

Getting Started

Preparation for Teaching and Learning Booklet

For All Primary and Special Schools



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Note to Facilitators

What is the aim of this booklet?

This booklet has been developed to support school leaders and teachers engaging with the [*Preparation for Teaching and Learning – Guidance for all Primary and Special Schools*](#), published in April 2021. The guidance aims to support classroom planning and preparation across the curriculum.¹ The purpose of this booklet is to support teachers and school leaders in making their preparation useful, purposeful and practical.

There are two parts to this booklet. Part 1 is an introduction which intends to support familiarity with the terminology and concepts of the guidance. Part 2 focuses on short-term preparation through a workshop-style approach and aims to guide teachers and school leaders in adapting their preparation in line with the guidance. During the workshop, teachers are encouraged to identify the variety of preparation activities they undertake and how these can be demonstrated. Teachers are also guided in a step-by-step manner as they draft short-term preparation documents that are practical and concise.

On completion of this workshop, it is intended that teachers and school leaders will acquire a renewed understanding of preparation, where recorded preparation documents are viewed

as one element in a broad range of activities which encompass preparation for teaching and learning. It is also intended that teachers will become more aware of the unrecorded or less explicit elements of preparation and become confident in discussing, describing and explaining these aspects of preparation.

How is the booklet to be used?

This booklet is designed to be used by school leaders and teachers in all primary and special school settings. It is recommended to start with the materials presented in Part 1 to gain familiarity with the key messages of the guidance. Following this, the workshop activities for short-term preparation (Part 2) can be completed. This booklet is intended to be used as an online multimedia resource with links to videos and additional support materials included throughout. The booklet also contains printable pages which can be used during the workshop.

¹In the special school context, the intended learning for children should be drawn from an age-appropriate primary or post-primary curriculum to ensure children have access to, participate in and benefit from an education that is inclusive and appropriate to their abilities and needs'. (Guidance Document, 2021, p.3)



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Part 1 – Introduction

Why has the guidance on preparation for teaching and learning been developed?

- To support teachers' preparation across the entire curriculum
- To capture and value the broad range of activities teachers undertake before, during and after learning experiences in the classroom



Arlene Forster, CEO, NCCA

What does the term 'preparation for teaching and learning' mean?

- 'Preparation for Teaching and Learning' replaces the term 'planning'
- It captures **all** of the activities teachers undertake as they prepare for learning experiences in their classrooms



Arlene Forster, CEO, NCCA

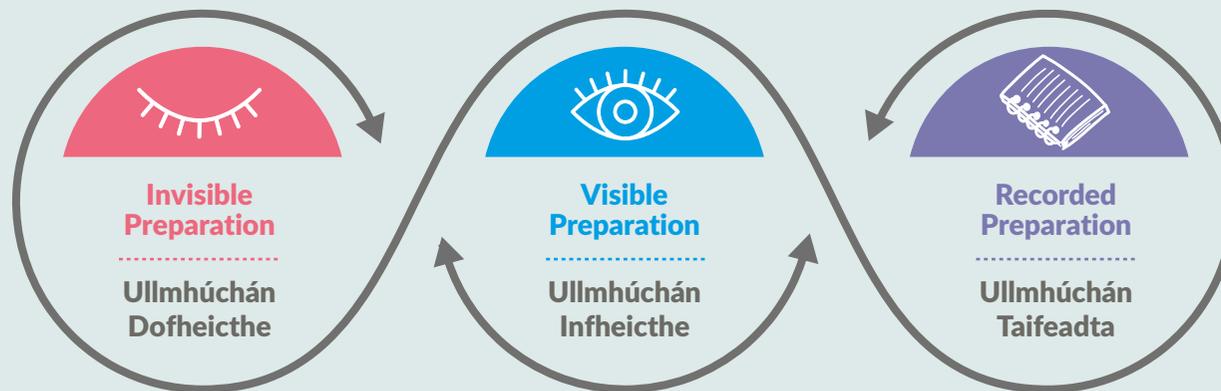
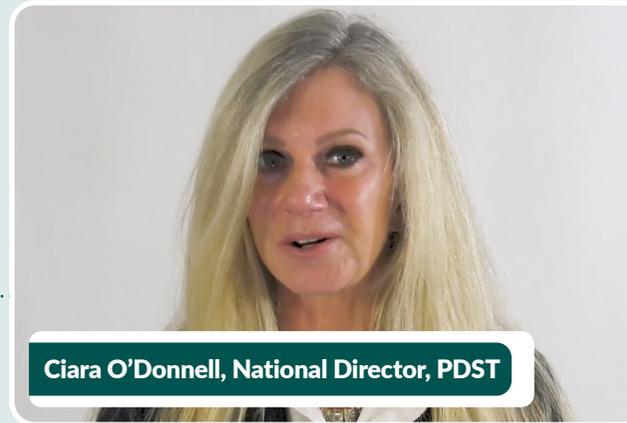
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What does preparation for teaching and learning involve?

- Preparation for teaching and learning is a process involving three parts, these are **invisible**, **visible** and **recorded preparation**.



Invisible Preparation

- is continuous and unrecorded
- includes the unseen expertise, knowledge and intuition teachers draw on to support children's learning

Visible Preparation

- teaching and learning in action
- what can be seen, heard and felt in the classroom
- includes the physical layout of the classroom, the resources chosen to support children's learning, and the provision of playful, appropriate and engaging experiences

Recorded Preparation

- any documentation which supports teachers' ongoing practice and reflection
- can include short-term and long-term documentation, student support plans/IEPs, assessment data, cuntas míosúil, end of year reports, personal notes, documentation from other professionals etc.

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What should teachers consider when preparing for teaching and learning?

There are three key pillars that teachers should consider

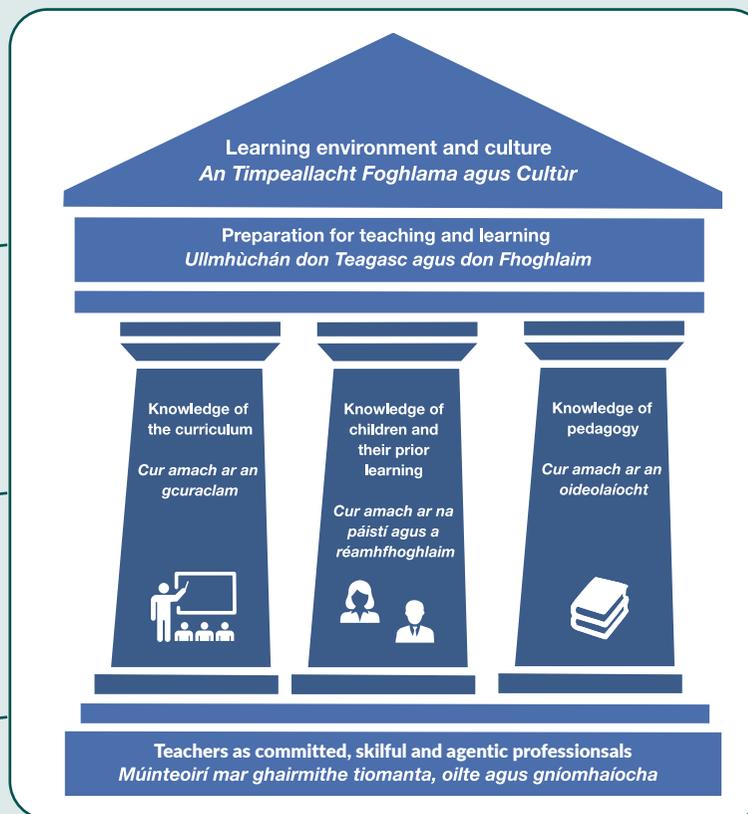
- Knowledge of Children and their Prior Learning
- Knowledge of Curriculum
- Knowledge of Pedagogy



Knowledge of Children and their Prior Learning – This knowledge can be deepened through observation, engagement and interaction with the child, collaboration, information gathering and assessment.

Knowledge of the Curriculum – Its aims, rationale, and intended learning for children. Consider the rationale and focus of each Learning Outcome, as well as the links that can be made across elements, strands and other curriculum areas.

Knowledge of Pedagogy – An understanding of pedagogical approaches is important in choosing appropriate and engaging learning experiences to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all children.



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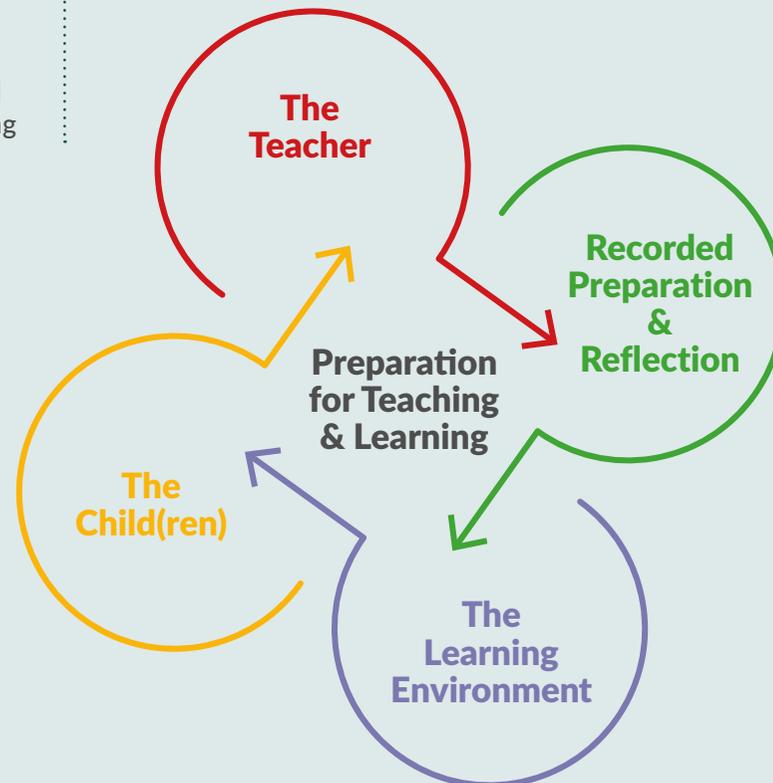
How can teachers demonstrate preparation for teaching and learning? What will this look like?

Preparation for teaching and learning can be demonstrated in four ways, through;

- **The children and their learning** – children can demonstrate or describe their learning and progress and what they really enjoyed
- **The teacher** – based on their knowledge of children, pedagogy and curriculum teachers can describe and discuss the decisions made to support children's learning
- **The learning environment** – the physical layout and culture of the learning environment including the quality of interactions between adult and child, the routines visible and the availability of learning resources
- **Recorded preparation** – this is first and foremost for the teacher, it is practical and purposeful. A teacher's recorded preparation is personal and bespoke and evolves as learning progresses.



How will this guidance be understood and accepted among school leaders, school support services and the inspectorate?

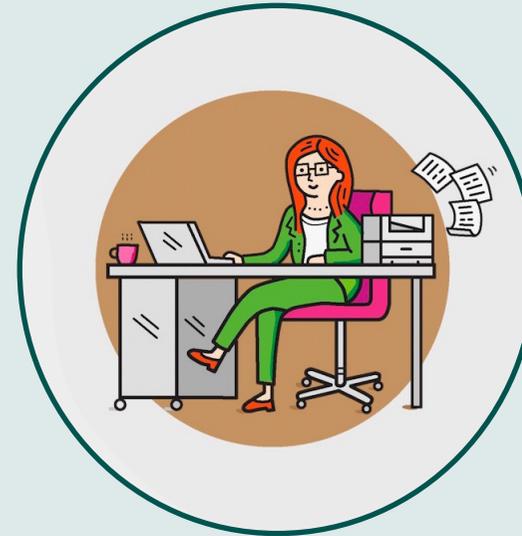
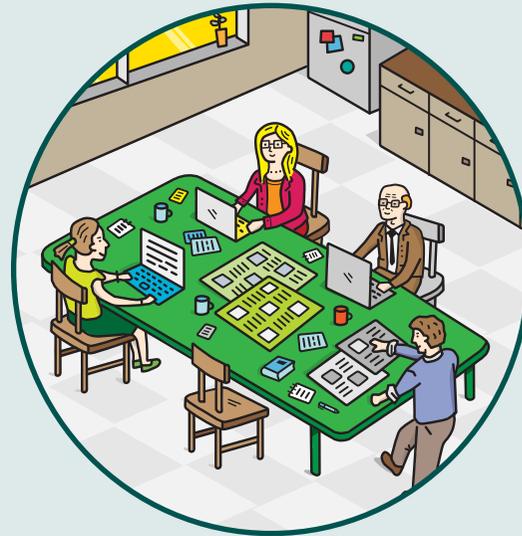


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Part 2 – Short-term Preparation Workshop Activities



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Workshop Activity 1

Estimated time to complete: 12 minutes

Short-Term Preparation... Time to reflect

With a partner, reflect on your current approach to short-term preparation. Discuss the basis for your choice of colour in response to the statements below.

Traffic light your responses to the questions below:

Always Sometimes Never



- | | Always | Sometimes | Never |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ● My approach to preparation is useful, purposeful and practical for myself | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ● My recorded preparation is written first and foremost for myself, to support my preparation as a classroom teacher | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ● My recorded preparation allows me to respond to unexpected learning opportunities as they arise in the classroom | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ● My preparation activities are based on the needs, interests and abilities of all children in the class | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ● My recorded preparation is concise and reflects my individual context | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ● I feel confident in discussing my professional decisions relating to the learning of the children in my class | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Workshop Activity 2

Estimated time to complete: 15 minutes

Video scenarios – Preparation for Teaching and Learning in Action

Familiarise yourself with some of the short, animated video scenarios. These provide a practical example of how teachers demonstrate the three elements of preparation (invisible, visible and recorded) in a variety of school settings.

Estimated time to complete – Videos vary in length from 3-6 minutes, there are 5 in total.

With your colleagues consider the following in relation to the video scenario you have viewed.

- How did the children's needs inform the teacher's preparation for the learning experience?
- How did the teacher's knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy inform his/her preparation?
- List some examples of the teacher's invisible, visible and recorded preparation.



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Workshop Activity 4

Estimated time to complete: **20** minutes

Making the change... recorded preparation



1. Look at your most recent short-term recorded preparation document ('fortnightly plan').
2. In light of what you have learned about preparation, highlight what you deem to be essential **for you, your context and your teaching** and what, on reflection, may be surplus to requirement in your current recorded preparation. This may include sections which could be accounted for in terms of visible preparation or descriptions which could be shortened in the document and be accounted for elsewhere. The guidance (on page 14) sets out elements to include in recorded preparation: learning outcome/s and content objectives, focus of new learning, learning experiences, how the children's progress will be monitored and assessed. These elements are described briefly in the table adjacent.

Learning outcome/s and content objectives	The learning outcome/s and content objectives from the curriculum area the learning experience is based on.
Focus of new learning	The specific aspect of the learning outcome/s or content objectives that the learning experience will focus on.
Learning experiences	The activities and tasks children will engage in as they work towards the learning outcome/content objective.
How children will demonstrate their learning	A description of how children will demonstrate their learning and how teachers gather information on their progression.



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3. Reflect on how the content of your recorded preparation document has been informed by the three key pillars of knowledge of the children, the curriculum and pedagogy. During moments of inspection, inspectors will engage in professional conversations with teachers to ascertain the quality of preparation for teaching and learning. Teachers also share and discuss their preparation for teaching and learning with others, for example school leaders and special education teachers. Knowing how your preparation and the choices you have made has been informed by your knowledge of the children, the curriculum and pedagogy and being able to discuss, describe and elaborate on this is important.

4. Draft your next short-term recorded preparation document using the headings you have deemed necessary. Ensure that your recorded preparation refers directly to the curriculum, identifying selected learning outcomes/content objectives and clarifying the focus of learning for children. It should also include the learning experiences that will be provided, and how this learning will be demonstrated by the children. Use the checklist below to help you with this task:

Checklist

- My short-term recorded preparation document and descriptions within it are concise and useful.
- I am comfortable discussing the invisible and visible aspects of my preparation
- Challenge yourself to describe how the content of the recorded preparation document is informed by your knowledge of the children, the curriculum and pedagogy (i.e. the three pillars).

Remember length and detail does not signify quality, and detail can be explained and elaborated on during professional conversations with school leaders and inspectors.

Remember that preparation is an evolving process, so amend the document as necessary using annotations etc. as the fortnight progresses.

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Workshop Activity 5

Reflect

Consider the follow questions independently or with colleagues

Preparation for teaching and learning can be demonstrated through professional conversations (with inspectors, school leaders and colleagues).

How might you discuss your preparation for teaching and learning with others following this workshop? What terminology/knowledge might you draw on?

How has your understanding of preparation for teaching and learning evolved from your engagement with this workshop?

What aspects of your approach to preparation would you like to maintain or change following this workshop?



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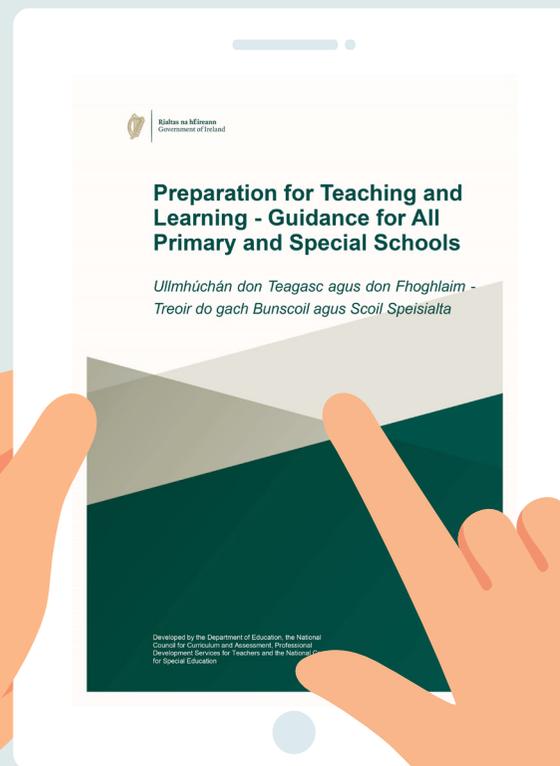
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Further Supports

You can find the materials presented in this workshop along with further supports on the following webpage <https://ncca.ie/en/primary/preparation/>

This webpage includes webinars, an interagency launch video, a 'document walk through' of the guidance and short video scenarios showcasing teachers' approaches to preparation for teaching and learning.

Additionally, PDST advisors and NCSE Primary Curriculum advisors are providing tailored and bespoke school-based support to help schools in navigating the guidance and applying it to their specific school context. Schools can apply for this support on the following webpages – www.pdst.ie – www.ncse.ie



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