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

One of the children in playschool was in hospital getting a tooth out and his mother mentioned that he found the experience very traumatic, especially the equipment. He had become very upset when the anaesthetist tried to put him to sleep. The child told us about this experience and the other children were interested and asked lots of questions.

We decided to ask one of our parents who is a nurse if she would come to talk to the children. She brought in oxygen masks, syringes and bandages that the children could use in play to extend their learning over the following weeks.

The experience provided lots of opportunities for the children to learn new vocabulary like blood pressure monitor, bandaging, stethoscope, syringe and oxygen mask.

Learning Experience: The Nurse’s visit

Setting: Bluebells Playschool, Ayle, Co. Tipperary
Setting Type: Sessional
Age Group: Young children
Theme: Identity and Belonging
Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended.
Learning Goal 6: In partnership with the adult, children will understand the different roles of people in the community.

Becoming the nurses, doctors and patients

This resource was developed through the Aistear in Action initiative.
The nurse showed the children how the equipment is used and talked about what it is like when you go to hospital. The children had lots of questions and she answered them all. The children used the equipment on each other and were totally engrossed in the experience for two hours and only stopped when their parents came to collect them!

The play leader needs first aid!
Bandaging

The oxygen mask

Ideas to extend the children’s learning

- Provide books about going to the doctor or going to the hospital. These books should include male and female doctors and nurses to avoid stereo-typing.
- Organise small group activities where children can use the new vocabulary again, for example, small world play.
- Add props to the pretend play area to continue the focus on the hospital. Think about including a phone and note-book to make appointments, clipboard and pencils to record blood pressure readings, tomato sauce for blood!
- Display photos and encourage children to talk about them with their parents.

This experience also links to:
- Well-being, Aim 1, Learning goal 1
- Communicating, Aim 2, Learning goals 1, 3 and 4
- Exploring and Thinking, Aim 1, Learning goal 2

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The play leader’s reflections

Some of the children showed a real caring side to their personality and the experience may have sparked an interest in the caring professions that might last a lifetime.

The child whose mother was the nurse was extremely proud of his Mum and learned a lot about what she does at work each day.

The child who had been in hospital was reluctant at the beginning to touch the oxygen mask but over time and watching the other children, he examined the mask and tried it on. After a few days he was as comfortable with the equipment as the other children.