  - Play is also a good time to observe children- it can allow us to see all that they are capable of and we can spot things that they need more help with. When you share with us what your child is interested in, we are able to use that information to plan learning experiences that will be really interesting and fun for your child too.

- Play does not always need special or expensive toys or games. Children will play using any materials that come to hand- natural items, cardboard boxes, bubble wrap, different clothes, real world utensils, creative natural crafts etc. However, they do need space and time to play.

Notes for Presenter
Share with parents examples of how you document learning and plan experiences to support children’s learning.
Children may not always tell you all the interesting things they did during their day when they get home. By sharing information with each other we can support you to learn all about their life in the setting by using portfolios or journals*, and we will be happy to share these with you.

We can plan better for each individual if you share information about your child with us and we will keep you informed of changes in the setting.

Let us know about anything that might be affecting your child’s mood or behaviour, such as a new sibling, moving house, or special family events. This is especially important at times of change in your child’s life such as settling in to a new setting, getting to know a new practitioner, or getting used to a new baby at home. We will let you know of any changes happening here too.

Other critical times might be experiencing bereavement, upset or worry, or feeling left out or feeling different in a negative way. By working together and sharing information, we can help make these times in children’s lives easier.

* Edit this text to describe whatever method you use for documenting children’s learning in your setting. Have some examples of children’s portfolios or learning journals ready for parents to look at. Let them know/ show them where their child’s journal is kept and invite them to add comments, photos or children’s drawings to this when they please.
Slide 11: Getting involved

Script:
• You can make a valuable contribution to your child’s learning and development by sharing information, time, experiences and talents with us.
• For example, if you have skills in a particular area such as drama, gardening or music, why not share it with the children? We’d be delighted for you to visit and share information and items from your work, from home or about your culture? You may be able to suggest or organise places for us to visit or interesting people to visit the service. Any ideas are greatly appreciated!
• For young children, seeing members of their own family in the setting enhances their sense of identity and belonging, as well as enriching their learning and development.

Notes for the presenter:
N/A
Slide 12: Partnership in action

Script:
• We will now take a look at a short video clip on partnership with parents.
• All of the people in this video are children’s parents, guardians, or extended family. It may give you some ideas of how you could spend some time in the setting with us.

Notes for presenter:
You can find the presentation on partnership in action at: http://action.ncca.ie/resource/Parents-and-Aistear/53
The Aistear Síolta Practice Guide is online and full of resources and suggestions to help you support your child’s learning and development at home. You’ll find tip sheets on play, early maths, enjoying early reading, suggested book lists, and physical skills including climbing, catching and throwing balls. You will also find podcasts on language development in the pre-school year and other resources to help you learn more about Play and Aistear.

Thank you so much for joining us and learning more about what we do as practitioners to help your child to grow, learn and develop. We hope that you have gained some useful information and have learned a little bit more about our setting.

Notes for presenter
Give out the tip sheet for parents (play tip sheet for young children). These are found in eight different languages in the Aistear Toolkit at http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Early_Childhood/Tipsheets/
Slide 14: Stay in touch

Script:
• Please stay in touch
• If you have any questions feel free to ask them now or speak to us individually

Notes for presenter
Ask parents whether they have any questions about the setting, about AistearSíolta or about play in early years