Learning Experience: Ice!

Setting: Cahir Bears Childcare Centre, Cahir, Co. Tipperary

Setting type: Full and part-time daycare

Age group: Young children

Theme: Exploring and Thinking

Aim 1: Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.

Learning goal 1: In partnership with the adult, children will engage, explore and experiment in the environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials.

This learning experience is an example of how one service supports one of the learning goals in Aistear’s theme of Exploring and Thinking.

As the weather had grown colder the children became interested in the topic of winter. The playgroup assistant, Lorraine, decided to organise some winter activities with them. The children did a small group activity that involved making animals that live in cold climates. Through this, the children used vocabulary like freezing, polar bears, snow, ice, shivering, Jack Frost.

One child suddenly asked the question, what is ice? Lorraine asked the other children what they thought. Ice is made of water, Rhys said. It lives at the beach, added Caoimhe. The water got colder making ice, said Martyna. Lorraine nodded in agreement and explained that when water gets very, very cold, when the temperature goes down to zero degrees, it freezes and turns into ice.

Ice makers!
Wanting to investigate this further, Lorraine and the children decided to fill two bowls with water and put them in the freezer to see if they could make ice. The following day during Circle Time, they checked their bowls to find ice. They explored the ice and talked about how it felt. Lorraine asked what would happen to the ice if they left it out of the fridge. Alicia suggested, *it would melt*. Alex said, *it would break*, and Jack said, *it would be soft and turn into water*. They decided they would experiment. They left the ice in the classroom and indeed it did melt!

The children also made a winter table to display their winter art work. They chose to add items like gloves, hats and story books about winter.
Ideas to extend the children’s learning

- Sing songs and read poems about winter.
- Make books about winter using magazines and pictures from the internet.
- Add new items to the pretend play area to encourage play around skiing holidays: a suitcase, goggles, gloves, hats, materials to make skis, winter holiday brochures.

This experience also links to:

- **Communicating**, Aim 3, Learning Goal 1
- **Exploring and Thinking**, Aim 2, Learning goal 4
The play leader’s reflections

The children loved the experience and learned new vocabulary like temperature, freezing, melt, zero degrees, shivering.

The children’s understanding of ice and how it melts was very interesting to listen to and gave us lots of ideas for investigating and exploring further.

The children liked the winter display table and spent time there looking at the items and chatting to friends.