

Infant Classes User Manual





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Introduction

Welcome to the user manual for *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. This manual contains the Principles, Standards, Components of Quality and Signposts for Reflection which make up the main body of *Síolta*. The manual has been designed to support your engagement with the Framework and may be used by you as an individual practitioner, in working with colleagues in your setting and also as a support for networking with other professional colleagues who work with young children from birth to six years. The contents of the manual are outlined overleaf:



Introduction

- The **Principles of Quality** represent the vision which underpins and provides the context for quality practice in ECCE in Ireland. They are inter-dependent and individual Principles are not intended to stand alone. They inform quality practice but will not be included in the assessment processes.
- The **Standards and Components of Quality** define quality practice within the Framework. These are the items which will be assessed. The Standards and Components are closely related. Each Standard has a number of associated Components that break down the Standards into 'bite-sized' items. The Standard, with its associated Components, is printed at the beginning of each of the sixteen sections.
- Each Component has a number of **Signposts for Reflection** which are made up of questions followed by bullet points called '**Think Abouts**'. These can be described as discussion points or thought provoking suggestions. They can be used by individuals who wish to take some time to consider their own work; and by groups, either within an individual setting or in a larger network. They offer a focus for discussion about quality improvement in individual work, in the work of the setting or in a number of other situations. They are open-ended, there are no right or wrong answers and, most importantly, they are not tick boxes. Some of the Signposts have been divided up into different groups according to whether special attention is required for a particular age. If the Signposts apply to practice with all ages of children they are called 'General'. It is hoped that the Signposts will help those using this manual to ask more questions and raise more discussion points relevant to their own work.
- **Cross-referencing** - When you are using the Components and Signposts, you will find the following symbol  See with a Component number/numbers beside it. This means that the Component is relevant to

the one you are thinking/talking about, and it might be helpful for you to look at that Component to enrich your discussion. For example, in Component 2.4 there is a cross-reference to Component 9.1  See 9.1 . This means that when you are working with 2.4 you can look up 9.1 and talk/think about how it affects the Component 2.4. This will help you look at all aspects of your work.

Additional Sections

- The **Resources** section gives information on resources (books, websites, organisations, etc.) which will be helpful in putting *Síolta* into practice. Where appropriate, the resource item has the number of the relevant Standard beside it. It is intended that anyone working with *Síolta* will use this section as a base and will add on other resources that they find helpful. It is hoped to eventually share such additional suggestions with everyone using the Framework.

There are three **Appendices**:

- **Appendix 1** gives a sample list of Policies and Procedures for settings to draw on. It is not a complete list and it is up to the setting to decide what policies and procedures are applicable to its own situation.
- **Appendix 2** gives a sample list of Legislation and Regulation as a guide for settings in considering what legislation and regulations apply to the setting.
- **Appendix 3**, the National Framework of Qualifications Grid of Level Indicators, is included to provide information on the way in which the various training and qualification levels of those working within the ECCE sector fit together within the Framework devised by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. It is included specifically to support you when working with the Standard on Professional Practice.

Steps for use:

- Select the Standard you wish to work with from the Contents page.
- Go to the relevant section of the colour-coded manual where you will find the text of the Standard and the Components that go with it.
- Select the Component you want to work with.
- Go to the relevant page in that section where you will find the text of the Component and the Signposts for Reflection.
- **Cross-referencing:** See page 3 for note on cross-referencing.
- Read the Component and the Signposts for Reflection carefully.
- Check the Resources section to identify materials and resources that may assist you in working with the Component.
- It may be useful to make brief notes for future reference.

Conclusion

Síolta challenges everyone working in the ECCE sector to think about the quality of the experiences we provide for young children. This manual aims to make the process of working with the Framework as clear as possible. It is intended that the discussion, reflection and debate on the Principles, Standards, Components and Signposts will enrich both the lives of children and the professional practice of adults.

Principles of *Síolta*

THE VALUE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD	CHILDREN FIRST	PARENTS
<p>Early childhood is a significant and distinct time in life that must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported in its own right.</p> <p>Early childhood, the period from birth to six years, is a significant and unique time in the life of every individual. Every child needs and has the right to positive experiences in early childhood. As with every other phase in life, positive supports and adequate resources are necessary to make the most of this period. Provision of such supports and resources should not be conditional on the expectations of the economy, society or other interests.</p>	<p>The child's individuality, strengths, rights and needs are central in the provision of quality early childhood experiences.</p> <p>The child is an active agent in her/his own development through her/his interactions with the world. These interactions are motivated by the individual child's abilities, interests, previous experiences and desire for independence. Each child is a competent learner from birth and quality early years experiences can support each child to realise her/his full potential. Provision of these experiences must reflect and support the child's strengths, needs and interests. Children have the right to be listened to and have their views on issues that affect them heard, valued and responded to.</p>	<p>Parents are the primary educators of the child and have a pre-eminent role in promoting her/his well-being, learning and development.</p> <p>Quality early childhood care and education must value and support the role of parents. Open, honest and respectful partnership with parents is essential in promoting the best interests of the child. Mutual partnership contributes to establishing harmony and continuity between the diverse environments the child experiences in the early years. The development of connections and interactions between the early childhood setting, parents, the extended family and the wider community also adds to the enrichment of early childhood experiences by reflecting the environment in which the child lives and grows.</p>

relationships

Responsive, sensitive and reciprocal relationships, which are consistent over time, are essential to the well-being, learning and development of the young child.

The relationships that the child forms within her/his immediate and extended environment from birth will significantly influence her/his well-being, development and learning. These relationships are two-way and include adults, peers, family and the extended community. Positive relationships, which are secure, responsive and respectful and which provide consistency and continuity over time, are the cornerstone of the child's well-being.

EQUALITY

Equality is an essential characteristic of quality early childhood care and education.

Equality, as articulated in Article 2 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) and in the *Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004*, is a fundamental characteristic of quality early childhood care and education provision. It is a critical prerequisite for supporting the optimal development of all children in Ireland. It requires that the individual needs and abilities of each child are recognised and supported from birth towards the realisation of her/his unique potential. This means that all children should be able to gain access to, participate in, and benefit from early years services on an equal basis.

DIVERSITY

Quality early childhood settings acknowledge and respect diversity and ensure that all children and families have their individual, personal, cultural and linguistic identity validated.

Diversity is a term which is generally used to describe differences in individuals by virtue of gender, age, skin colour, language, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, religion, race or other background factors such as family structure, economic circumstances, etc. Quality early childhood environments should demonstrate respect for diversity through promoting a sense of belonging for all children within the cultural heritage of Ireland. They should also provide rich and varied experiences which will support children's ability to value social and cultural diversity.

ENVIRONMENTS	welfare	ROLE OF THE ADULT
<p>The physical environment of the young child has a direct impact on her/his well-being, learning and development.</p> <p>The child's experiences in early childhood are positively enhanced by interactions with a broad range of environments. These include the indoor and outdoor, built and natural, home and out-of-home environments. The environment should be high quality and should extend and enrich the child's development and learning. These experiences stimulate curiosity, foster independence and promote a sense of belonging. The development of respect for the environment will also result from such experiences.</p>	<p>The safety, welfare and well-being of all children must be protected and promoted in all early childhood environments.</p> <p>The promotion of child well-being is a characteristic of a quality environment. This involves the protection of each child from harmful experiences and the promotion of child welfare. Additionally, the opportunity to form trusting relationships with adults and other children is a key characteristic of quality. Promotion of safety should not prevent the child from having a rich and varied array of experiences in line with her/his age and stage of development.</p>	<p>The role of the adult in providing quality early childhood experiences is fundamental.</p> <p>Quality early childhood practice is built upon the unique role of the adult. The competencies, qualifications, dispositions and experience of adults, in addition to their capacity to reflect upon their role, are essential in supporting and ensuring quality experiences for each child. This demanding and central role in the life of the young child needs to be appropriately resourced, supported and valued.</p>

teamwork

The provision of quality early childhood experiences requires cooperation, communication and mutual respect.

Teamwork is a vital component of quality in early childhood care and education. It is the expression of cooperative, coordinated practice in any setting. Shared knowledge and understanding, clearly communicated among the team within the setting; with and among other professionals involved with the child; and with the parents is a prerequisite of quality practice and reflects a 'whole-child perspective'. This also ensures the promotion of respectful working relationships among all adults supporting the well-being, learning and development of the child. Such teamwork, coordination and communication must be valued, supported and resourced by an appropriate infrastructure at local, regional and national levels.

PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy in early childhood is expressed by curricula or programmes of activities which take a holistic approach to the development and learning of the child and reflect the inseparable nature of care and education.

Pedagogy is a term that is used to refer to the whole range of interactions which support the child's development. It takes a holistic approach by embracing both care and education. It acknowledges the wide range of relationships and experiences within which development takes place and recognises the connections between them. It also supports the concept of the child as an active learner. Such pedagogy must be supported within a flexible and dynamic framework that addresses the learning potential of the 'whole child'. Furthermore, it requires that early childhood practitioners are adequately prepared and supported for its implementation.

Play

Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child.

Play is an important medium through which the child interacts with, explores and makes sense of the world around her/him. These interactions with, for example, other children, adults, materials, events and ideas, are key to the child's well-being, development and learning. Play is a source of joy and fulfilment for the child. It provides an important context and opportunity to enhance and optimise quality early childhood experiences. As such, play will be a primary focus in quality early childhood settings.



Standards of Quality





Standard 1: Rights of the Child

Ensuring that each child's rights are met requires that she/he is enabled to exercise choice and to use initiative as an active participant and partner in her/his own development and learning.



Component 1.1

Each child has opportunities to make choices, is enabled to make decisions, and has her/his choices and decisions respected.

Component 1.2

Each child has opportunities and is enabled to take the lead, initiate activity, be appropriately independent and is supported to solve problems.


Component 1.3

Each child is enabled to participate actively in the daily routine, in activities, in conversations and in all other appropriate situations, and is considered as a partner by the adult.

Component 1.1

Each child has opportunities to make choices, is enabled to make decisions, and has her/his choices and decisions respected.

→ Signposts for Reflection

1.1.1 How do you foster each child's sense of control over her/his daily experiences and activities?  See 5.3 / 5.4




Think about: (e.g.)

- Opportunities for the child to have choices and make decisions
- Challenges for the teacher/school in respecting the child's choices and decisions
- Achieving a balance between child-chosen (directed) and teacher-chosen (directed) activity
- Ensuring that the level of choice is appropriate for the child
- Opportunities for the child to plan activities
- Enabling children with language and communication difficulties to share their plans
- Challenges for the teacher in enabling the child with special needs (e.g., communication, motor skills, etc.) to have choices and make decisions
- Opportunities for the child to review her/his plans and activities
- Catering for the child's interests in the daily routine

Component 1.2




Each child has opportunities and is enabled to take the lead, initiate activity, be appropriately independent and is supported to solve problems.

→ Signposts for Reflection

1.2.1 How is the child provided with opportunities within the daily routine to use her/his initiative and to be appropriately independent?  See 7.3



Think about: (e.g.)

- Problem-solving opportunities that arise for the child in the course of the day's activities and routines
- The challenges you meet in making sure that, as a matter of routine, the child takes the lead and acts with appropriate levels of independence
- A situation when a child chose, organised and took the lead in an activity during which you supported the process and emphasised its success  See 7.3
- Supporting child-initiated activity for the child with a disability
- Providing opportunities for the child to care for her/his own belongings and those of the classroom/school
- Enabling the child to take care of her/himself
- Implementing this Component through indoor and outdoor play  See 2.5 / 2.6  See 6.3
- Incorporating this Component into meal/snack times and tidy-up times

Component 1.3

Each child is enabled to participate actively in the daily routine, in activities, in conversations and in all other appropriate situations, and is considered as a partner by the adult.

→ Signposts for Reflection

1.3.1 How do you enable each child (including the child with special needs) to participate with her/his peers?



 See 5.1

1.3.2 How do you ensure that each child joins in the shared activities in a way that suits her/his own disposition?

 See 5.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- Supporting each child's participation in a group activity
- Managing difficulties which arise among children during group activity
- Assessing at what stage you should intervene in a child's play to offer assistance  See 6.6
- Ensuring that the child is a partner in her/his own learning at all times
- Challenges for you in considering the child as a partner
- Affording the child the opportunity to initiate activity and to invite others to participate
- Showing responsiveness and sensitivity to the child when you are engaged with her/him  See 5.4

Standard 2: Environments

Enriching environments, both indoor and outdoor (including materials and equipment) are well-maintained, safe, available, accessible, adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and offer a variety of challenging and stimulating experiences.



Component 2.1

The indoor and outdoor environment is well planned and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and adults in the setting.

Component 2.2

The environment (including equipment and materials) is adaptable for, and accessible to, all children and adults within the setting.

Component 2.3

The indoor and outdoor environment is well maintained and ensures comfortable and pleasant surroundings for children and adults.

Component 2.4

The environment promotes the safety, both indoors and outdoors, of all children and adults.

Component 2.5

The outdoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Component 2.6

The indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Component 2.7

There is an appropriate amount of equipment and materials within the setting (both indoors and outdoors) for use by individual children and groups of children.

Component 2.8

The environment provides for the safe management of food consumption.

Component 2.1

The indoor and outdoor environment is well planned and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and adults in the setting.

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.1.1 How does the layout of the classroom and school meet the needs of children, teachers and other adults?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Safety
- Privacy (e.g., staff room, parents room, etc.) See 9.5
- Personal care needs
- Rest facilities
- Heating/lighting/décor
- Organisation of learning space
- Facilitating free movement

2.1.2 In what way is space provided for each child's belongings in the classroom? See 1.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- Coat hooks at the child's level
- Symbols/pictures as labels
- Cubby holes/shelving for personal belongings
- Space for schoolbags

2.1.3 How are visitors directed into and around the school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Group sign outside
- Bell/intercom
- Welcoming notice
- Directional signs (in English, Irish and other languages, as appropriate) See 14.2
- Class and teacher name on the door
- Picture on the door to help child identify classroom
- Signage at children's height
- Signs for adults with literacy difficulties and visual impairment


2.1.4 How is the indoor and outdoor space designed to accommodate children individually, in small groups and in large groups?

2.1.5 How does the indoor environment allow for opportunities for children and teachers/adults to move around freely?


Component 2.2

The environment (including equipment and materials) is adaptable for, and accessible to, all children and adults within the setting.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 2.2.1 How does the planning of the classroom/school allow for free movement within the classroom/school?
- 2.2.2 If applicable, how do you ensure that the school (indoors and outdoors) is accessible to all children and adults with special needs?  See 14.2

Think about: (e.g.)


- Ramps
- Wide doors
- Handrails
- Accessible storage areas
- Parking
- Outdoor/indoor play spaces
- Signage  See 2.1
- Visual aids

- 2.2.3 How are the toilet facilities made accessible to all children and adults within the classroom/school?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Adequate number of toilets
- Child-friendly toilets
- Separate adult toilet facilities

- Disabled access
- Changing facilities for disabled children
- Bathroom supplies (paper towels, bins, liquid soap dispensers, storage for supplies)
- Washable walls and floors
- Space and privacy

- 2.2.4 Could you give an example of how the environment is appropriate to the needs of children of different abilities and cultural backgrounds?  See 14.2 / 14.3



Think about: (e.g.)

- Providing opportunities for all children to be outdoors
- Criteria when buying materials and equipment to ensure that they are adaptable and accessible to all children
- Ensuring that all children are able to access natural and homemade materials (e.g., cardboard boxes, pine cones, leaves, homemade play dough, etc.)
- Ensuring that children can use the equipment and materials independently (e.g., storage on low shelves, open shelving, labeling/pictures/symbols, etc.)

 See 6.2

Component 2.3

The indoor and outdoor environment is well maintained and ensures comfortable and pleasant surroundings for children and adults.

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.3.1 How is the environment made comfortable and pleasant?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Bright and inviting environment for children and parents
- Lighting appropriate to the range of activities
- Provisions for ventilation, especially in the sanitary areas
- Suitable seating for adults engaged in a range of activities with children (e.g., sharing books, etc.)
- Heating is thermostatically controlled to ensure an appropriate temperature is maintained
- Maintenance of indoor and outdoor space
- Regular review of the environment

2.3.2 How is the cleaning of the classroom organised?

 See 9.1 / 9.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- Cleaning checks by a designated person
- Dressing up clothes are regularly washed
- Sand is regularly cleaned/replaced
- Hand washing notices are displayed in all toilets
- Personal hygiene routines are in place for all staff and children

- Pest control
- Waste disposal
- Laundry

Component 2.4

The environment promotes the safety, both indoors and outdoors, of all children and adults.

 See 9.1

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.4.1 What procedures/routines are in place to regularly ensure that the outdoor play area is clean and free from hazards?

2.4.2 How is the outside area secured and maintained to ensure children's safety and protection from harm?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Covering (e.g., ponds, pits, sheds, etc.)
- Fencing
- Child-proof gate for entry
- Perimeter fence
- Gate latches

2.4.3 How is the classroom/school kept free from health hazards?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Storage of cleaning materials/chemicals/poisons
- Storage of waste materials
- Storage of medication

Standard 2: Environments

2.4.4 In what way is the indoor environment/equipment designed to reduce risk of injury to children?




Think about: (e.g.)

- No sharp corners on furniture or fittings
- Heaters guarded from children to ensure that they are not at risk of burns
- Water temperature in the bathrooms maintained at a suitable temperature (below 40° Celsius)
- Passageways are free of obstacles
- Electrical sockets are covered
- Floor coverings are secured
- Choking hazards are removed
- Non-slip flooring
- Safety devices on windows and doors
- Safety glass
- Appropriate safety symbols
- Removal of trailing flexes from children's reach
- Cords of blinds and curtains are inaccessible
- Removal of broken/damaged equipment

2.4.5 Are all exits accessible and fully functioning in the case of an emergency?



Think about: (e.g.)



- Dual language signage (and other languages, as appropriate)
- Visual aids
- Evacuation procedures  See 9.7

2.4.6 Is the water source in the classroom verified to be safe for human consumption?

2.4.7 In what way does your storage of materials and equipment ensure safety within the classroom/school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Storage areas for indoor equipment
- Storage areas for outdoor equipment
- Secured storage areas for children's records  See 10.6  See 12.1
- Locked cupboard for the storage of hazardous/toxic materials
- Secure store for cleaning equipment
- Suitably high shelving
- Top heavy shelving is bolted or secured to the ground/wall



2.4.8 Does the school have a fully stocked first aid kit that is easily accessed and available?

2.4.9 What system is in place to ensure that smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, fire alarms and fire blankets are in working order and are serviced regularly?

Component 2.5


The outdoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.  See 14.2

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.5.1 How does your school provide and promote opportunities for the child to experience the outdoor environment?  See 6.3 / 6.5  See 7.3 / 7.4



Think about: (e.g.)

- Provision of an outdoor space
- Regular access to this space
- Maximising opportunities for all children to be in the outdoor space
- Challenges and barriers you face in providing access to the outdoors
- Strategies to overcome some/all of these challenges
- Encouraging the use of the outdoor environment all year round
- Variety of outdoor experiences provided
- Opportunities for challenge and 'safe risk'
- Arrangement of the environment to keep children in view at all times
- Variety of surfaces to enhance the experiences of the child in the outdoor environment
- Opportunities for all children to visit other outdoor environments beyond the immediate setting (e.g., parks, playgrounds, shops, etc.)  See 16.3

2.5.2 How does the range of outdoor equipment match the needs and abilities of the children in your class?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Communication
- Interactions  See 5.1 / 5.2
- Collaboration


2.5.3 Does each child have access to toilet facilities from the outdoor area?

2.5.4 What range of experiences does the outdoor equipment promote?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Creativity and problem-solving
- Running
- Climbing
- Balancing
- Jumping
- Pouring
- Swinging
- Dramatic play
- Block building
- Manipulative play
- Art activities
- Crawling
- Scooting
- Digging and planting

2.5.5 How is sufficient space provided outdoors to foster curiosity and exploration and to allow the flexibility of individual or group play?  See 6.6

Component 2.6

The indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.  See 14.2

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.6.1 How do you provide for visual display?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Notice boards
- Display areas
- Project area
- Child's eye level display
- Posters/pictures/photos
- Real life images
- Children's work (e.g., paintings, drawings, constructions, etc.)
- Storing children's work until ready to be brought home
- Rotating visual displays

2.6.2 How does the environment facilitate and support the development of social activities and interaction?

 See 5.1

2.6.3 What different areas/spaces within the classroom are offered to the child?  See 6.4



Think about: (e.g.)


- Water area (e.g., suitable temperature, tools and equipment for water, aprons, change water daily, appropriate floor covering, etc.)
- Sand area (e.g., different types of sand [fine sand, wet/dry sand], containers, tools and equipment for sand, dustpan and brush, aprons, sand regularly replenished and replaced, etc.)
- Paint area (e.g., frequent painting, tables, easels, brushes, variety of colours, variety of paper [colour, shape, texture, size], equipment for group activities [rollers, sponges, finger paints], etc.)
- Collage/junk art materials (e.g., storage unit, large selection of materials gathered by children, scissors, glue and pastes, brushes, staplers, paper clips, etc.)
- Graphics/writing area (e.g., selection of paper, chalks, charcoals, crayons, pencils, pens, markers, examples of written materials, appropriate tables and chairs, etc.)
- Play dough area (e.g., table and chairs, variety of colours, suitable and plentiful equipment and tools, aprons, etc.)
- Table top toy area (e.g., child-sized tables and chairs, low level storage areas, wide range of equipment [jigsaws, threading toys, grading toys, shape sorters], etc.)
- Floor area (e.g., carpeted section, adequate storage, equipment [road mats, cars, caravans, garage, trucks, farm animals, trains, blocks, doll's house], etc.)
- Home corner (e.g., well-defined from other areas, inviting and appealing, low level furniture [cooker, cooking utensils, fridge, settee, dressing up clothes, books and magazines], equipment reflects children's home lives, [dolls, tea-sets] etc.)
- Role play (e.g., hair dressers, post office, Gardaí, teacher, nurse, fire fighter, doctor, shop, restaurant, library, etc.)

Standard 2: Environments

- Book area (e.g., quiet area of the room, natural light, comfortable seating, carpeted section, cushions, display units, books clean and accessible, puppets for story-telling, large books available in a variety of languages and different formats, system of borrowing, links to local library, etc.)
- Sound and music area (e.g., wide variety of musical instruments, reflecting a variety of cultures, equipment [tape recorders, tapes], different types of music [classical, opera, pop, traditional], suitable storage, traditional nursery rhymes, etc.)
- Other special theme/interest areas (e.g., clay, computer area, nature, science, woodwork, cooking, etc.)

2.6.4 How are these areas/spaces easily distinguished through furnishings, decoration and equipment?

Component 2.7

There is an appropriate amount of equipment and materials within the setting (both indoors and outdoors) for use by individual children and groups of children.  See 6.4

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.7.1 What range of developmentally appropriate equipment and materials is available for all children within the classroom to support the child's learning and development?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Sensory materials (e.g., sand, water, play dough, paint [non-toxic], blocks, etc.)


- Physical activities (e.g., walking on, climbing, moving through, pushing, pulling, etc.)
- Containers of objects for exploring, emptying and refilling
- Furniture (e.g., tables, chairs, etc.)

2.7.2 How do the equipment and materials ensure that the changing learning needs of each child are met?

 See 7.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Sufficient amounts of equipment and materials
- Regularly inspected and replaced/repared when necessary
- Equipment and materials supporting the implementation of the curriculum
- Provision of equipment and materials for children with special needs to ensure access to the curriculum activities
- Use of television/video/DVDs/computers to initiate interest, develop ideas and extend learning
- Reflecting the diversity of the wider society within the setting  See 14.2

2.7.3 How do the equipment and materials appeal to multiple senses and consist of both natural and manufactured products?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Hard and soft textures
- Objects with smell and taste
- Objects made of wood, fabric, metal, paper, liquid, etc.

 See 6.5

Component 2.8

The environment provides for the safe management of food consumption.  See 9.4

→ Signposts for Reflection

2.8.1 How do you ensure good hygiene practice in all places where food is stored, prepared and consumed?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Surfaces are clean
- Hygienic cloths are used
- Floors are swept clean

2.8.2 How is food stored safely within the classroom/school?

Standard 3: Parents and Families

Valuing and involving parents and families requires a proactive partnership approach evidenced by a range of clearly stated, accessible and implemented processes, policies and procedures.



Component 3.1

Staff and parents have both formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing about the child.

Component 3.2

There are a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in activities within the setting, taking into account the range of parents' interests and time-constraints.

Component 3.3

Staff are responsive and sensitive in the provision of information and support to parents in their key role in the learning and development of the child.

Component 3.4

The setting has written records of all policies and procedures regarding parental involvement and makes them available to all stakeholders.

Component 3.1

Staff and parents have both formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing about the child.

→ Signposts for Reflection

3.1.1 What kind of arrangements are in place to facilitate regular formal meetings between parents and staff?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Types of meetings organised for parents by the setting
- Involving both parents (where appropriate)
- Frequency of meetings
- Responding to requests from parents for meetings
- Space for/location of meetings

3.1.2 How do you disseminate information to parents?

See 12.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- Notice Boards
- Daily timetables
- Photographs of staff/children's events and activities
- Oral communication
- Newsletter
- E-mail
- Texting

3.1.3 What kind of opportunities are in place for informal, regular conversations with parents?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Creating opportunities for informal interaction with parents
- Making parents welcome within the school See 14.2

3.1.4 How do the formal and informal opportunities for communication with parents support the child's learning and development?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Accessing parents' expert knowledge of their child's development and learning
- Communicating information to parents about their child's learning and development
- Integrating parents' knowledge in the planning/assessment of children's learning
- Supporting parents in understanding their child's learning and development

Component 3.2

There are a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in activities within the setting, taking into account the range of parents' interests and time-constraints.



→ Signposts for Reflection



3.2.1 How is parental involvement supported and encouraged within your school and classroom?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Opportunities for parents to be involved in the management of the school


Standard 3: Parents and Families

- Opportunities for parents to contribute their skills and resources to the school/classroom  See 16.4
- Facilitating parents to participate based on their interests, abilities and cultures  See 14.2
- Being proactive in encouraging parental participation

Component 3.3

Staff are responsive and sensitive in the provision of information and support to parents in their key role in the learning and development of the child.  See 12.2


→ Signposts for Reflection

- 3.3.1 How do you provide information for parents?
 See 16.1



Think about: (e.g.)

- Range of information
- Regular review of the information available to parents
- Response to specific requests for information
- Making parents aware of information relevant to their key role
- Supporting parents in the use of this information in the home

- 3.3.2 Do you create opportunities for other professionals from the community to engage with parents within the school?  See 16.3



Think about: (e.g.)

- Public Health Nurse
- Garda

- Fire Safety Officer
- Other professionals

Component 3.4

The setting has written records of all policies and procedures regarding parental involvement and makes them available to all stakeholders.



 See 10.2  See 14.1

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 3.4.1 How does your school use its policies and procedures in support of parental involvement?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Positive promotion of parental role
- Involving parents in the management of the school
- Ensuring that parents have read and understood policies and procedures
- Involving parents in compiling policies for the school  See 4.1
- Processes for regular review and update of policies
- Putting your policy into practice  See 4.2
- Documentation of procedures
- Ensuring that everyone understands and follows these procedures

Standard 4: Consultation

Ensuring inclusive decision-making requires consultation that promotes participation and seeks out, listens to and acts upon the views and opinions of children, parents and staff, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.



Component 4.1

The setting actively invites contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders.

Component 4.2

The setting acts upon contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders, as appropriate.

Component 4.1


The setting actively invites contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders.


→ Signposts for Reflection


4.1.1 How does the school encourage consultation with staff, parents, children and other appropriate stakeholders?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Regular staff meetings are held as a means for staff to identify their needs
- Teachers and other staff are facilitated to share opinions through an appropriate forum (e.g., regular group meetings, suggestion boxes, input into purchasing decisions, etc.)
- Open, solution-driven discussions take place on a regular basis within the school
- Parents are given an opportunity to have input regarding the policies and procedures of the school
- Parents are given opportunities to have meetings with teachers to discuss their child's development, accomplishments and/or needs/difficulties  See 3.1
- All staff participate in annual self-evaluation of the school
- All staff are provided with the opportunity to evaluate their own performance
- Annual meetings are held, during which all stakeholders are invited to share their views


- Teachers seek input from parents about how their child is engaging with the curriculum
- Interactions with a broad range of stakeholders (e.g., families, colleagues, assistants, other community services, regulatory or other statutory officials, etc.) are facilitated in an efficient and effective manner
- Teachers actively create opportunities to involve children in age-appropriate decision-making with regard to the development of the class/school  See 1.1

4.1.2 What plan has been developed to ensure that the sharing of views and opinions is actively encouraged and appropriately recorded?  See 10.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- Supporting teachers/adults working in the school to engage with each other and as a team
- Promoting discussion amongst relevant stakeholders on issues related to the promotion of the health and well-being of children



4.1.3 What can you/your school do to develop children's capacity to contribute their views and opinions on issues relating to their daily experiences?  See 5.4



Think about: (e.g.)

- Open-ended questions
- Giving children time to think and reply
- Encouraging children to name and share feelings and emotions
- Sharing control of conversations with the child
- Involving children in finding/choosing a solution to a problem



Standard 4: Consultation

- 4.1.4 What opportunities are available to children to make plans and indicate these plans to the teacher/ appropriate adult?  See 7.3
- 4.1.5 How does your school show respect for parents' goals and preferences for their child?  See 3.3
- 4.1.6 How is the input of children, parents, families and other relevant stakeholders recorded so as to inform decision-making processes?
- 4.1.7 How does your school give feedback to the participants that are consulted?

Component 4.2

The setting acts upon contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders, as appropriate.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 4.2.1 How are the views and opinions gathered through consultation with stakeholders used to regularly review and revise all aspects of practice?
- 4.2.2 How are staff encouraged to take responsibility for the implementation of agreed actions?  See 10.5
- 4.2.3 In your School Plan, do you have a section on policies and procedures which has been devised in consultation with parents, staff, Board of Management, and, where appropriate, the children in the school?
- 4.2.4 How do you ensure that your policies and procedures are working documents and are revised and updated on a regular basis?  See 8.1
- 4.2.5 How does consultation influence the School Plan?

Standard 5: Interactions

Fostering constructive interactions (child/child, child/adult and adult/adult) requires explicit policies, procedures and practice that emphasise the value of process and are based on mutual respect, equal partnership and sensitivity.



Component 5.1

Each child is enabled to interact with her/his peers and with children of different ages in pairs, small groups and, to a lesser degree, in large groups.

Component 5.5

Interactions between the adults within, and associated with the setting, act as a model of respect, support and partnership for the child.

Component 5.2

Each child receives appropriate support to enable her/him to interact positively with other children.

Component 5.6

There is a clear written policy and associated procedures which underpin interactive practice taking place within the setting.

Component 5.3

The adult uses all aspects of the daily routine (both formal and informal) to interact sensitively and respectfully with the child.


Component 5.4

The adult interactive style is focused on process as opposed to outcomes. It is balanced between talking and listening, offers the child a choice of responses and encourages expanded use of language. It follows the child's lead and interests, and challenges the child appropriately.

Component 5.1

Each child is enabled to interact with her/his peers and with children of different ages in pairs, small groups and, to a lesser degree, in large groups.



→ Signposts for Reflection

5.1.1 How does your planning reflect the child's potential to learn in collaboration with others?  See 6.6

 See 7.4

5.1.2 Throughout the daily routine, what opportunities does each child have to interact with another child or with a small group of children?

 Think about: (e.g.)

- Seating arrangements
- Layout of space  See 2.1
- Different activity areas  See 2.5 / 2.6
- Meal/snack times
- Tidy-up times
- Planning time
- Outdoors/indoors

5.1.3 What arrangements are in place to enable children to mix with children of other ages?

 Think about: (e.g.)

- Whole School Planning
- Contact opportunities with siblings/friends/other children

- Older children 'helping' younger children
- Shared outings

5.1.4 How do you manage group work within your classroom?

 Think about: (e.g.)

- Managing large group work so that each child can contribute
- Minimising the time the child spends in large/whole group activities
- Suitable activities for large/whole group activities
- Enabling the child to develop an aptitude and willingness to talk and co-operate with others



Component 5.2

Each child receives appropriate support to enable her/him to interact positively with other children.

→ Signposts for Reflection

5.2.1 What is your role in supporting the child to interact with other children?

 Think about: (e.g.)

- Individual disposition
- Positive identities
- Sense of belonging
- Self-confidence  See 1.2  See 14.2

5.2.2 What kind of co-operative interactions between a child and another child (or children) have you observed and noted?

Standard 5: Interactions



Think about: (e.g.)

- Learning
- Conversation
- Friendships
- Helping each other
- Negotiation
- Compromise
- Sharing
- Turn-taking
- Conflict
- Argument

5.2.3 What strategies are in place to manage conflicts between children?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Supporting the child who has difficulty in interacting with other children
- Situations in which interaction involved conflict
- Helping children resolve conflict themselves without you imposing solutions (e.g., negotiation, compromise, listening, naming emotions, acknowledging feelings, etc.)
- Providing guidance and discipline which is supportive
- Reflecting realistic expectations for the child's age and individual development

5.2.4 How do you enable the child who consistently plays alone to interact with other children?

5.2.5 In what ways are children facilitated to work together in small groups?

Component 5.3

The adult uses all aspects of the daily routine (both formal and informal) to interact sensitively and respectfully with the child.

→ Signposts for Reflection

5.3.1 What opportunities do you avail of in order to interact positively with the child?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Greetings
- Care routines
- Meal and snack times
- One-to-one interactions
- Small group activities
- Large group activities
- Tidy-up time
- Play time
- Incidental conversation
- Planning activities
- Singing and rhyming
- Games


5.3.2 How do you use these ongoing opportunities?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Listening
- Eye contact

Standard 5: Interactions

- Talking with the child – not about the child
 - Observing the child's feelings
 - Showing sensitivity and warmth
 - Interacting for a meaningful length of time
 - Being age and developmentally appropriate
 - Fun
 - Observing the child's development and learning
 - Following the child's lead
- 5.3.3 In what way can non-verbal interactions show warmth and support?
- 5.3.4 How can you ensure that the child feels secure with you?
 See 9.6

Component 5.4


The adult interactive style is focused on process as opposed to outcomes. It is balanced between talking and listening, offers the child a choice of responses and encourages expanded use of language. It follows the child's lead and interests, and challenges the child appropriately.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 5.4.1 What measures can you take to increase the likelihood of interactions between yourself and the child lasting a meaningful length of time?
- 5.4.2 In keeping the interaction going for a meaningful length of time, what does the process offer the child?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Child's current interactive capacity
- Child's potential
- Context of interaction
- Listener/speaker relationship
- Adult understanding of the child's use of language, pronunciation, etc.
- Attention span
- Communication
- Opportunities for language development  See 14.2

5.4.3 If applicable, how do you change/vary your style of interaction to match the actions of a child with special needs?

5.4.4 How can your responses support a child towards new learning and meaning?

5.4.5 How do you draw on the child's previous learning to support 'meaning making'?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Child's interests
- Child's experiences
- Child's previous learning (e.g., rhymes, stories, people, family, etc.)

5.4.6 In interacting with an individual child or a group of children, what are the challenges for you in making sure the child does most of the talking?

5.4.7 What impact does group size (small/large) have on the amount of talking you do?

Standard 5: Interactions



Think about: (e.g.)

- Volume
- Tone
- Ratio of adult: child talk

5.4.8 What observations do you make when you are listening to children's interactions?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Child's language use
- Sentence structure
- Non-verbal communication

5.4.9 Can you give an example of an interaction with a child in which you followed the child's lead?

5.4.10 Can you give an example of an interaction which you initiated?

5.4.11 When you review an interaction you had with a child/group of children, what changes, if any, would you make to your interactive style?

5.4.12 In your interactions with the child, what process characteristics do you emphasise?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Open-ended comments and questions
- Positive attention
- Waiting for the child to form thoughts
- Encouraging expanded responses
- Encouraging descriptive language
- Exploring the child's interests

5.4.13 What do you try to achieve through your responses to the child?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Expanded response from child
- Co-operation
- Guidance
- Collaboration
- Negotiation
- Understanding
- Affirmation
- Positive identities
- Sense of belonging
- Cultural awareness
- Challenge
- Clarification
- Answering
- Commentary




5.4.14 In the context of the previous two Signposts, what are the challenges in interacting in this way with a child or group of children?

5.4.15 If challenges have been identified, what strategies can be developed to meet these challenges?

Component 5.5

Interactions between the adults within, and associated with the setting, act as a model of respect, support and partnership for the child.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 5.5.1 How do your interactions with parents model friendly respect and partnership?  See 3.3  See 11.5
- 5.5.2 If you work as part of a team (e.g., other infant teachers, classroom assistants, special needs assistants, etc.), what positive attributes are evident in the way in which team members work together?  See 10.5



Think about: (e.g.)

- Responsibility to the team
- Commitment
- Acknowledging individual contribution(s)
- Sharing ideas
- Supporting initiative/improvement
- Collaboration and co-operation
- Consultation
- Professional respect
- Confidentiality
- Listening
- Support
- Trustworthiness
- Acknowledging strengths/weaknesses
- Cultural awareness


- 5.5.3 How does the nature of the interactions between the teachers/adults within the school impact on the child's learning and development?
- 5.5.4 Are there opportunities for the child to observe teachers/adults modelling positive interactions?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Co-operation
- Helping
- Turn-taking
- Showing kindness
- Problem-solving

Component 5.6


There is a clear written policy and associated procedures which underpin interactive practice taking place within the setting.  See 14.1

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 5.6.1 What does school policy say about interactions between children and adults?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Promoting desirable behaviour
- Unacceptable behaviour
- Negative stereotyping  See 14.2 / 14.3
- Bullying
- Conflict resolution
- Parental responsibility and involvement
- School's responsibility

Standard 5: Interactions

- Consistency
- Inclusion
- Cultural awareness

5.6.2 How are children involved in devising and implementing the policy on positive behaviour?  See 4.1



Think about: (e.g.)


- Children's opinion on positive interactions
- Children setting standards
- Children's forum on behaviour/interactions/rules
- Children's understanding of the benefits of positive behaviour
- Reinforcing positive interactions
- Noticing positive behaviours

5.6.3 What procedures have you put in place to deal with unacceptable behaviour from the child?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Code of Discipline
- Discussion
- Promoting empathy
- Understanding consequences
- Long term support
- Documenting incidents
- Support from colleagues
- Informing parents
- Parental involvement
- Quiet time/time-out

5.6.4 What procedures have you put in place to deal with bullying?  See 14.3



Think about: (e.g.)

- Anti-bias programme content
- Specific anti-bullying programme
- Involving parents
- Support for victim(s)
- Support for perpetrator(s)

5.6.5 How does your policy characterise interactions between staff members and children?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Respect
- Partnership
- Co-operation
- Collaboration

5.6.6 What procedures do you have in place to ensure that teachers/adults are able to conduct interactions with children in keeping with your policy?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Priority for small numbers in infant classes
- Time management
- School/classroom planning

5.6.7 How does practice in your setting mirror your policy and implement your procedures?

Standard 6: Play

Promoting play requires that each child has ample time to engage in freely available and accessible, developmentally appropriate and well-resourced opportunities for exploration, creativity and 'meaning making' in the company of other children, with participating and supportive adults and alone, where appropriate.



Component 6.1

The child spends a significant amount of time in the setting at play/exploration, and these and other playful activities are central to the daily routine.

Component 6.5

Play opportunities provided for the child encourage her/him to explore, to be creative and to use her/his previous learning to make new meanings.

Component 6.2

When the child is engaged in play/exploration, the equipment and materials provided are freely available and easily accessible to her/him.

Component 6.6

The child has opportunities for play/exploration with other children, with participating and supportive adults and on her/his own, as appropriate.

Component 6.3

The opportunities for play/exploration provided for the child mirror her/his stage of development, give the child the freedom to achieve mastery and success, and challenge the child to make the transition to new learning and development.

Component 6.7

Opportunities for play/exploration are devised in conjunction with planning for curriculum/programme implementation, and are adapted to meet changing learning and development requirements.


Component 6.4

Each learning area and each activity in the setting has plenty of equipment and materials for the child.

Component 6.1

The child spends a significant amount of time in the setting at play/exploration, and these and other playful activities are central to the daily routine.

→ Signposts for Reflection

6.1.1 What proportion of the daily routine is given over to play, whether structured activities, adult or child initiated, indoors or outdoors, etc?  See 2.5 / 2.6




Think about: (e.g.)

- Play with concrete materials
- Interactive story-time
- Singing and rhyming
- Dance and music
- Symbolic play
- Creative play
- Games (e.g., auditory, visual, etc.)
- Ensuring that time for play is maximised within your daily routine
- Routine activities which could be done in a playful manner (e.g. break times, lunch time, tidy up times, lining up, etc.)

Component 6.2

When the child is engaged in play/exploration, the equipment and materials provided are freely available and easily accessible to her/him.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 6.2.1 How do you arrange your storage so that any materials and equipment provided for a particular session are within reach of the child?  See 2.2
- 6.2.2 Once you provide a particular set of equipment and materials, are they available to all children?
- 6.2.3 Once you make the equipment and materials available, can the child use any item in any of the activity areas you provide (e.g., bring the tea-set to the sink, etc.)?
- 6.2.4 What specific arrangements are necessary for the child with special needs, particularly a child with a physical disability, to ensure availability of and accessibility to the equipment and materials provided?

Component 6.3

The opportunities for play/exploration provided for the child mirror her/his stage of development, give the child the freedom to achieve mastery and success, and challenge the child to make the transition to new learning and development.

→ Signposts for Reflection

6.3.1 What kind of play is the child currently engaging in?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Functional play
- Construction play
- Symbolic play
- Imaginative play
- Socio-dramatic play [See Resources](#)

6.3.2 What range of opportunities are you providing for the child so that she/he can fully explore this type of play?

[See 2.5 / 2.6](#) [See 5.1](#) [See 7.4](#)

6.3.3 How are these opportunities giving the child a sense of control and of being competent? [See 1.2](#)

6.3.4 Given the child's current developmental stage, what fine-tuning of the current opportunities will give the child the chance to achieve further development and learning?

Component 6.4

Each learning area and each activity in the setting has plenty of equipment and materials for the child.

→ Signposts for Reflection

6.4.1 How do you ensure that each play/exploration area has plenty of the relevant play items and materials for each child there? [See 2.5 / 2.6 / 2.7](#)



Think about: (e.g.)

- Identifying resources which do not have to be bought
- Providing outdoor play equipment

Component 6.5

Play opportunities provided for the child encourage her/him to explore, to be creative and to use her/his previous learning to make new meanings.

→ Signposts for Reflection

6.5.1 What open-ended play items do you provide which leads the child to explore different properties in the environment, both indoor and outdoor?



[See 2.5 / 2.6 / 2.7](#)




Think about: (e.g.)

- The role of open-ended play in your classroom practice
- Encouraging the child to recreate and replicate the learning that has taken place in one play area in another

Standard 6: Play

- Prompting the child to draw on her/his previous learning in a new context  See 5.4
- Finding out the extent of the child's previous learning  See 7.6

Component 6.6

The child has opportunities for play/exploration with other children, with participating and supportive adults and on her/his own, as appropriate.  See 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.3 / 5.4

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 6.6.1 How often do you participate in play with the child?
- 6.6.2 What form does your participation take?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Listening
- In role
- Observer
- Joint attention
- Feedback
- Enabling
- Offering choice
- Prompting the child to extend her/his thinking
- Encouraging and sustaining interest

- 6.6.3 What strategies can be used to support and enable the child who may have difficulties 'gaining entry' to and sustaining play with other children, or who may be consistently excluded from play?


- 6.6.4 Can you think of a situation in which a child wished to play alone?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Facilitating the child to play alone, if appropriate
- Circumstances in which it is not appropriate for a child to play alone

Component 6.7


Opportunities for play/exploration are devised in conjunction with planning for curriculum/ programme implementation, and are adapted to meet changing learning and development requirements.  See 7.1


→ Signposts for Reflection

- 6.7.1 How does planning for learning through play accommodate the individual child, classroom/school, local context and specific needs?  See 7.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Special needs
- Disadvantage
- Cultural context  See 14.2 / 14.3
- Linguistic needs

- 6.7.2 How often is planning for play and curriculum implementation undertaken?  See 7.5



Think about: (e.g.)

- Daily/weekly/fortnightly/monthly
- Term/season/annual

Standard 6: Play

6.7.3 How is the documentation and review of planning managed?  See 7.5



Think about: (e.g.)

- Methods of documenting planning
- Keeping track of changes to planning in light of practice/impact of spontaneous learning opportunities
- Relationship between planning and what happens in practice
- Challenges involved in planning for the young child's learning and development
- Integration of play and curriculum implementation

Standard 7: Curriculum

Encouraging each child's holistic development and learning requires the implementation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme.



Component 7.1

It is evident that the child's learning and development are holistic experiences and processes, that play is central to integrated learning and development and to curriculum/programme implementation.

Component 7.2

There is a well-referenced curriculum or programme in operation, based on established and verifiable principles of child development.

Component 7.3

The curriculum/programme is reflected in and implemented through the child's daily routine, spontaneous learning opportunities, structured activities and activities initiated by the child.

Component 7.4

Curriculum/programme implementation is achieved through a variety of adult strategies, close and supportive relationships in the setting and a wide range of experiences which are made available to the child.

Component 7.5

The curriculum or programme of activities being implemented is documented and the documentation is available and in use.

Component 7.6

Planning for curriculum or programme implementation is based on the child's individual profile, which is established through systematic observation and assessment for learning.

Component 7.1

It is evident that the child's learning and development are holistic experiences and processes, that play is central to integrated learning and development and to curriculum/programme implementation.

→ Signposts for Reflection

7.1.1 What is understood by holistic learning and development in the infant classroom?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Links between developmental domains
- Learning processes
- Learning dispositions
- Learning contexts
- Integration
- Relationships
- Competent learners

7.1.2 In thinking of a child engaged in a particular activity, which aspects of learning and development are being integrated?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Language
- Socialisation
- Creativity
- Visual discrimination

- Gross/fine motor skills
- Classification

7.1.3 When teaching one area/strand unit of the curriculum, what possibilities are there for integration of other aspects of learning and development?

7.1.4 What does the curriculum say about play?

See 6.1 / 6.3 / 6.5 / 6.7

7.1.5 During the daily routine, what opportunities could you provide for the child to use skills and knowledge in different contexts?

Component 7.2

There is a well-referenced curriculum or programme in operation, based on established and verifiable principles of child development.

Component 7.3

The curriculum/programme is reflected in and implemented through the child's daily routine, spontaneous learning opportunities, structured activities and activities initiated by the child.

→ Signposts for Reflection


7.3.1 How is the daily routine used to implement the curriculum? See 5.3 See 6.1




Think about: (e.g.)

- Arrival in the morning

Standard 7: Curriculum

- Settling-in time
- Play time
- Meal/snack times
- Trips and outings
- Toileting and hygiene routines
- Transitions  See 13.1

7.3.2 What aspects of the curriculum lend themselves to responding to spontaneous learning opportunities which occur during the daily routine, and to the ever-changing nature of the child's activities?  See 6.5 / 6.7

 See 11.5

7.3.3 How can the curriculum be adapted to support the learning and development of all children, thinking especially of children with special needs?


 See 14.2 / 14.3

7.3.4 How can spontaneous learning opportunities be used to implement an element/strand of the curriculum?



Think about: (e.g.)


- Curriculum content
- Themes and topics
- Maths and literacy
- Extending learning
- Dimensions of development
- Observation
- Language
- Child's interests
- 'Meaning making'

7.3.5 Can you give an example of a planned, structured activity you have devised, and the aspects of child development and learning being addressed in this activity?  See 1.1 / 1.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- Creative activities
- Small/large groups
- Tidy-up time
- Table-top activities
- Outdoor play/games

7.3.6 In child-initiated activity, what strategies do you use to incorporate your curriculum goals?  See 5.4



Think about: (e.g.)

- Your comments
- Descriptive/expressive language
- Questions
- Participating in play in character

Component 7.4


Curriculum/programme implementation is achieved through a variety of adult strategies, close and supportive relationships in the setting and a wide range of experiences which are made available to the child.



Signposts for Reflection

7.4.1 What strategies do you use in teaching/implementing

Standard 7: Curriculum

the curriculum?  See 5.4



Think about: (e.g.)


- Modelling
- Facilitating
- Language/body language
- Enabling
- Playing
- Observing and listening
- Structuring
- Enabling interactions between children

7.4.2 What teaching approaches and methodologies do you use to implement the curriculum?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Active learning methodologies
- Collaborative learning opportunities
- Group and pair work
- Use of ICT
- Integrated learning opportunities


7.4.3 How are you pro-active in becoming involved in the child's learning and development through curriculum implementation?  See 6.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Individual attention
- Emotional presence
- Interactions
- Engagement
- Sharing interests

- Joint projects

What range of experiences are provided for the child in the course of the daily routine?  See 2.5 / 2.6 / 2.7

 See 6.3



Think about: (e.g.)

- Outdoor play
- Activity areas
- Rhyme, story and song
- Care of pets
- Physical activity
- Creativity
- Quiet time

7.4.5 What impact does the nature of your relationship with the child have on their learning and development?

 See 5.4

 See 9.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Caring
- Responsive
- Sensitive
- Supportive

7.4.6 What is the range of relationships within the school which have an impact on the child's learning and development?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Management
- Staff
- Parents

Component 7.5

The curriculum or programme of activities being implemented is documented and the documentation is available and in use.

 See 6.7


→ Signposts for Reflection

7.5.1 How often do you consult your curriculum documentation?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Plean Scoile
- Classroom planning
- Teacher Guidelines in the Primary School Curriculum (1999)
- DES support documentation (e.g., *Looking at our Schools*, etc.)
- Curriculum review processes (e.g., Cuntas Míósúil, etc.)

7.5.2 What kind of documentation do you produce yourself to support curriculum implementation?  See 6.7

7.5.3 At what intervals do you document your curriculum planning?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Year plan
- Season/term plan
- Monthly/fortnightly/weekly/daily plan

→ Signposts for Reflection

7.6.1 What are the different elements of your system of child observation and assessment?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Observation
- Parents
- Child's self-assessment
- Participating in play
- Interactions
- Listening
- Informal
- Consultation with colleagues
- Reflection
- Ongoing cycles

7.6.2 How do you record the information gained from your observations and assessment?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Daily observation notebook
- Observation templates
- Child's portfolio

- Photos/tapes/video, etc.
- Process as opposed to outcome

7.6.3 How do you acknowledge and validate cultural experiences and knowledge in the curriculum?

See 14.3



Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation

Enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the setting requires cycles of observation, planning, action and evaluation, undertaken on a regular basis.



Component 8.1

Each Standard area of practice is reviewed regularly through appropriate and tailored processes of observation, planning, action and evaluation.

Component 8.2

The setting has established and documented review structures.

Component 8.3

There is a mechanism in place to ensure that review processes lead to changes in practice.

Component 8.4

The outcomes of review structures and processes are recorded, stored and shared, as appropriate.

Component 8.1

Each Standard area of practice is reviewed regularly through appropriate and tailored processes of observation, planning, action and evaluation.

→ Signposts for Reflection

8.1.1 What types of review processes are appropriate to each of the 16 Standards specific to the *Síolta*?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Person-centred review
- Structural review
- Resource review
- Evidence and documentation
- Change management review
- External review process

8.1.2 How often do you undertake reviews within the practice categories of the Standards?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Daily/weekly/monthly
- Term/annual
- Rolling review

8.1.3 What aspects of the Standards require more frequent review than others?

Component 8.2

The setting has established and documented review structures.

→ Signposts for Reflection

8.2.1 What review structures are in place in your classroom/school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Time management
- Team/staff/management meetings
- Inputs from parents and children
- Self-review
- Supervision and appraisal
- Progress reports/Cuntas Míosúil
- Evidence and documentation
- External evaluation/audits

Component 8.3

There is a mechanism in place to ensure that review processes lead to changes in practice.

→ Signposts for Reflection

8.3.1 When change is indicated by the review process, how is that change incorporated into practice?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Responsibility for incorporating change
- Responsibility for overseeing change

Component 8.4

The outcomes of review structures and processes are recorded, stored and shared, as appropriate.


→ Signposts for Reflection

8.4.1 How do you document your review processes?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Review templates
- Curriculum planning notes
- Records of decisions
- Minutes of meetings
- Practice diaries
- Evaluation reports
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

8.4.2 How do you ensure that records are stored and shared appropriately, ensuring confidentiality?  See 10.6

 See 12.2 / 12.3

Standard 9: Health and Welfare

Promoting the health and welfare of the child requires protection from harm, provision of nutritious food, appropriate opportunities for rest, and secure relationships characterised by trust and respect.



Component 9.1

The setting has implemented a full range of policies and procedures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, reduce exposure to environmental hazards and stress, and deal effectively and efficiently with medical situations that may arise.

Component 9.2

The setting endeavours, through the implementation of a range of policies, procedures and actions, to promote the health of all children and adults.

Component 9.3

The setting has implemented the guidelines from *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care* in relation to child protection.

Component 9.4

The setting is proactive in supporting the development of healthy eating habits in children whilst supporting their enjoyment and appreciation of eating as a positive social experience.

Component 9.5

The setting has made significant efforts to ensure that children's need for rest, quiet time and privacy is appropriately catered for and respected.


Component 9.6

The setting has made provision to ensure that children can form and sustain secure relationships with adults, siblings, peers and other children.

Component 9.7

The setting ensures that all adults and children are prepared for emergency situations.

Component 9.1

The setting has implemented a full range of policies and procedures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, reduce exposure to environmental hazards and stress, and deal effectively and efficiently with medical situations that may arise.  See 2.4

→ Signposts for Reflection

9.1.1 How do you deal with illness, infectious diseases and medical emergencies in your school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Policies and procedures
- Informing parents and families
- Informing other relevant adults (e.g., SNA, student teachers, substitutes, medical personnel, etc.)
- Isolation/exclusion/supervision
- Provision of a quiet, comfortable location

9.1.2 What procedures are in place to respond to medical emergencies?




Think about: (e.g.)


- Appropriate number of teachers/adults in your school qualified to administer first aid
- Adequate number of fully-equipped first aid boxes available and easily accessible
- Briefing of teachers/adults on appropriate storage and administration of medication

- Arrangement with a medical doctor or other appropriately qualified medical professional to provide advice and support to the school
- Communication with parents in the case of illness or medical emergency (e.g., accessible and up-to-date contact details, informing them of infectious illnesses in the school, advising them on appropriate precautionary methods, etc.)

Component 9.2

The setting endeavours, through the implementation of a range of policies, procedures and actions, to promote the health of all children and adults.  See 14.1

→ Signposts for Reflection

9.2.1 What strategies are in place to ensure that everyone in your school is fully informed on all aspects of health promotion?  See 11.1 / 11.4



Think about: (e.g.)

- Making information leaflets available on vaccinations, oral hygiene, prevention of infection, etc.
- Inviting regular contact with the public health nurse and other relevant health professionals
- Holding information evenings for parents on health promotion issues
- Offering teachers/adults working in the school opportunities to participate in training on health promotion matters
- Incorporating health promotion into the curriculum for children

Standard 9: Health and Welfare

- Training regarding child protection, etc.

9.2.2 How are children supported to develop good personal hygiene routines?  See 7.3




Think about: (e.g.)

- Establishing routines regarding hand washing, cleaning after toilet use, nose blowing, waste disposal, etc.
- Developing self-management skills through the curriculum (e.g., opening/closing fastenings, tidy up time, etc.)
- Reinforcing good practice regarding keeping the environment clean and safe (e.g., mopping up spills, wiping feet, etc.)

9.2.3 How can teachers/adults in your school contribute positively to the promotion of children's health?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Modelling good hygiene practice
- Suitable outdoor clothing, application of sunscreen
- No smoking
- Being attentive and responsive regarding children's routine personal hygiene needs (e.g., toileting, etc.)
- Minimising stress and anxiety for children by acting in a calm manner at all times  See 5.5
- Support and supervision of adults
- Being responsive and sensitive to children's needs for reassurance and comfort

Component 9.3

The setting has implemented the guidelines from *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care* in relation to child protection.

→ Signposts for Reflection

9.3.1 How does your school ensure that all teachers/adults are fully briefed on good practice guidelines in relation to child protection?  See 11.4



Think about: (e.g.)

- Relevant information available and accessible to all
- Briefing on child protection policies and procedures in your induction process for teachers/adults working in the school
- Involving all relevant adults in the development of a policy and procedures related to child protection
- Role of in-service training to support the teachers'/ adults' engagement with child protection policies and procedures
- Ensuring that information updates are communicated clearly to all teachers/adults, as appropriate
- Ensuring that parents are familiarised with policies and procedures on child protection




9.3.2 What processes are in place in your school and classroom to ensure that children are treated with respect and dignity, especially in relation to personal care?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Supporting children to have a say in decision-making

Standard 9: Health and Welfare

- Ensuring that children's rights to privacy are respected
- Ensuring that behaviour management processes maintain respect for the dignity and rights of children
 See 1.3  See 5.6
- Ensuring that all complaints are dealt with sensitively and responsively
- Ensuring that children are able to trust and confide in teachers/adults working in the school
- Ensuring that adults are never unsupervised/alone with an individual child
- Supporting children's understanding of their own role in respecting the rights of others  See 14.3

9.3.3 What procedures do you have to deal with suspected or actual abuse of children in your school or elsewhere?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Designated person who takes responsibility for issues related to child protection
- Opportunity for the designated person to gain the skills and knowledge necessary for this important role
- Recognition of, and response to, abuse
- Reporting of suspected abuse
- Supporting the child to report abuse
- Provision of support for the child where abuse has been identified
- Liaison with other agencies/individuals who can intervene and/or support you in dealing appropriately with this issue

Component 9.4


The setting is proactive in supporting the development of healthy eating habits in children whilst supporting their enjoyment and appreciation of eating as a positive social experience.

→ Signposts for Reflection

9.4.1 How are healthy eating habits promoted among the children in your classroom?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Informing children about healthy eating/healthy choices
- Raising awareness with parents and families regarding healthy eating
- Sources of information about healthy eating available in the school (e.g., leaflets/posters from Health Services Executive, An Bord Bia, food companies, magazine articles, etc.)
- Offering children experience of different foods
 See 7.3
- Involving children in discussion and debate about healthy eating
- Encouraging parents and families to support your healthy eating policies
- Responding to individual children's dietary needs
- Ensuring that all children have free access to safe drinking water at all times

9.4.2 How is children's enjoyment/appreciation of eating developed as a positive social experience?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Relaxed and unhurried break and snack times
- Sitting with children at snack times to provide positive role models
- Offering children opportunities to take responsibility for organising break/snack times

Component 9.5

The setting has made significant efforts to ensure that children's need for rest, quiet time and privacy is appropriately catered for and respected.



Signposts for Reflection

9.5.1 How can the school/classroom meet the child's need for rest during the school day?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Arrangements for quiet time and relaxation during the daily routine
- Encouraging children to take appropriate breaks to eat, and also to play outdoors
- Flexibility around opportunities for rest in the classroom routine
- Toileting

Component 9.6

The setting has made provision to ensure that children can form and sustain secure relationships with adults, siblings, peers and other children. See 5.1 / 5.2 / 5.3 See 13.1

See 14.2



Signposts for Reflection

9.6.1 How are children supported to form relationships during the first year of school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Opportunities for siblings to meet and interact
- Support from experienced teachers/adults who can provide continuity and consistency
- Supporting children's friendship formations
- Supporting children's relationships with parents and extended families

Component 9.7

The setting ensures that all adults and children are prepared for emergency situations.




Signposts for Reflection

9.7.1 How does your school make provision to deal with emergency situations that require evacuation?

Standard 9: Health and Welfare



Think about: (e.g.)

- Policies and procedures  See 10.2
- Communicating these clearly to all relevant adults and children
- Preparing the children and adults in your school to respond to emergency situations in a calm, stress free manner (e.g., regular fire drill, familiarisation with exits, alarm bells, etc.)
- Accessing external assistance in the case of emergencies



Standard 10: Organisation

Organising and managing resources effectively requires an agreed written philosophy, supported by clearly communicated policies and procedures to guide and determine practice.



Component 10.1

The setting has developed a comprehensive statement or set of statements that clearly describes the vision, values and principles which underpin the nature of the service, and informs all aspects of practice.

Component 10.2

The setting has a range of clearly documented policies and procedures covering all aspects of practice in the setting. These are developed, and shared appropriately, with all stakeholders.

Component 10.3

The management of financial resources within the setting is efficient, effective and ensures the sustainability of the service.

Component 10.4

All adults working in the setting are valued, supported and encouraged in their individual roles and responsibilities.

Component 10.5

A strong ethos of teamwork is evident in the setting.

Component 10.6

The setting keeps relevant and accurate administration records whilst maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

Component 10.7

The setting has clearly documented, well-developed and functioning management structures and operating processes that support the implementation of the setting's philosophy, in the best interests of children, families and staff.

Component 10.1




The setting has developed a comprehensive statement or set of statements that clearly describes the vision, values and principles which underpin the nature of the service, and informs all aspects of practice.

→ Signposts for Reflection

10.1.1 What are the essential elements that need to be included in a philosophy statement for your school?



Think about: (e.g.)


- The view of children and child development that informs and guides your practice  See 7.1
- The core values that teachers/adults working with children should be guided by  See 11.2
- How you define and describe the service you provide for children and families in the infant classes
- Your perspectives on the role of parents and families in the infant classes  See 3.2 / 3.3
- The outcomes of participation in your class for children and their families

Component 10.2

The setting has a range of clearly documented policies and procedures covering all aspects of practice in the setting. These are developed, and shared appropriately, with all stakeholders.

→ Signposts for Reflection

10.2.1 What documented policies and procedures are in place in your school? [See Appendix 1 and Resources](#)

10.2.2 How do you get the views and input of all relevant stakeholders in the development of policies and procedures?  See 4.1




Think about: (e.g.)

- Asking for input on the writing/preparation of your policy and procedures
- The stakeholders involved
- Gathering and translating these views into the policy documents
- Getting agreement on the content

10.2.3 How do your policies and procedure documents inform practice in your school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Familiarity with these documents by all teachers/adults in the setting
- Their use as the basis for routines and everyday practice in the school
- Regular review to ensure they continue to be relevant to practice  See 8.4

Component 10.3

The management of financial resources within the setting is efficient, effective and ensures the sustainability of the service.

→ Signposts for Reflection

10.3.1 What systems does the school and, where relevant, the teacher have in place to make sure that financial records are accurate and well maintained?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Book-keeping, income and expenditure, invoices and receipts
- Salaries, payslips, P60's
- Taxation, revenue returns
- Audited accounts

10.3.2 What processes are used to review the financial situation of your school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Preparation of budgets
- Weekly, quarterly, annual reconciliation of expenses to budget
- Processes to review or amend budgets

10.3.3. How does the school ensure that it has the necessary information and skills to continue to be financially sustainable?



Think about: (e.g.)

- The financial management skills of the principal/manager

- Accessing professional advice and support (e.g., accountant, auditor)
- Opportunities for accessing funding, grant aid, subsidies, fundraising, sponsorship

Component 10.4

All adults working in the setting are valued, supported and encouraged in their individual roles and responsibilities.

→ Signposts for Reflection

10.4.1 What processes are in place to ensure that all teachers/adults have their rights as employees met and safeguarded?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Employer and employee registration, contracts of employment, working hours, holidays, salaries, PAYE, PRSI, PRSA
- Recruitment processes (e.g., job descriptions, interview procedures, etc.)
- Disciplinary/grievance procedures, review

10.4.2 How does the school ensure that all teachers/adults are fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Job descriptions, skills analysis
- Induction processes for new teachers/adults
- Daily/weekly rotas and assignments
- Students' participation and supervision processes
- The role and supervision of volunteers (e.g., parents)


Standard 10: Organisation


- Communications strategies (e.g., team meetings, newsletter, notice board, etc.)

10.4.3 How are teachers/adults working in the school valued and supported sensitively, in a manner designed to motivate and encourage?  See 14.1



Think about: (e.g.)

- Decision-making processes/consultation being inclusive of the views of all involved  See 4.1
- Opportunities to share ideas, views and information on, e.g., staff needs
- Regular opportunities to give and receive feedback on how staff are progressing in their role
- Systems and processes to make sure all teachers/adults can access appropriate support for their role

10.4.4 What opportunities are provided for teachers/adults to plan for and become involved in education, training and continuing professional development?  See 11.4

10.4.5 How does your school acknowledge, value and respond positively to the sharing of new practice approaches or new ideas gained through education and continuing professional development/in-service activities?

10.4.6 How do you develop your school as a learning environment for students/adults?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Promoting action research
- Providing a model of good practice
- Induction and supervision of students
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Communicating with Colleges of Education/training institutions

Component 10.5



A strong ethos of teamwork is evident in the setting.

→ Signposts for Reflection


10.5.1 How is teamwork promoted and encouraged in your school and classroom?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Creating and supporting a culture of teamwork
- Opportunities to participate in team activities
- Sharing information in support of teamwork
- How adult/adult interactions reflect mutual support and trust of each other  See 5.5
- Ensuring rights to confidentiality are respected amongst all teachers/adults in the school  See 12.3
- Holding structured team meetings regularly with an agenda and record-keeping

Component 10.6

The setting keeps relevant and accurate administration records whilst maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.  See 12.3

→ Signposts for Reflection

10.6.1 What types of records are kept in your school and classroom?

Standard 10: Organisation



Think about: (e.g.)

- Children, staff, attendance, accidents/incidents, medication, administration, parental permission for outings and photography, cleaning routines, fire drills, etc.
- Ensuring confidentiality of records, which are sensitive or refer to personal details of children, families and staff
- Storage of records
- Access to records See 15.1
- Sharing of records See 12.2
- Accuracy of records
- Responsibility for record-keeping
- Regular review of records

Component 10.7

The setting has clearly documented, well-developed and functioning management structures and operating processes that support the implementation of the setting's philosophy, in the best interests of children, families and staff.



Signposts for Reflection

- 10.7.1 Is the school's management structure, including the Board of Management, clearly communicated and understood by everyone using the school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Information for new parents
- Induction for teachers/adults in the school
- Middle management structures

- 10.7.2 How does the Board of Management contribute to the effectiveness of the school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Its composition/constitution
- Regularity of meetings
- Meetings are conducted democratically
- Recording of meetings

- 10.7.3 What skills, experience and competencies are necessary for those in positions of management (e.g. Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Special Duties Teacher, members of the Board of Management) to implement the philosophy and policies of the school?
- See 11.1



Think about: (e.g.)

- Selection criteria/processes
- Support/training for the role
- Review of role

- 10.7.4 How do management structures actively promote and support an environment of trust, teamwork and inclusion in the school?

- 10.7.5 What processes are in place to support medium and long term strategic planning for the development of the school?

Standard 11: Professional Practice

Practising in a professional manner requires that individuals have skills, knowledge, values and attitudes appropriate to their role and responsibility within the setting. In addition, it requires regular reflection upon practice and engagement in supported, ongoing professional development.



Component 11.1

All adults working within the setting can provide evidence that they have achieved levels of skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

Component 11.5

Adults demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families.

Component 11.2

All adults subscribe to a set of core principles, which inform all aspects of their practice in early childhood care and education settings.

Component 11.3

The setting supports and promotes regular opportunity for practitioners to reflect upon and review their practice and contribute positively to the development of quality practice in the setting.

Component 11.4

Adults within the setting are encouraged and appropriately resourced to engage in a wide variety of regular and ongoing professional development.

Component 11.1

All adults working within the setting can provide evidence that they have achieved levels of skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

→ Signposts for Reflection

11.1.1 What levels of qualifications have been attained by teachers/adults working in the school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- National Framework for Qualifications [See Appendix 3](#)
- Professional qualification requirements (teachers and other adults in the school)

11.1.2 Can adults working directly with children in the school demonstrate that they have skills and knowledge in core areas appropriate to their role and responsibilities? [See Resources](#)



Think about: (e.g.)

- Special Needs

11.1.3 Are adults working in support positions appropriately qualified? [See Resources](#)

11.1.4 What evidence can adults/teachers provide to demonstrate the levels of skills and knowledge they have achieved?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Formal learning (e.g., qualifications, certified learning, etc.)
- Informal learning (e.g., portfolios of learning, experience, etc.)

Component 11.2

All adults subscribe to a set of core principles, which inform all aspects of their practice in early childhood care and education settings.

→ Signposts for Reflection

11.2.1 What are the key principles which guide and determine practice in your school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Philosophy statement
- Professional code of ethics
- National principles/standards
- National practice organisations' guidelines
- International guidelines
- National legislation and regulations [See 15.1](#)


11.2.2 What processes demonstrate how your principles/vision statement influences practice in your school?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Team processes [See 10.4](#)
- Parental involvement processes [See 3.2](#)
- Consultation processes [See 4.1](#)
- Observation based practice [See 7.6](#)
- Curriculum
- Research processes (e.g., library, internet, etc.)

Component 11.3

The setting supports and promotes regular opportunity for practitioners to reflect upon and review their practice and contribute positively to the development of quality practice in the setting.  See 8.1

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 11.3.1 What processes are in place to allow teachers/other staff time to reflect on their own practice, in order to identify areas where obtaining additional knowledge or changing approaches is necessary?
- 11.3.2 How often is time scheduled for group/staff reflection and discussion about practice in your school?
- 11.3.3 How are teachers/other staff encouraged to share their experience and ideas regarding practice in the school?

 See 16.1

Component 11.4

Adults within the setting are encouraged and appropriately resourced to engage in a wide variety of regular and ongoing professional development.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 11.4.1 In what type of professional development activity do teachers/adults working in the school participate?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Conferences
- Workshops
- Cluster groups
- Third level courses and seminars
- In-service and summer courses
- Online courses and Internet resources
- Compiling or consulting a resource library
- Staff exchanges
- Observation of other adults/teachers
- Mentoring and coaching


- 11.4.2 How are adults/teachers encouraged to engage in professional development?



Think about: (e.g.)

- An achievable, realistic, professional development plan
- Developing, implementing and reviewing this plan

Standard 11: Professional Practice


- In-service training opportunities available to teachers/adults
 - Sessions specific to early childhood or applying the principles of adult learning
 - Opportunity and structures to facilitate mentoring for adults/teachers
 - Induction of new teachers
 - Regular observation of teachers and other adults in the classroom and provision of feedback by someone familiar with the curriculum's goals, objectives and methods of working with children
 - Allocating resources (time, funding, materials) to professional development
 - Incentives to encourage adults/teachers to engage in professional development
 - Support staff (e.g., cook, bus driver, secretary, etc.) and volunteers are provided with appropriate induction and supervision which builds positively on their existing levels of expertise
- 11.4.3 How are cooperative working relationships with other community services used to support the professional development of adults/teachers?  See 16.1 / 16.3





Component 11.5

Adults demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families.

 See 5.3  See 9.6

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 11.5.1 How are individual children's efforts and ideas acknowledged and encouraged?  See 5.3 / 5.4

- 11.5.2 How is this information communicated to parents and families?  See 3.1
- 11.5.3 How are children encouraged to interact with, and turn to, one another for assistance throughout the day?  See 5.1 / 5.2
- 11.5.4 How do teachers/adults respond sensitively to parents' need for information and reassurance on the well-being of their child?  See 3.3  See 12.2

Standard 12: Communication

Communicating effectively in the best interests of the child requires policies, procedures and actions that promote the proactive sharing of knowledge and information among appropriate stakeholders, with respect and confidentiality.



Component 12.1

The setting undertakes the collection of relevant and appropriate information on all children and stores it in a safe manner.

Component 12.2

The setting is proactive in sharing information, as appropriate, in the best interests of the child, with other stakeholders.

Component 12.3

Confidentiality is a feature of the way staff record, store and share information in the best interests of children.

Component 12.4

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and actions regarding communication within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

Component 12.1

The setting undertakes the collection of relevant and appropriate information on all children and stores it in a safe manner.

→ Signposts for Reflection

12.1.1 How do you and your school collect information on individual children (both formally and informally)?

 See 3.1  See 7.6  See 10.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Nature of information sought and stored
- Ensuring that information is recorded correctly and accurately
- Facilities for the safe storage of this information
- Access to this information
- Access to records in an emergency situation
- Ensuring that the information gathered is regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date
- Sharing information (formally and informally) between all relevant stakeholders
- Use of child observation records
- Involving parents

Component 12.2


The setting is proactive in sharing information, as appropriate, in the best interests of the child, with other stakeholders.

→ Signposts for Reflection

12.2.1 How does your school decide who has access to information and how it is shared?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Parental access to information  See 3.1 / 3.3
- Relevant information/stakeholders
- Child's best interests
- Being proactive


12.2.2 How is information shared?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Teachers/adults within the school
- Appropriate stakeholders outside the school
- Regular feedback to parents regarding their child
- Dissemination of information from other relevant organisations to parents  See 16.1
- Provision of information to other organisations and services in the area on the services the school provides
- Promoting easy access for children and families to other services within the community

Standard 12: Communication

- Making information available to persons who speak other languages (e.g., parents whose first language is not the language of your school) or who have disabilities (e.g., parents who are deaf or hard of hearing, parents who are blind or partially sighted, parents who have other disabilities that impact on their ability to receive or understand information, etc.)  See 14.2

Component 12.3

Confidentiality is a feature of the way staff record, store and share information in the best interests of children.

→ Signposts for Reflection

12.3.1 How is information shared in a confidential manner?

 See 14.3




Think about: (e.g.)

- Assurances to parents
- Compliance with relevant data protection legislation
- Consulting with parents regarding consent for the sharing of information about their child
- How the recording and storage system promotes confidentiality
- Secure storage facilities for records

Component 12.4


The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and actions regarding communication within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

→ Signposts for Reflection

12.4.1 What policies within your school relate to the recording and sharing of information in the best interests of children?  See 10.2



Think about: (e.g.)

- How the policies and procedures promote the sharing of knowledge and information in the best interests of the child
- Range of stakeholders involved in the processes of devising, implementing and reviewing policies and procedures  See 4.1
- Implementation of policy
- Documenting procedures
- Ensuring that relevant staff/adults understand and follow these procedures

Standard 13: Transitions

Ensuring continuity of experiences for children requires policies, procedures and practice that promote sensitive management of transitions, consistency in key relationships, liaison within and between settings, the keeping and transfer of relevant information (with parental consent), and the close involvement of parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.



Component 13.1

Smooth transitions are facilitated and promoted through the provision of consistent key relationships within the setting.

Component 13.2

The setting promotes smooth transitions by ensuring there is appropriate liaison within the setting and between settings.

Component 13.3

Parents, children and relevant professionals are consulted and involved in ensuring that transitions are made as smooth as possible for children.

Component 13.4

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and actions regarding transitions within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

Component 13.1




Smooth transitions are facilitated and promoted through the provision of consistent key relationships within the setting.

→ Signposts for Reflection

13.1.1 How does the school support consistent key relationships for children?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Experience of the teacher
- Same teacher throughout the school year  See 5.6
- Ensuring sensitivity to the child's needs at transition times throughout the day  See 5.3
- Providing secure attachment relationships with teachers/adults in the school  See 14.2
- How these secure relationships facilitate the easy transition of children into/within/from the school

Component 13.2




The setting promotes smooth transitions by ensuring there is appropriate liaison within the setting and between settings.

→ Signposts for Reflection

13.2.1 How does the school support the child's transition into/within/from the infant classroom?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Collection of information before the child enters the school  See 12.1
- Sharing this information appropriately within the school  See 12.2
- Making connections with other settings/schools/organisations/individuals to promote smooth transitions  See 16.4
- Providing information and advice to other settings/schools/organisations/individuals when the child is transferring from your classroom





Component 13.3

Parents, children and relevant professionals are consulted and involved in ensuring that transitions are made as smooth as possible for children.

→ Signposts for Reflection

13.3.1 How are parents, children and relevant professionals consulted and involved in children's transitions into/within/from your school?  See 4.1

Think about: (e.g.)

- Enabling staff and parents to meet and discuss issues prior to the enrolment of the child  See 3.1
- Opportunities to visit the school/classroom prior to enrolment
- Introducing children to the school following enrolment
- Facilitating and encouraging parents to spend time in the classroom/school with their child following enrolment  See 3.2
- Accessing information about the child from parents/previous settings
- The provision of information to other settings, with parental consent  See 12.2 / 12.3
- How formal and informal links with other relevant organisations or agencies in the community support transitions  See 16.3

Component 13.4

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and actions regarding transitions within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

→ Signposts for Reflection

13.4.1 How do school policies and procedures support your activities regarding the children's transitions?

 See 10.2

Think about: (e.g.)

- Review and update of policy
- Policy into practice
- Documenting procedures
- Ensuring relevant staff/adults understand and follow these procedures

Standard 14: Identity and Belonging

Promoting positive identities and a strong sense of belonging requires clearly defined policies, procedures and practice that empower every child and adult to develop a confident self- and group-identity, and to have a positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others.



Component 14.1

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and practice regarding the promotion of positive identities and a strong sense of belonging within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

Component 14.2

The setting promotes a confident self- and group-identity through the provision of an appropriate environment, experiences and interactions within the setting.

Component 14.3

The setting promotes positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others through the provision of an appropriate environment, experiences and interactions within the setting.

Component 14.1

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and practice regarding the promotion of positive identities and a strong sense of belonging within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

 See 10.1

→ Signposts for Reflection

14.1.1 What policies and procedures within your school relate to the promotion of positive identities and belonging in the best interests of children?




Think about: (e.g.)

- Inclusion
- Anti-discrimination/anti-bias
- Access
- Bullying
- Behaviour management
- Recruitment


14.1.2 How do these policies and procedures impact upon practice?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Range of stakeholders involved in the process of formulating these policies and procedures  See 4.1
- Processes to review and update these policies and procedures
- Ensuring that everybody understands and follows these policies and procedures

Component 14.2

The setting promotes a confident self- and group-identity through the provision of an appropriate environment, experiences and interactions within the setting.  See 2.5 / 2.6

 See 5.5

→ Signposts for Reflection

14.2.1 How does the school and classroom environment reflect and promote the culture and background of all children?





Think about: (e.g.)

- Images of family/community life (e.g., photos, posters, children's drawings, etc.)
- Toys (e.g., cooking utensils, dress up box, small world toys, etc.)
- Computer software
- Books and materials
- Avoiding the depiction of stereotypical role models and cultural images (e.g., gender, culture, age, ability, etc.)
- Avoiding bias (e.g., gender, colour, race, religious affiliation, family structure, socio-economic status, etc.) within activities






14.2.2 How do the experiences you provide for the child in the school and classroom promote a confident group- and self-identity?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Encouraging teachers/adults to become aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes to diversity
-  See 5.5  See 11.2



Standard 14: Identity and Belonging



- Responsiveness and sensitivity of teachers/adults to the identity and rights of all children within the classroom and school  See 1.1  See 5.2
- Language (e.g., Irish language, first language of the child, materials/information available in the first language of the family, promoting communication between English and non-English speaking children, strategies to encourage children to express themselves verbally and non-verbally, ensuring each child's name is known and pronounced correctly, etc.)  See 5.2
- Strategies in place to support and maintain the first language of the child while she/he is learning an additional language (e.g., training/staff resource library, signs and labels in the first language, contact with families, etc.)
- Raising awareness around different ways of life (e.g., family configuration, types of housing, geographical locations, etc.)
- Celebrations (e.g., birthdays, festivals, important events in the child's life, etc.)
- Encouraging and supporting parents to share aspects of their culture or background with all within the classroom (e.g., food recipes, story-telling, customs and culture, etc.)  See 3.2
- Ensuring that assessment techniques are free from cultural and gender bias  See 7.6

14.2.3 In what ways does classroom and school practice promote high self-esteem among the children?



Think about: (e.g.)


- Security in relationships  See 9.6
- Promoting a sense of belonging
- Preventing discrimination/bullying  See 5.6

- Providing purpose and responsibility for children  See 1.2
- Developing competence
- Ensuring that children can interact with positive adult role models from their own cultural, ethnic or other background within the classroom and school  See 5.5

14.2.4 How do the classroom and school counteract discriminatory words or actions? See 5.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Identifying and empathising with children and adults affected by discrimination and racism
- Encouraging teachers/adults to discuss difficult situations
- Supporting teachers/adults and children to overcome difficult experiences in relation to racism and discrimination
- Provision of ongoing professional development  See 11.4

14.2.5 What elements of school and classroom practice promote respect and understanding of difference in the following areas?





Think about: (e.g.)

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Membership of the Traveller community
- Appearance
- Religion
- Language
- Family background

Standard 14: Identity and Belonging

- Gender
- Age
- Ability

Component 14.3

The setting promotes positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others through the provision of an appropriate environment, experiences and interactions within the setting.  See 2.5 / 2.6  See 5.5

→ Signposts for Reflection

14.3.1 How does the school and classroom environment promote positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others?



Think about: (e.g.)







- Images of family/community life (e.g., photos, posters, children's drawings, etc.)
- Toys (e.g., cooking utensils, dress up box, small world toys, etc.)
- Computer software
- Books and materials
- Avoiding the depiction of stereotypical role models and cultural images (e.g., gender, culture, age, ability, etc.)
- Avoiding bias (e.g., gender, colour, race, religious affiliation, family structure, socio-economic status, etc.) within activities

14.3.2 How do the experiences provided for the child in the school and classroom promote a confident group- and

self-identity?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Encouraging teachers/adults to become aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes to diversity  See 5.5  See 11.2
- Responsiveness and sensitivity of teachers/adults to the identity and rights of all children within the classroom and school  See 1.1  See 5.2
- Language (e.g., Irish language, first language of the child, materials/information available in the first language of the family, promoting communication between English and non-English speaking children, strategies to encourage children to express themselves verbally and non-verbally, ensuring each child's name is known and pronounced correctly, etc.)  See 5.2
- Strategies in place to support and maintain the first language of the child while she/he is learning an additional language (e.g., training/staff resource library, signs and labels in the first language, contact with families, etc.)
- Raising awareness around different ways of life (e.g., family configuration, types of housing, geographical locations, etc.)
- Celebrations (e.g., birthdays, festivals, important events in the child's life, etc.)
- Encouraging and supporting parents to share aspects of their culture or background with all within the setting (e.g., food recipes, story-telling, customs and culture, etc.)  See 3.2
- Ensuring that assessment techniques are free from cultural and gender bias  See 7.6

Standard 14: Identity and Belonging

14.3.3 In what ways does classroom and school practice promote high self-esteem among the children?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Security in relationships See 9.6
- Promoting a sense of belonging
- Preventing discrimination/bullying See 5.6
- Providing purpose and responsibility for children See 1.2
- Developing competence
- Ensuring that children can interact with positive adult role models from their own cultural, ethnic or other background within the school See 5.5

14.3.4 How do the classroom and school counteract discriminatory words or actions? See 5.6



Think about: (e.g.)

- Identifying and empathising with children and adults affected by discrimination and racism
- Encouraging teachers/adults to discuss difficult situations
- Supporting teachers/adults and children to overcome difficult experiences in relation to racism and discrimination
- Provision of ongoing professional development See 11.4

14.3.5 What elements of school and classroom practice promotes respect and understanding of difference in the following areas?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Race
- Ethnicity

- Membership of the Traveller community
- Appearance
- Religion
- Language
- Family Background
- Gender
- Age
- Ability

Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation

Being compliant requires that all relevant regulations and legislative requirements are met or exceeded.



Component 15.1

All relevant legislation and regulations are met or exceeded by the setting.

Component 15.1

All relevant legislation and regulations are met or exceeded by the setting. [See Appendix 2](#)

→ Signposts for Reflection

15.1.1 Is your school compliant with the relevant legislation and regulations listed in Appendix 2?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Employment
- Equality
- Health and safety
- Building and planning
- Data protection

15.1.2 Do you have a named person (or persons) that understands and accepts responsibility for ensuring the service complies with the relevant regulation and legislation included in Appendix 2?

15.1.3 What procedures do you have in place to ensure that the school keeps up-to-date with new legislation and regulations?

Standard 16: Community Involvement

Promoting community involvement requires the establishment of networks and connections evidenced by policies, procedures and actions which extend and support all adult's and children's engagement with the wider community.



Component 16.1

The setting has gathered and made available a comprehensive range of information on resources at local, regional and national levels.

Component 16.2

The setting has established links which have the potential to extend and develop its involvement in the wider community.

Component 16.3

The setting is connected and integrated with the local, regional and national community.

Component 16.4

The setting actively promotes children's citizenship in their local, regional and national community.

Component 16.1

The setting has gathered and made available a comprehensive range of information on resources at local, regional and national levels.




 See 12.2

→ Signposts for Reflection

16.1.1 What information does the school have available on the range of amenities, services and opportunities available at local, regional and national level that can be used to support and complement your goals and objectives?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Professional support (e.g., Education Centres, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, membership organisations [e.g., Principals Support Group, Forbairt Naíonraí Teo, Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education, etc.], Irish Montessori Education Board, Primary Curriculum Support Programme, School Development Planning Initiative, National Education Welfare Board, Colleges of Education, Barnardos, Visiting Teacher for Travellers, Traveller organisations, National Council for Special Education, Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, County Childcare Committees, other early childhood practitioners and services networks, etc.)  See 11.4
- Health services (e.g., doctor, public health clinic/nurse, preschool officers, therapists, dentists, Early Intervention Team, etc.)  See 9.2
- Parent support (e.g., parenting programmes, social clubs/societies, support groups for families of a child with a disability, etc.)  See 3.3

- Other ECCE services (e.g., parent and toddler groups, crèches, childminders, primary schools, after school programmes, etc.)
- Educational/learner support (e.g., preschools, post primary schools, Special Education Needs Officers, adult education opportunities, training organisations, etc.)
- Cultural (e.g., theatres, music centres, museums, art centres, libraries, heritage centres, sports clubs, voluntary groups [e.g., drama, dance, etc.], environmental protection programmes, etc.)
- Social and environmental (e.g., parks and gardens, sports facilities, fire station, Gardaí, open farms, zoo, cinema, etc.)
- Internet/websites

16.1.2 How do you make this information available and raise awareness of these resources?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Use of bulletin boards, information area/website
- Newsletter/parent booklets/e-mail/texting
- Information sharing sessions/open days/evenings
- Outings/field trips/participation in community events

16.1.3 How do you make the community aware of the activities and services the school contributes to supporting children and families?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Home/school/community liaison teacher (if applicable)
- Newsletter
- Website
- Information meetings
- Connection with local media

Component 16.2

The setting has established links which have the potential to extend and develop its involvement in the wider community.

→ Signposts for Reflection

- 16.2.1 How familiar are you with the roles, responsibilities, programmes and services of other organisations involved with children and families in your local community?
- 16.2.2 How do you make use of these amenities and services to enhance the children's/ parent's experience, awareness and appreciation of their own local community?



 See 2.5

 See 7.4

Component 16.3

The setting is connected and integrated with the local, regional and national community.

→ Signposts for Reflection


- 16.3.1 To what extent is the school actively involved in networks at local, regional and national level that support and enhance the achievement of your goals and objectives?
- 16.3.2 What partnerships and professional relationships have been developed with community organisations, services and other professionals?
- 16.3.3 What resources and amenities in your local community do you use regularly to enrich and enhance children's experiences in your class and engagement with their environment?  See 7.4  See 14.2 / 14.3



Think about: (e.g.)

- The natural environment (e.g., fields, beach, woods, mountains, etc.)
- Park, swimming pool, sports grounds
- Cinema, theatre, library
- Supermarket, post office, florists

Component 16.4

The setting actively promotes children's citizenship in their local, regional and national community.  See 14.2 / 14.3




→ Signposts for Reflection

- 16.4.1 How do you try to ensure that infant class activities are regularly coordinated with other schools, community agencies/services?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Transitions policy  See 13.2
- Residents' Associations
- Community initiatives (e.g., arts centres, youth groups, tidy towns, retirement homes, etc.)
- Sports groups




- 16.4.2 How do you enable children to be present/participate in events and activities within the community?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Outings, field trips
- Participation in community events (e.g., market day, school fairs, St. Patrick's Day parade, etc.)

Standard 16: Community Involvement

- Facilitating visits to the setting by representatives of a variety of community resources (e.g., Garda, fire officer, shopkeeper, librarian, artist, storyteller, etc.)
 See 3.2  See 14.2
- Involving children in partnerships with other services (e.g., visiting the local retirement home, fundraising for animal shelter, ecological projects, etc.)
- Integrating local knowledge, environmental and cultural activities into the curriculum  See 7.3



Resources section

Introduction

This section contains various resources to support you in working with *Síolta*. These include information sources such as libraries, websites and a variety of publications. Where appropriate, we have linked these resources to the Standards for which they have most relevance.

Every effort has been made to ensure that all the references listed are current and easily available. Please bear in mind that this list of resources is not exhaustive and you may find others in the course of your own work. We would appreciate your feedback on the resources listed here and suggestions for inclusion in future editions of *Síolta*.

Sources of information

Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education Library
St. Patrick's College
Drumcondra
Dublin 9

Tel: 01 8842110
Fax: 01 8842111
Email: early.childhood@spd.dcu.ie
Website: www.cecde.ie
www.siolta.ie

Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centres
Christchurch Square
Dublin 8

Tel: 01 4549699
Fax: 01 4530300
Email: ncrc@barnardos.ie
Website: www.barnardos.ie

County Childcare Committees' Libraries

ECCE Organisations

Barnardos

Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

Tel: 01 4530355

Email: info@barnardos.ie

Website: www.barnardos.ie

Border Counties Childcare Network

Unit 10d, M:TEK Building

Knockaconny

Armagh Road

Monaghan

Tel: 047 72469

Email: bccn@eircom.net

Website: www.bccn.net

Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education

Gate Lodge

St. Patrick's College

Drumcondra

Dublin 9

Tel: 01 8842110

Fax: 01 8842111

Email: early.childhood@spd.dcu.ie

Website: www.cecde.ie

Childminding Ireland

Wicklow Enterprise Park

The Murrough

Wicklow Town

Tel: 0404 64007

Fax: 0404 64008

Email: info@childminding.ie

Website: www.childmindingireland.ie

Children in Hospital Ireland

Carmichael Centre

Coleraine House

Coleraine Street

Dublin 7

Tel: 01 8780448

Email: info@childreninhospital.ie

Website: www.childreninhospital.ie

Forbairt Naíonraí Teo

7 Merrion Square

Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6398442/9

Fax: 01 6398401

Email: forbairtnaionrai@eircom.net

Irish National Teachers' Organisation

35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8047700

Fax: 01 8722462

Email: info@into.ie

Website: www.into.ie

IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation

Unit 4, Broomhill Business Complex

Broomhill Road, Tallaght

Dublin 24

Tel: 01 4630010

Email: info@ippa.ie

Website: www.ippa.ie

National Children's Nurseries Association

Unit 12, Bluebell Business Park

Old Naas Road, Bluebell

Dublin 12

Tel: 01 4601138

Email: info@ncna.net

Website: www.ncna.net

Resources

St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland

1-3 Callaghan's Lane
George's Place
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin
Tel: 01 2805705
Fax: 01 2805705
Email: snmt@eircom.net
Website: www.snmmta.com

Websites of Interest

Standard(s)

An Garda Síochána: www.garda.ie/angarda/stations.html	15,16
Barnardos: www.barnardos.ie	
CECDE: www.cecde.ie	
Children's Rights Alliance: www.childrensrights.ie/index.php	1
Government of Ireland website: www.irlgov.ie	15
Irish Public Libraries: www.library.ie/public/index.shtml	16
Irish Statute Book: www.irishstatutebook.ie/front.html	15
Oasis – an Irish eGovernment website developed by Comhairle: www.oasis.gov.ie	15
Ombudsman for Children: www.oco.ie	1
Parents in Education (University of Dundee): www.dundee.ac.uk/fedsoc/parentsineducation/	3
Rollercoaster: www.rollercoaster.ie	3
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm	1
Please check the Online Resources section of our website for a more comprehensive list of related websites – www.cecde.ie	

Publications of Interest

	Standard(s)	Standard(s)
Border Counties Childcare Network (2002). <i>Out Door Play - Design and Benefits</i> . Monaghan: Border Counties Childcare Network.	6	
Brennan, C. (Ed.) (2004). <i>Power of Play – A Play Curriculum in Action</i> . Dublin: IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation.	6	
Bruce, T. and Meggitt, C. (2002). <i>Child Care and Education</i> . London: Hodder and Stoughton.		
Byrne, M. (2003). <i>A Guide to Developing Policies and Procedures in a Childcare Setting</i> . Dublin: Area Development Management.		
http://www.adm.ie/Pages/cHILDCARE/NEWEST/PandPpdf.pdf	10	
Byrne, M. (2005). <i>Personnel Practice in Early Years Services - A Guide</i> . Dublin: Barnardos.	10	
Childminding Ireland (No Date). <i>Health and Safety, Hygiene and Nutrition - A Guide to Good Practice for Childminders</i> . Wicklow: Childminding Ireland.		
http://www.childminding.ie/publications/health%20and%20safety.rtf	9	
Children’s Rights Alliance (No Date). <i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> . Dublin: Children’s Rights Alliance (Video).	1	
Conaty, C. (2002). <i>Including All: Home, School and Community United in Education</i> . Dublin: Veritas Publications.	12	
Department of Education and Science (1998). <i>Education Act, 1998</i> . Dublin: The Stationary Office.	10	
Department of Education and Science (1999). <i>White Paper on Early Childhood Education – Ready to Learn</i> . Dublin: The Stationary Office.		
Department of Education and Science (2001). <i>Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures</i> . Dublin: The Stationary Office.	9	
		Department of Education and Science (2003). <i>Looking at our School: An Aid to Self-evaluation in Primary Schools</i> . Dublin: Department of Education and Science.
		7
		Department of Health and Children (1999). <i>Children First : National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children</i> . Dublin: The Stationary Office.
		9
		Department of Health and Children (1999). <i>Our Duty to Care: The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People</i> . Dublin: The Stationary Office.
		9
		Department of Health and Children (2000). <i>The National Children’s Strategy: Our Children - Their Lives</i> . Dublin: The Stationary Office.
		1
		Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2002). <i>Quality Childcare and Lifelong Learning; Model Framework for Education, Training and Qualifications for Early Childhood Practitioners in Ireland</i> . Dublin: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
		11
		Doherty, S. (2003). <i>National Directory of Childcare and Social Care Courses 2003/2004</i> . Limerick: Barnardos’ National Children’s Resource Centre.
		11
		Donohoe, J. and Gaynor, F. (2003). <i>Education and Care in the Early Years: An Irish Perspective</i> . Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd.
		Fabian, H. (2002). <i>Children Starting School: A Guide to Successful Transitions and Transfers for Teachers and Assistants</i> . London: David Fulton Publishers.
		13
		Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A. (2002). <i>Transitions in the Early Years : Debating Continuity and Progression for Children in Early Education</i> . London: RoutledgeFalmer.
		13
		French, G. (2003). <i>Supporting Quality – Second Edition</i> . Dublin: Barnardos.
		2, 3, 10, 11, 15,

Resources

	Standard(s)		Standard(s)
Hayes, N. (2002). <i>Children's Rights - Whose Right? A Review of Child Policy Development in Ireland</i> . Dublin: The Policy Institute.	1	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2005). <i>Intercultural Education in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools</i> . Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.	3, 14
Health Promotion Unit (2004). <i>Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services</i> . Dublin: Health Promotion Unit.	2, 9	National Parents' Council Primary (2004). <i>Working Effectively as a Parent Association - Guidelines for Parents Associations</i> . Dublin: National Parents Council Primary.	16
Hyson, M. (Ed.) (2003). <i>Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC Standards for Programs</i> . Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.	11	NIPPA (No Date). <i>I Want to Play - Practical Ideas to use at Home with Young Children</i> . Belfast: NIPPA.	6
Larkin, M., Malee, K. and O'Grady, D. (2000). <i>A Guide to Quality Practice in Pre-School Services</i> . Galway: Western Health Board.	2, 3, 6, 9	Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Clarke, P. (2001). <i>Supporting Identity, Diversity and Language in Early Years</i> . Buckingham: Open University Press.	3
Murray, C. and O'Doherty, A. (2001). <i>'Éist' : Respecting Diversity in Early Childhood Care, Education and Training</i> . Dublin: Pavee Point.	3, 14		
National Children's Nurseries Association (2002). <i>We Like This Place.... Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities</i> . Dublin: National Children's Nurseries Association. http://www.adm.ie/Pages/cHILDCARE/NEWEST/We%20like%20this%20placedoc.pdf	2		
National Children's Nurseries Association (2003). <i>Centre for Excellence: Self Evaluation Profile</i> . Dublin: National Children's Nurseries Association.	2, 3, 9, 10, 11		
National Children's Office (2004). <i>Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy</i> . Dublin: National Children's Office.	6		
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1999). <i>Primary School Curriculum - Your Child's Learning : Guidelines for Parents</i> . Dublin: The Stationery Office. http://www.ncca.ie/j/pdf/parentsEng.pdf	3, 7		
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2004). <i>Towards a Framework for Early Learning</i> . Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.	7		
		For more complete lists of material on any of the Standards, please contact the libraries listed at the beginning of this document.	

Appendix 1

Sample Policies and Procedures¹

This is a sample list of policies and procedures to be used as a guide. It is, however, the responsibility of each school to determine its own relevant policies and procedures.

Overarching Statements

- Ethos/Philosophy
- Mission Statement
- Aims and Objectives
- Principles

Health and Safety

- Child protection
- Child protection reporting procedure
- Anti-bullying
- Equal opportunities
- Illness
- Medication
- Exclusions
- Food/nutrition
- Outings
- Resting
- Child collection
- Security
- Areas to which the child/children have access

- Sun protection
- Accidents, incidents and injuries
- Hygiene
- Disaster/fire plan
- First Aid
- Non-smoking
- Visits to school by medical staff
- Safe work environment
- Spillages
- Toilet time
- Head lice
- Food hygiene/health and safety
- Waste disposal
- Furniture/fittings/equipment
- Premises
- Outside space
- Violence
- HIV/AIDS
- Hepatitis

Child Welfare

- Children's rights
- Children's participation
- Programmes (e.g., Walk Tall)
- Equal opportunities and social justice

¹The CECDE wishes to gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Barnardos in the compilation of this list.

Appendices

- Special needs
- Language
- Positive approaches to behaviour
- Settling in/distressed children
- Clothing
- Items from home
- Biting
- Television/Video/DVD/Internet
- Class size
- Spiritual, cultural, moral and social values

Curriculum

- Planning
- Adult/child interaction
- Greetings and departures
- Transitions
- Tidy up time
- Small and large group time
- Outside time
- Planning for observation
- Principles of assessment
- Effective record keeping/report writing

Partnership with Families and Liaison

- Home links/key person (e.g., Home/School/Community Liaison Teacher)
- Confidentiality

- Parental/guardian involvement
- Community links
- Statutory links
- Voluntary links
- Consultation
- Grievance procedure

Human Resources

- Recruitment
- Equal opportunities
- Training
- Staff meetings
- Support and supervision
- Appraisals
- Induction procedure
- Students'/volunteers' guidelines
- Equal employment opportunity
- Grievance and disciplinary procedure
- Accidents and injuries

Administration

- Admissions
- Comments/complaints
- Record keeping
- Withdrawing children
- Insurance
- Financial procedures

Appendix 2

Sample List of Legislation and Regulations

This is a sample list of legislation and regulation to be used as a guide. It is, however, the responsibility of each school to determine its own relevant legislative and regulatory framework.

Education Legislation

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992)
- Education Act (1998)
- Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (1999)
- Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- Our Duty to Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (2002)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- Rules for National Schools (1965) (and subsequent Department of Education and Science Circulars)

Employment Laws

- Income Tax (and Finances) Acts (1967)
- Redundancy Payments Acts (1967-2003)
- Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act (1973-2001)
- Juries Act (1976)
- Protection of Employment Act (1977) and EC (Protection of Employment) Regulations (2000)
- Unfair Dismissals Acts (1977-2001)

- Workers Participation (State Enterprises) Acts (1977-2001)
- Protection of Employees (Employer's Insolvency) Acts (1984-1991)
- Industrial Relations Acts (1990 and 2001)
- Pensions Acts (1990 and 2002)
- Payment of Wages Act (1991)
- Terms of Employment (Information) Acts (1994 and 2001)
- Maternity Protection Acts (1994 and 2004)
- Adoptive Leave Act (1995)
- Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act (1996)
- Organisation of Working Time Act (1997) and Organisation of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations (2001)
- Parental Leave Act (1998)
- Employment Equality Act (1998)
- European Communities (Parental Leave) Regulations (2000)
- Carer's Leave Act (2001)
- Protection of Employees (Part-time Work) Act (2001)
- Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act (2003)
- European Communities (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations (2003)

Appendices

Equality

- Anti-discrimination (Pay) Act (1974)
- Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004
- Equality Act (2004)

Health and Safety

- Infectious Diseases Regulations (1981-2003)
- Fire Services Act (1981)
- EC (Quality of Water intended for Human Consumption) Regulations (1988 and 2003)
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (1989 and 2005)
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations (1993 -2005)
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Miscellaneous Welfare Provisions) Regulations (1995)
- Food Safety Authority Act (1998)
- Protection for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act (1998)
- EC (Official Control of Foodstuffs) Regulation (1998)
- EC Hygiene of Foodstuffs Regulation (2000)
- Public Health (Tobacco) Acts (2002 and 2004)

Building and Planning

- Building Control Act (1990)
- Building Regulations Technical Guidance Documents (1997-2004)
- Building Control Regulations (1997 and 2004)
- Building Regulations (1997-2002)
- Planning and Development Act (2000)

Data Protection

- Freedom of Information Act (1997) and Freedom of Information (Amedment) Act (2003)
- Data Protection Act (1988 and 2003)

Appendix 3: National Framework of Qualifications — Grid of Level Indicators

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
Knowledge Breadth	Elementary knowledge.	Knowledge that is narrow in range.	Knowledge moderately broad in range.	Broad range of knowledge.	Broad range of knowledge.	Specialised knowledge of a broad area.	Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas.	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning.	A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning.	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning.
Knowledge Kind	Demonstrable by recognition or recall.	Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension.	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements.	Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory.	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas.	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory.	Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas.	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s).	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning.	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers.
Know-How & Skill Range	Demonstrate basic practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools.	Demonstrate limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools.	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools.	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools.	Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools.	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools.	Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study.	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity.	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry.	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials.
Know-How & Skill Selectivity	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable.	Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction.	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems.	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems.	Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems.	Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems.	Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes.	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing.	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques.	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge.
Competence Context	Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts.	Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts.	Act within a limited range of contexts.	Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts.	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts.	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts.	Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts.	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts.	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts.
Competence Role	Act in a limited range of roles.	Act in a range of roles under direction.	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogenous groups.	Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy.	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups.	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple complex and heterogeneous groups.	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work.	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups.	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity.	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes.
Competence Learning to Learn	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources.	Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment.	Learn to learn within a managed environment.	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment.	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment.	Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs.	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group.	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically.	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/ professional development.	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.
Competence Insight	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self.	Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self.	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour.	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour.	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour.	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others.	Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others.	Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others.	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them.	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them.

Note: The outcomes at each level include those of all the lower levels in the same sub-strand.
 This 10-level grid of level indicators forms part of the determination of the National Framework of Qualifications under Section 7(a) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999.
Source: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (2003), 'Determinations of the Outline National Framework of Qualifications', Dublin: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.



Infant Classes User Manual

Standard 1: Rights of the Child **1**

Standard 2: Environments **2**

Standard 3: Parents and Families **3**

Standard 4: Consultation **4**

Standard 5: Interactions **5**

Standard 6: Play **6**

Standard 7: Curriculum **7**

Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation **8**

Standard 9: Health and Welfare **9**

Standard 10: Organisation **10**

Standard 11: Professional Practice **11**

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