AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

síolta

The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

Síolta User Manual

Full and Part-time Daycare Settings | Sessional Settings | Infant Classes | Childminding Settings



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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:





The contents of *Síolta* have been designed to assist all those concerned with the provision of quality early education in Ireland to participate in a developmental journey towards the improvement and enrichment of young children's early, and arguably most critical, life experiences.

Síolta has relevance for the work of a wide range of ECEC practitioners irrespective of the context of their practice. Furthermore, it can provide valuable information for other professionals whose work requires them to interact with young children and their families. It is also intended that the information should be of value to parents and families and be of support to them in their role as the primary educators of their children.

It is hoped that Síolta, along with Aistear and the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide will be valuable at many levels in practice situations, for example, as:

- A support for individual professional practice and development;
- A focus for teamwork and team development;
- A tool for management, strategic planning and policy development;
- A common base for the interactions of a varied team of professionals.

This edition of the *Síolta User Manual* replaces previous individual user manuals and is applicable to:

- Full and Part-time Daycare settings
- Sessional settings
- Infant Classes
- Childminding Settings

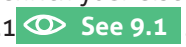
The principles, standards and components contained within this manual are applicable to and for use by the above early years settings.

Introduction

The Síolta **Principles of Quality** closely align with those of Aistear and represent the vision which underpins and provides the context for quality practice in ECEC 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.

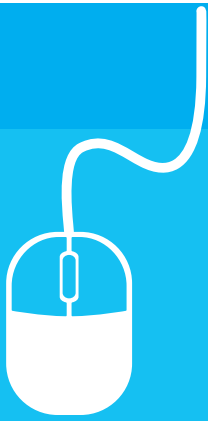
The **Standards and Components of Quality** define quality practice within the Framework. These are the items which will be assessed. The Standards and Components are closely related. Each Standard has a number of associated Components that break down the Standards into 'bite-sized' items. The Standard, 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  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  . 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.

Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum, was developed and published in 2009 since the advent of Síolta. It describes the types of learning and development that are important for children in their early years and offers ideas and suggestions on how these might be nurtured. Síolta and Aistear complement each other. When using Síolta, think about your work with Aistear and how it links with different standards and components. The introduction to the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide summarises connections between the Síolta standards and Aistear (See http://www.ncca.ie/en/Practice-Guide/About/Introduction/AistearSiolta-Practice-Guide-Introduction.pdf). The Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (www.aistearsiolta.ie) provides examples of practice relating to specific standards and offers further prompts and tools for reflection, discussion and action planning.

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.
- Think about what you are currently doing in your setting and how this meets the components and standards.
- Write down examples of good practice you already have in place.
- Record ideas and plans about what you will do to improve your practice.

Principles of *Síolta*

The value of Early Childhood	Children First	Parents
Early childhood is a significant and distinct time in life that must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported in its own right.	**The child's individuality, strengths, rights and needs are central in the provision of quality early childhood experiences.**	**Parents are the primary educators of the child and have a pre-eminent role in promoting her/his well-being, learning and development.**
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.	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 their 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.	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.

Relationships	Equality	Diversity
Responsive, sensitive and reciprocal relationships, which are consistent over time, are essential to the well-being, learning and development of the young child.	**Equality is an essential characteristic of quality early childhood care and education.**	**Quality early childhood settings acknowledge and respect diversity and ensure that all children and families have their individual, personal, cultural and linguistic identity validated.**
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, 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 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.

Environmets	Welfare	Role of the Adult
The physical environment of the young child has a direct impact on her/his well-being, learning and development.	**The safety, welfare and well-being of all children must be protected and promoted in all early childhood environments.**	**The role of the adult in providing quality early childhood experiences is fundamental.**
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.	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.	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.

Teamwork	Pedagogy	Play
The provision of quality early childhood experiences requires cooperation, communication and mutual respect.	**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.**	**Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child.**
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 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 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.


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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
Birth - 18 months

1.1.1 How do you match your care routines to the child's own routine and needs?

1.1.2 How does the child's key worker let other people know about the child's preferences? See 13.1

Think about: (e.g.)

- Identifying/recording/reviewing child's preferences Child's preferences regarding security objects, nap times, things to look at, things which hold her/his attention, etc.
- Appropriate choices a child can make as she/he gets older – e.g., around food and meal times, snacks, choosing between two playthings, etc.

12 - 36 months

1.1.3 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 adult/setting in respecting the child's choices and decisions
- Achieving a balance between child-chosen (directed) and adult-chosen (directed) activity
- Ensuring that the level of choice is appropriate for the child
- Opportunities for the child to plan activities
- Enabling a child with language and communication difficulties to share their plans
- Challenges for the adult 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

$2^1/_2$ - 6 years

1.1.4 1.1.3 ↖

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
Birth - 18 months

1.2.1 How do you ensure that the child is responded to quickly when she/he cries or otherwise indicates that she/he needs attention?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Routines to ensure the child gets regular and frequent individual attention (other than in response to distress or care needs)
- Providing individualised care for each child

→ 12 - 36 months

1.2.2 1.2.1 ↖

1.2.3 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 setting
- 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

→ 2½ - 6 years

1.2.4 1.2.3 ↖

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

General

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 show responsiveness and sensitivity to the child when you are engaged with her/him? See 5.4

→ Birth - 18 months

1.3.3 How do you ensure the child is responded to sensitively, with loving care?

1.3.4 Can you give a description of responding to the child's actions (such as babbling, moving, etc.) with affection and playfulness through nonsense sounds, songs, baby games, hugs, etc.?

→ 12 - 36 months

1.3.5 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

→ 2½ - 6 years
1.3.6 1.3.5 ↖

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

General

2.1.1 How does the layout of the indoor environment meet the needs of children and adults within the setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Safety
- Privacy (e.g., staff room, etc.) See 9.5
- Personal care needs
- Sleep and 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 within the setting? See 1.2

Think about: (e.g.)

- Changing bags
- Buggies
- Toiletries
- Coat hooks at the child's level
- Symbols/pictures as labels
- Cubby holes/shelving for personal belongings

2.1.3 How are visitors directed into and around the setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Group sign outside
- Bell/intercom
- Welcoming notice
- Directional signs (in English, Irish and other languages, as appropriate) See 14.2
- Signage at children's height
- Signs for adults with literacy difficulties and visual impairment

→ Birth - 18 months

2.1.4 What facilities are available for nappy-changing?

2.1.5 What facilities do you have available for feeding young babies?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Privacy for breastfeeding mothers

→ 12 - 36 months

2.1.6 2.1.4-2.1.5 ↖

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

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

V $2\frac{1}{2}$ - 6 years

2.1.9 2.1.7-2.1.8 ↖

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

General

2.2.1 How does the planning of the setting allow for free movement from one area of the setting to another?

2.2.2 If applicable, how do you ensure that the setting (indoors and outdoors) is accessible to all children and adults with special needs? See 14.2

Think about: (e.g.)

- Ramps
- Wide doors
- Handrails
- Changing facilities for all children
- Accessible storage areas
- Parking
- Outdoor/indoor play spaces
- Signage See 2.1
- Visual aids

2.2.3 How are the toilet/changing facilities made accessible to all children and adults within the setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Adequate number of toilets
- Child-friendly toilets
- Separate adult toilet facilities
- Disabled access
- Changing facilities for disabled children
- Bathroom supplies (bins, paper towels, liquid soap dispensers, storage for supplies, toiletries)
- 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, including babies, are able to access natural and homemade materials (e.g., cardboard boxes, pine cones, leaves, homemade play dough, etc.)?

→ 12 - 36 months

2.2.5 How do you ensure that children can use the equipment and materials independently? See 6.2

Think about: (e.g.)

- Storage on low shelves
- Open shelving
- Labelling (e.g., pictures, symbols, etc.)

→ 2½ - 6 years

2.2.6 2.2.5 ↖

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., bottle feeding, 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 setting organised?

See 9.1 / 9.2

Think about: (e.g.)

- Cleaning rotas displayed
- 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
General

2.4.1 What procedures/routines do you have 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 do you ensure that your setting remains free from health hazards?

Think about: (e.g.)

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

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 out of reach/covered
- Floor coverings are secured
- Stair gate is used where necessary
- Choking hazards are removed
- Finger guards on doors and cupboards
- 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 verified to be safe for human consumption?

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

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 Do you have a fully stocked first aid kit that is easily accessed and available in each area of your setting?

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?

→ Birth - 18 months

2.4.10 How do you ensure that there are safe areas for babies outdoors?

→ 12 - 36 months

2.4.11 How do you ensure that there are safe areas for toddlers outdoors?

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
General

2.5.1 How does your setting 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 developing child?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Communication
- Interactions See 5.1 / 5.2 See 5.1 / 5.2
- Collaboration

Birth - 18 months

2.5.3 What range of experiences does the outdoor equipment promote for babies?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Sensory stimulation
- Crawling
- Climbing

12 - 36 months

2.5.4 2.5.3 ↖

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

2.5.6 What range of experiences does the outdoor equipment promote?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Creativity and problem-solving
- Running
- Climbing
- Balancing

- Riding
- Jumping
- Pouring
- Swinging
- Dramatic play
- Block building
- Manipulative play
- Art activities
- Crawling
- Scooting
- Digging and planting

2.5.7 How do you ensure that the child has sufficient space outdoors to foster curiosity and exploration and to allow the flexibility of individual or group play? See 6.6

→ 2½ - 6 years

2.5.8 **2.5.5-2.5.7** ↖

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
General

2.6.1 How do you provide for visual display?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Notice boards
- Home corner (e.g., well-defined from other areas, inviting and appealing, low level furniture [cooker, cooking utensils, fridge, table and chairs, dressing up clothes, books and magazines], equipment reflects children's home lives [dolls, tea-sets], etc.)
- Role play (e.g., hairdressers, post office, Gardaí, teacher, nurse, fire fighter, doctor, shop, restaurant, library, etc.)
- Other special theme/interest areas (e.g., clay, computer area, nature, science, woodwork, cooking, etc.)

2.6.2 How does the environment facilitate and support the development of social activities and interaction? See 5.1

→ Birth - 18 months

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

Think about: (e.g.)

- Floor area (e.g., carpeted section, adequate storage for equipment [e.g., soft toys, baby toys, ball pool, trucks, farm animals, trains, blocks, etc.])
- Book area (e.g., quiet area of the room, natural light, comfortable seating, carpeted sections, cushions, display units, puppets for story-telling, books available in a variety of languages, large books in a variety of formats, system of borrowing, cardboard and other durable books, links to local library, etc.)
- Sensory stimulation 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], wall-mounted mirrors, treasure basket, scented materials, suitable storage, traditional nursery rhymes, etc.)

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

→ 12 - 36 months

2.6.5 What different areas/spaces within the setting are offered to the child?

Think about: (e.g.)

2.6.3 ↖

- 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., daily free 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.)
- Home corner (e.g., well-defined from other areas, inviting and appealing, low level furniture [cooker, cooking utensils, fridge, table and chairs, dressing up clothes, books and magazines], equipment reflects children's home lives [dolls, tea-sets], etc.)
- Role play (e.g., hairdressers, post office, Gardaí, teacher, nurse, fire fighter, doctor, shop, restaurant, library, etc.)
- Other special theme/interest areas (e.g., clay, computer area, nature, science, woodwork, cooking, etc.)

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

→ 2½ - 6 years

2.6.7 2.6.5-2.6.6 ↖

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 setting 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, sleeping mats, 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/repaired when necessary
- How the equipment and materials support the implementation of the curriculum or programme of activities
- Provision of equipment and materials for children with special needs to ensure access to the curriculum/ programme of 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 you ensure that the furniture is at a comfortable height for all children within the setting?

2.7.4 How do you use television/video/DVDs/computers to initiate interest, develop ideas and extend learning?

2.7.5 How do the equiment 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 the kitchen, food preparation and storage area maintained as a safe and hygienic area within the setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Expressed breast milk
- Bottles
- Baby formula and food
- Fridge is clean, well maintained and temperature is correct
- Food and storage cupboards are cool, ventilated, clean and hygienic
- Food is carefully labelled
- Utensils are washed and stored hygienically
- Refuse is stored in containers with closefitting lids and disposed of regularly

Standard 2: Environments

- Accessibility to unsupervised children
- Cooker and kettle guard
- Knives and other sharp objects are out of children's reach
- Safe storage of cleaning materials
- Washable walls and surfaces
- Systems to dispose of body fluids and waste materials

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 Does your setting operate a key worker system to promote effective communication with parents?

3.1.3 How do you disseminate information to parents?

See 12.2

Think about: (e.g.)

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

3.1.4 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 setting

See 14.2

3.1.5 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 setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Opportunities for parents to be involved in the management of the setting
- Opportunities for parents to contribute their skills and resources to the setting 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 setting?
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 setting 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 setting
- Ensuring that parents have read and understood policies and procedures
- Involving parents in compiling policies for the setting 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 do you 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
- Adults 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 setting
- Parents are given an opportunity to have input regarding the policies and procedures of the setting
- Parents are given opportunities to have meetings with staff to discuss their child's development, accomplishments and/or needs/difficulties See 3.1
- All staff participate in annual appraisal of the setting
- 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
- Parents have full representation on advisory, management and policy-making committees See 3.2
- Staff seek input from parents about the curriculum/programme and its relationship to children's development
- 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
- Adults actively create opportunities to involve children in age-appropriate decision-making with regard to the development of the setting 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 adults working in the setting 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 strategies do adults employ to encourage and 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

4.1.4 What opportunities are available to children to make plans and indicate these plans to adults? See 7.3

4.1.5 How do you 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 do you 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 Do you have a policies and procedures handbook devised in consultation with parents, staff, management, and, where appropriate, the children in the setting?

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 design and development of the curriculum/programme of activities within the setting?

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 5.2
Each child receives appropriate support to enable her/him to interact positively with other children.

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 5.5
Interactions between the adults within, and associated with the setting, act as a model of respect, support and partnership for the child.

Component 5.6
There is a clear written policy and associated procedures which underpin interactive practice taking place within the setting.

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
General

5.1.1 How does your planning reflect the child's potential to learn in collaboration with others? See 6.6 See 7.4

→ Birth - 18 months

5.1.2 In your care routines, can you indicate how you show sensitivity towards the child's signals and cues and how you respond appropriately, adequately and consistently?

5.1.3 How do your interactions with the child enhance her/his potential to interact positively with other children?

5.1.4 Describe how you engage the child's interest (including the child with special needs) in objects, in her/his surroundings and in social interactions with others?

→ 12 - 36 months

5.1.5 **5.1.2-5.1.4** ↖

5.1.6 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

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

Think about: (e.g.)

- Siblings/friends/other children coming to play
- Older children 'helping' younger children
- Shared outings

5.1.8 How do you manage group work within your setting?

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

→ 2½ - 6 years

5.1.9 **5.1.6-5.1.8** ↖

Component 5.2

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

→ Signposts for Reflection

General

5.2.1 What kinds of opportunities do you provide which encourage the child to interact with others in peer groups and across the age range in your setting?

5.2.2 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

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

Think about: (e.g.)

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

→ Birth - 18 months

5.2.4 What arrangements do you have in place for the child to have contact with other children in the company of her/his key worker?

See 9.6

→ 12 - 36 months

5.2.5 **5.2.4 ↖**

5.2.6 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 involves 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

→ 2½ - 6 years

5.2.7 **5.2.5-5.2.6 ↖**

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

5.2.9 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
Birth - 18 months

5.3.1 What kind of interactions do you have with the child during your daily care routines?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Warmth
- Security
- Loving atmosphere
- Fun
- Joy
- Cuddling/holding (e.g., comfort, feeding, etc.)

5.3.2 What other opportunities do you create every day to interact verbally and non-verbally with the child?

5.3.3 How do you show the child that you enjoy developing your relationship with her/him through sensitive and responsive interactive play? See 6.6

5.3.4 How do you go about giving the child a strong sense of security in being with you in the setting? See 9.6

→ 12 - 36 months

5.3.5 **5.3.1-5.3.4** ↖

5.3.6 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

5.3.7 How do you use these ongoing opportunities?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Listening
- Eye contact
- 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

5.3.8 In what way can non-verbal interactions show warmth and support?

5.3.9 How can you ensure that the child feels secure with you?

See 9.6

→ 2½ - 6 years

5.3.10 **5.3.5-5.3.9** ↖

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

General

5.4.1 How do you make sure that your interaction with the child lasts for a meaningful length of time?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Child's current interactive capacity
- Child's potential
- Context of interaction
- Adult understanding of the child's use of language, pronunciation, etc.

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.)

- Listener/speaker relationship
- 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?

→ Birth - 18 months

5.4.5 How do you reflect the elements of this Component in your interactions and relationship with the child?

5.4.6 When you are having 'conversations' with the child, how is the listener/speaker relationship developed?

5.4.7 How do your responses to the child reflect the inflections and patterns of adult conversation?

→ 12 - 36 months

5.4.8 **5.4.5-5.4.7** ↖

5.4.9 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.)

5.4.10 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?

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



Think about: (e.g.)

- Volume
- Tone
- Ratio of adult: child talk

5.4.12 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

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

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

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

→ 2½ - 6 years

5.4.16 **5.4.8-5.4.15 ↖**

5.4.17 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

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



Think about: (e.g.)

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

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

5.4.20 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, 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 adults within the setting impact on the child's learning and development?

5.5.4 Are there opportunities for the child to observe 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 your 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

- 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.)

- Discussion
- Promoting empathy
- Understanding consequences
- Conflict resolution
- Understanding emotions
- 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 adults working in the setting and children?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Respect
- Partnership
- Co-operation
- Collaboration

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



Think about: (e.g.)

- Key worker system
- Staff deployment within the setting
- Time management
- Training

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 6.2
When the child is engaged in play/exploration, the equipment and materials provided are freely available and easily accessible to her/him.

Component 6.3
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 6.4
Each learning area and each activity in the setting has plenty of equipment and materials for the child.

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 6.6
he child has opportunities for play/exploration with other children, with participating and supportive adults and on her/his own, as appropriate.

Component 6.7
he child has opportunities for play/exploration with other children, with participating and supportive adults and on her/his own, as 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.

Signposts for Reflection
General

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, etc.)

Birth - 18 months

6.1.2 For very young babies, how do you incorporate play fulactivities into your care routines?

6.1.3 What does play mean for babies and young children?

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
General

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?

Birth - 18 months

6.2.5 How does the child who is not mobile access the available equipment and materials?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Play mats
- Baskets of appropriate toys/materials within reach
- Mobiles of everyday objects See 2.2

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
General

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

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
General

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 practice

- Encouraging the child to recreate and replicate the learning that has taken place in one play area in another
- 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

→ Birth - 18 months

6.5.2 What kinds of sensory stimulation do the child's play opportunities provide?

6.5.3 How are you adding to the learning potential of those opportunities in the way you interact with the child? See 5.3 / 5.5

6.5.4 What open-ended, real world (heuristic) materials, both bought and sourced in the environment, are suitable for the child?

6.5.5 How can the child be enabled to explore the outdoor environment?

→ 12 - 36 months

6.5.6 **6.5.2-6.5.5** ↖

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 it 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

General

6.7.1 How does planning for learning through play accommodate the individual child, setting, 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/ programme implementation undertaken See 7.5

Think about: (e.g.)

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

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/programme 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
General

7.1.1 What is understood by holistic learning and development in your setting?

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 Are there instances in which one or other dimension of the child's development and learning is being emphasised, and can you think of such a situation?

7.1.4 In describing a situation in which you focus on one aspect of development and learning, what possibilities are there for bringing in other aspects of learning and development?

7.1.5 What does the curriculum/programme being implemented in your setting say about play?

See 6.1 / 6.3 / 6.5 / 6.7

→ Birth - 18 months

7.1.6 What provision does the curriculum/programme you are implementing make for children whose experience is primarily supported by adults?

7.1.7 How does your curriculum/programme guide your relationship with the child? **See 5.3 / 5.4**

→ 12 - 36 months

7.1.8 **7.1.6-7.1.7**

7.1.9 Is the curriculum/programme you are implementing likely to result in you approaching the child's learning and development from a 'subject' based perspective or from a 'thematic' perspective?

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

→ 2½ - 6 years

7.1.11 **7.1.8-7.1.10** ↖

Component 7.2

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

Signposts for Reflection

7.2.1 How does the curriculum/programme support your setting's aims and objectives for development and learning?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Sources for the curriculum/programme you use
- How the curriculum/programme developed
- The research base of the curriculum/programme being implemented
- Content of the literature/references used in the development of the curriculum/programme
- Predominant influences on the curriculum/programme in use in your setting
- Theories of child development most influential in the curriculum/programme you use
- How principles of child-development incorporated into the curriculum/programme support you in considering the child's learning and development as a holistic process See 7.1
- Implementation of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (2009)

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
General

7.3.1 How is the daily routine, including care routines, used to implement the curriculum/programme? See 5.3 See 6.1

Think about: (e.g.)

- Arrival in the morning
- 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/programme 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/programme 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 of the curriculum/programme?

Think about: (e.g.)

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

→ 12 - 36 months

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 What aspects of child learning and development are being addressed in this activity?

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

Think about: (e.g.)

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

→ 2 1/2 - 6 years

7.3.8 7.3.5-7.3.7 ↖

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
General

7.4.1 What strategies do you use in implementing the curriculum/programme? 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 How are you pro-active in becoming involved in the child's learning and development through curriculum/programme implementation? See 6.6

Think about: (e.g.)

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

7.4.3 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

7.4.4 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

7.4.5 What is the range of relationships within the setting 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 does the curriculum/programme documentation support implementation?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Type of documentation
- Ensuring the documentation is the most up-to-date available
- Making all of the documentation available to everyone who is interacting with the child in the setting

- Frequent usage of the documentation
- Additional documentation you produce yourself to support curriculum/programme implementation
  See 6.7
- How often you document your curriculum/programme planning (e.g., year plan; season/term plan; monthly/fortnightly/weekly/daily plan, etc.)

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.

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
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

7.6.3 How do you acknowledge and validate cultural How do you acknowledge and validate cultural experiences and knowledge in the curriculum/programme? 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 *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 setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

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

Component 8.3

The setting has established and documented review structures.

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

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 setting

Think about: (e.g.)

- Policies and procedures
- Informing parents and families
- Informing other relevant adults (e.g., volunteers, students, 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 adults in your setting qualified to administer first aid
- Adequate number of fully-equipped first aid boxes available and easily accessible
- Briefing of 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 setting
- 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 setting, 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 setting 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 adults working in the setting opportunities to participate in training on health promotion matters
- Incorporating health promotion into the curriculum/programme of activities for children
- Training regarding child protection, food-handling, 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, brushing teeth, cleaning after toilet use, nose blowing, waste disposal, etc.
- Developing self-management skills through the curriculum/programme (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, wearing indoor shoes, etc.)

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

Think about: (e.g.)

- Modelling good hygiene practice
- Following safety procedures
- Suitable outdoor clothing, application of sunscreen
- No smoking
- Being attentive and responsive regarding children's routine personal hygiene needs (e.g., nappy-changing, 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 setting ensure that all 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 adults working in the setting
- Involving all relevant adults in the development of a policy and procedures related to child protection
- Role of in-service training to support the adults' engagement with child protection policies and procedures
- Ensuring that information updates are communicated clearly to all 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 setting 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
- 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 adults working in your setting
- 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 setting 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

General

9.4.1 How does your setting promote the development of healthy eating habits in children?

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 setting (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 does your setting make sure that:

Think about: (e.g.)

- It complies with the Department of Health and Children's *'Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Preschools?'*
- Written daily menus are available to parents?
- Meals and snacks are available with consideration to the individual dietary needs of the child?
- Food portions are adjusted according to the age of the children and also in a manner that affords age-appropriate decision-making to the child?
- In the daily menu, food from all food groups are provided?
- Food texture is adjusted according to the age of the child?
- Food served is attractive and appetising to the child?
- The setting ensures that children with special dietary requirements, allergies or food forbidden for any reason (e.g., religious custom) are catered for?
- All staff have appropriate training in food-handling?
- A HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) programme is in operation?

9.4.3 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

→ Birth - 18 months

9.4.4 How are the specific needs of babies provided for within the setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- How do you make provision for breastfeeding?
- Is feeding based on individual nutritional needs and feeding schedules, and not by rota?
- Are there adequate storage and preparation areas for bottles?
- Are babies always held and given one-to-one attention whilst being bottle fed?
- What processes do you have in place to support the weaning of babies?
- How do you encourage independence in feeding?
- How is seating arranged to support social interaction with others?

→ 12 - 36 months

9.4.5 9.4.4 ↖

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

General

9.5.1 How do you make appropriate space available for quiet time and relaxation, away from the other activities in your setting?

9.5.2 How do you incorporate flexibility around opportunities for rest into the daily routine of children in your setting?

9.5.3 How do you encourage children to take appropriate rest breaks?

→ Birth - 18 months

9.5.4 Have all babies under 12 months a cot with a safety mattress and individual linen in a quiet, darkened, warm area?

9.5.5 What precautions have you in place for the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)?

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 in your setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Opportunities for siblings to meet and interact
- Support from experienced adults who can provide continuity and consistency
- Supporting children's friendship formations
- Supporting children's relationships with parents and extended families
- Operation of a key worker system

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 setting make provision to deal with emergency situations that require evacuation?

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 setting 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
General

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

Think about: (e.g.)

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

10.1.2 What are the outcomes of participation in your service 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 setting?

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 setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Familiarity with these documents by all adults in the setting
- Their use as the basis for routines and everyday practice in the setting
- 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 do you 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 do you use to review the financial situation of your setting?

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 do you make sure that you have the necessary information and skills to ensure that your setting continues to be financially sustainable?

Think about: (e.g.)

- The financial management skills of the operator/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 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 do you ensure that all adults working in the setting are fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities?

Think about: (e.g.)

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

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

10.4.3 How are adults working in the setting 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/adults are progressing in their role
- Systems and processes to make sure all adults can access appropriate support for their role

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

10.4.5 How does your setting 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 setting 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 training providers

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 setting?

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 adults in the setting See 12.3
- Holding structured team meetings regularly with 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 setting?

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 there a defined management structure, which is clearly communicated and understood by everyone using the setting?

10.7.2 If appropriate, is there a management committee?

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 to implement the philosophy and policies of the setting? See 11.1

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

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

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 11.2

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 11.5

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

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 adults working in the setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- National Framework for Qualifications level indicators
- Professional qualification requirements

11.1.2 Can adults working directly with children in the setting demonstrate that they have skills and knowledge in core areas appropriate to their role and responsibilities?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Special needs

11.1.3 Are those in managerial roles qualified to at least Bachelor degree level or equivalent?

11.1.4 Are adults working in autonomous or supervisory positions qualified to at least Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) Level 6 or equivalent?

11.1.5 Are all adults included for the purposes of calculating ratios of adults to children in the setting qualified to FETAC Level 5 or equivalent?

11.1.6 Are all other adults who are unqualified, or in the process of acquiring training and qualifications, treated as supernumerary in the setting?

11.1.7 Are adults working in support positions appropriately qualified?

11.1.8 What evidence can adults 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 setting

Think about: (e.g.)

- Philosophy statement
- Professional code of ethics
- Voluntary code of practice
- 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 setting?

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/programme
- 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 practitioners 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 in your setting for group reflection and discussion about practice?

11.3.3 How are practitioners encouraged to share their experience and ideas regarding practice in the setting?

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 adults working in the setting participate?

Think about: (e.g.)

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

11.4.2 How are practitioners encouraged to engage in professional development?

Think about: (e.g.)

- An achievable, realistic, professional development plan
- Developing, implementing and reviewing this plan
- Levels of in-service training sessions available

- Sessions specific to early childhood or applying the principles of adult learning
- Opportunity and structures to facilitate mentoring for practitioners
- Incentives to encourage practitioners to engage in professional development
- Allocating resources (time, funding, materials) to 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 To what degree are practitioners regularly observed in the setting and provided with feedback by someone familiar with the curriculum's/programme's goals, objectives and methods of working with children?

11.4.4 How are cooperative working relationships with other community services used to support professional development of practitioners? 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 do you communicate this information to parents and families? See 3.1

11.5.3 How do adults encourage children to interact with, and turn to, one another for assistance throughout the day? See 5.1 / 5.2

11.5.4 How do 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.

12



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
General

12.1.1 How does your setting 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 do you 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.)

- Adults within the setting
- Appropriate stakeholders outside the setting
- 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 setting provides
- Promoting easy access for children and families to other services within the community
- Making information available to persons who speak other languages (e.g., parents whose first language is not the language of your setting) 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 setting 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.



13

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

General

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

Think about: (e.g.)

- Experience of the adults
- Same adults throughout the 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 adults in the setting See 14.2
- How these secure relationships facilitate the easy transition of children into/within/from the setting
- Key Worker system in operation

➔ Birth - 18 months

13.1.2 How do you ensure the development of a key relationship for babies within the setting?

13.1.3 How do you manage the baby's transition into your setting?

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 do you support the child's transition into/within/from your setting?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Collection of information before the child enters the setting See 12.1
- Sharing this information appropriately within the setting 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 setting

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 setting? 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 setting prior to enrolment
- Introducing children to the setting following enrolment
- Facilitating and encouraging parents to spend time in the setting 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 your 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.

14



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 setting 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 environment reflect and promote the culture and background of all children present in the setting?

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 promote a confident group- and self-identity?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Encouraging staff to become aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes to diversity within the setting See 5.5 See 11.2

- Responsiveness and sensitivity of adults to the identity and rights of all children within the setting See 5.2 See 1.1
- 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

14.2.3 In what ways does the setting promote high self-esteem

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 setting See 5.5

14.2.4 How does the setting 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 staff to discuss difficult situations
- Supporting 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 your 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
- 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 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 ongoing experiences of the child within the setting promote positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Encouraging staff to become aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes to diversity within the setting
  See 5.5 See 11.2
- Responsiveness and sensitivity of adults to the identity and rights of all children within the setting
  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

14.3.3 In what ways does the setting promote high self-esteem among the children?



Think about: (e.g.)

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

14.3.4 How does the setting counteract discriminatory words or actions?



Think about: (e.g.)

- Identifying and empathising with children and adults affected by discrimination and racism
- Encouraging staff to discuss difficult situations
- Supporting 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 your 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 exceededby the setting.

Component 15.1

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

→ Signposts for Reflection

15.1.1 Is your service compliant with relevant legislation and regulations?

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 responsiblity for ensuring the service complies with relevant legislation and regulations?

15.1.3 What procedures do you have in place to ensure that the setting 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 adults' and children's engagement with the wider community.

16



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

See 12.2

→ Signposts for Reflection

16.1.1 What information do you 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 the goals and objectives of your service?

Think about: (e.g.)

- Professional support (e.g., County Childcare Committees, trade unions, Traveller organisations, Barnardos, membership organisations [e.g., National Children's Nurseries Association, Forbairt Naíonraí Teo, Irish Montessori Education Board), other early childhood practitioners and services networks (e.g., Border Counties Childcare Network), 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, post-primary schools and colleges, etc.)
- Educational/learner support (e.g., schools, 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.], 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
- Information sharing sessions/evenings in the setting
- Outings/field trips/participation in community events

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

Think about: (e.g.)

- 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 your setting 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 setting 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 setting activities are regularly coordinated with community agencies and/or local schools?

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 babies and young 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.)

- 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/programme

See 7.3

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.


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Le ceannach díreach ó
FOILSEACHÁIN RIALTAIS,
52 FAICHE STIABHNA, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
(Teil: 01 – 6476834 nó 1890 213434; Fax 01 – 6476843)
nó trí aon díoltóir leabhar.

To be purchased from
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS
52 ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN 2.
(Tel: 01 – 6476834 or 1890 213434; Fax: 01 – 6476843)
or through any bookseller.

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

1st Edition published by Early Years Education Policy Unit

Department of Education and Skills
Tel: 01 647 3050

E-mail: earlychildhood@education.gov.ie

www.siolta.ie
www.education.gov.ie
www.dcya.ie
www.aistearsiolta.ie

Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education
ISBN: 978-1-4064-2941-1

Síolta – User Manual
ISBN: 978-1-4064-2941-1

© 2010 Department of Education and Skills

1st Edition published by Early Years Education Policy Unit
© 2017 Department of Education and Skills

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Funded by the Irish Government and part financed by the European Union under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

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ISBN 978-1-4064-2941-1

€5.00