

Aistear

Aistear is the Irish word for journey. As the name implies, education is a lifelong journey that can take many different routes. Aistear is designed to support Parents and Teachers in planning for and providing enriching, challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities for children. The aim of Aistear is to help every child to grow and develop as a competent and confident learner. Ultimately, according to Aistear, early childhood care and education must support a child's sense of: well-being, identity and belonging, exploring and thinking and communicating. These are the 4 main goals of Aistear and it proposes that they are achieved through the contexts of play and supported by caring, learning relationships with adults and peers. In this way it makes very strong links between care and education in the early years and firmly establishes the child's right to a safe, stimulating, nurturing and play-based environment.

Junior and Senior Infants in Scoil Barra Naofa experience Aistear using themes such as 'The Doctor', 'The Shop', 'The Post Office' or 'The Farm'.

Playing helps your young child to:

- **Build relationships** - by being with others; sharing and taking turns; solving problems and negotiating like when two children or more want the same toy; being a leader and a follower; finding out how to join in play with others; learning about others' feelings.
- **Be creative** - when he/she makes outfits from old clothes; builds an apartment block out of junk material; makes a bowl from homemade play-dough and paints and decorates it with glitter for a sparkly look.
- **Read, write and learn about numbers** - when he/she 'reads' and tells stories; makes menus for the café or information booklets, posters and prescriptions for the veterinary clinic; pays for things in the pretend shop; writes down the scores of the matches for the news report; measures how many blocks are needed to build the road.
- **Think** - when a plan has to be made so the toy tractor can drive over the slippery mud; when deciding what items can be used to make a den; when figuring out how a sloped roof can be made and attached to the house of blocks.
- **Use language** - when he/she sings; says rhymes; tells jokes; takes on different roles in pretend play such as the hairdresser, the waiter, the security guard, or the dentist; explains the rules of a game.
- **Use small and large muscles** - when he/she builds an airport with Lego; cuts with scissors; draws pictures; makes things from play-dough; runs; jumps; plays ball games; climbs; cycles; skips; threads beads onto wool; makes chains from daisy flowers.

Playing with your young child

Here are some tips which you might find useful as a parent.

- Give your child **time** to play every day.
- Provide **things** for your child to play with. Recycled materials like boxes, household items and old clothes are often more fun than bought toys and equipment, and they cost less.
- **Join in** the play. Take on a role, make jokes and be **playful**.
- Make **space** for play. As your child gets older he/she will probably spend more time playing with a particular thing or in a particular role, so having a place where your child can leave items and continue playing with them the next day is important.
- Show that you **value play** whether it's at home or in school.

The following are Tip Sheets for Play with Literacy:

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Primary/Tip_Sheets_for_Parents/Tipsheet_for_parents_literacy.pdf

The following is a Tip Sheet for Play with Numeracy:

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Primary/Infant_classes_Maths_resources/Helping_your_young_child_with_maths.pdf

This is a link to what the children are learning in Infant Classes in Maths. and the 12 accompanying videos give an insight into the methods used in teaching the various concepts.

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Primary/Infant_classes_Maths_resources/Infant_Classes_Maths_Resources.html