Updating *Aistear* Phase 2 Consultation

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 updatingaistear@ncca.ie.

The template is structured according to the Principles, Themes and Supporting *Aistear*. Each section is briefly summarised as a support for working on the submission. Before completing the template, please read the draft updated *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* at this link: https://ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/early-childhood-education-developments/updating-aistear/consultation/.

Data Protection Statement

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NCCA, as a public body operating under the Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), is required to publish publicly funded research. All data from this survey will be further anonymised and aggregated before being published and only made available after the final report on this consultation is completed. Further information on the NCCA's Data Protection Policy can be found here.

*If you are contributing your views as an **individual**, please provide details below*

Name:	Paula Walshe
E-mail address:	
Do you wish to be listed as a contributor to this consultation on the NCCA website?	Yes
Do you wish to have your written submission published on the NCCA website?	Yes

*If you are contributing your views on behalf of an **organisation or group**, please provide details below*

Name	
Email address:	
Name of organisation/group:	
Does your organisation wish to be listed as a contributor to this consultation on the NCCA website?	Yes/No

Please email your submission to updatingaistear@ncca.ie

Does your organisation wish to have this written submission published on the NCCA website?	Yes/No

Key Messages of the Proposals

Phase 1 indicated that *Aistear* has stood the test of time and remains broadly relevant. However, it was indicated that some areas could be updated. This section seeks to understand your views on the proposed updates.

To what extent do the proposals keep the structure of *Aistear* but update individual sections?
Do the proposals draw greater attention to the importance of interactions and relationships between babies, toddlers, young children, parents, educators and other important people in their lives?
Do the proposals emphasise babies, toddlers and young children as citizens with rights to meaningfully participate and exercise influence on decisions that affect them?
Do the proposals embed the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion? Use the term 'parents and primary caregivers' or just 'families' throughout for inclusivity. So family being the most important people in the child's life as opposed to parents.

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Do the proposals emphasise and reaffirm the centrality of learning through play and hands-on experiences?
Do the proposals support greater continuity of experience and progression of learning for babies, toddlers, and young children?

Principles of *Aistear*

The number of Principles has been revised from 12 to 9 and reframed. Additionally, the proposals aim to integrate the Themes of *Aistear* in a seamless manner across the Principles. We are interested in receiving your feedback about these changes.

Please insert your feedback on the Principles of *Aistear* here:

Themes of *Aistear*

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Aistear is underpinned by four Themes of learning and development. It is proposed that the Learning Goals within each Theme remain broad, but observable statements that support babies, toddlers and young children's learning and development. It is also proposed that the Principles of *Aistear* be interwoven and visible throughout *Aistear*'s Themes.

This section seeks your detailed feedback as to whether these key changes are visible within the draft proposals. The draft proposals are available here for your information.

Please give specific feedback in relation to each of the Themes of *Aistear*.

Theme: Wellbeing

I feel the term 'spiritual' needs to be removed as it is exclusionary to those who are atheist with not spiritual faith. The word 'spirit' is too closely aligned with religion and church. Perhaps refer to wellbeing, wonder, mindfulness etc instead.

Theme: Identity and Belonging

Theme: Communicating

Theme: Exploring and Thinking

Need to have reference to STEAM in this theme of Aistear. #STEAM is an approach to hands-on playful learning so conducive to Aistear framework and how #children learn through play. I see the individual terms of science, technology, engineering and maths are mentioned in this theme, however the point of STEAM is to not separate out the individual siloed areas as that doesn't support the transdisciplinary nature of STEAM and the interplay between the areas which is really so conducive as an approach that can span the early childhood framework. I was also surprised that STEAM isn't in the draft due to the Aistear draft mentioning alignment with the primary curriculum which references STEM and the Arts as do the DoE recommendations

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for same as well as STEM and the Arts as discussed in the Lit Review for Aistear. Keeping the elements separate in Aistear seems perhaps out of step with the rest of the education continuum and a missed opportunity to include an approach within Aistear which is so relevant to how our youngest children learn.

In your reading of the proposals, are the Principles of *Aistear* interwoven and visible throughout *Aistear*'s Themes?

Please insert any additional feedback that you would like to share with us about the proposals here:

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The inclusion of some Irish words sprinkled throughout is tokenistic, it would be better to have a more embedded approach by using the Irish names for the themes similar to Te Whariki, therefore ensuring that the Irish language is brought into Aistear in a useable way in everyday pedagogical practice by educators.

Supporting Aistear

Part 1: Guidance for Good Practice

Pages 27 to 33 describe the Guidance for Good Practice. The Guidance for Good Practice expands on some of the important ideas introduced in the Principles and Themes. It also reflects other important messages, or big ideas, from Phase 1 of the consultation to update Aistear, as well as from research and wider societal and policy changes. The big ideas are organised according to Aistear's original Guidelines for Good Practice.

- *Partnerships between Parents and Practitioners*
- *Learning and Developing through Interactions*
- *Learning and Developing through Play*
- *Supporting Learning and Development through Assessment*.

It is proposed that these will be extended and supplemented through resources developed for the online *Aistear* Toolkit. Sample resources are available in Appendix 1 of the draft proposals.

Please give your overall feedback in relation to the Guidance for Good Practice.

Please email your submission to updatingaistear@ncca.ie

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Part 2: Supporting Educators

Page 34 of the proposals explains how this consultation is an opportunity to gather information on the nature of supports required to support the early childhood educators in working with the curriculum framework.

Please provide feedback on how early childhood educators can be supported in working with the curriculum framework. For example, what resources would be helpful to include in the Guidance for Good Practice?

Live links to Síolta and to the ASPG to help educators implement the principles.

A universally rolled out implementation and training plan is a must this time around.

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