

	<h2>Activity: Exploring Aistear's learning goals</h2>
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Purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To introduce participants to how <i>Aistear</i> describes children's learning and development through its themes, aims and learning goals. 2. To help participants become familiar with what children learn through <i>Aistear's</i> learning goals.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Cut-outs' of the aims and learning goals in each of <i>Aistear's</i> four themes (available in the <i>Aistear</i> Toolkit at www.ncca.ie/aistear toolkit) ▪ Envelopes for packing and presenting the 'cut-outs'. ▪ Copies of each theme's aims and learning goals (pages 17, 26, 35, and 44 in <i>Aistear, Principles and themes</i>).
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make copies of each theme's aims and 12 of its 24 learning goals. If possible, use coloured paper/card corresponding to the colours of <i>Aistear's</i> themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Well-being</i> - purple - <i>Identity and Belonging</i> - red - <i>Communicating</i> - yellow - <i>Exploring and Thinking</i> - green. <p>If this isn't possible each of the aims and learning goals has the theme printed on it in small letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cut up the aims and learning goals as separate pieces of paper/card. ▪ Put the 4 aims and 12 learning goals from each theme into an envelope. (3 of the 6 learning goals from each aim have been chosen to reduce the time required for the activity.) ▪ Label each envelop with the relevant theme. ▪ Make copies of pages 17, 26, 35, and 44 in <i>Aistear, Principles and themes</i> – one copy for each group of participants.
Doing the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4 people and invite each group to work on a different theme. If there are more than 4 groups the fifth group can take the first theme (<i>Well-being</i>) and so on. 2. Explain that <i>Aistear</i> uses 4 interconnected themes to describe children's early learning and development. The themes are <i>Well-being</i>, <i>Identity and Belonging</i>, <i>Communicating</i>, and <i>Exploring and Thinking</i>. 3. Indicate that each theme has 4 aims and each aim has 6 broad learning goals. These describe the dispositions, skills, attitudes and

	<p>values, knowledge and understanding that children learn through the theme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Give an envelope to each group. 5. Ask each group to decide which 3 learning goals go with each aim in that particular theme. Explain that while each aim has 6 learning goals, we are working with 3 during the activity. (10 minutes) 6. When the activity is completed, invite each group to check their responses using a copy of the aims and learning goals in their relevant theme. (3 minutes) 7. Take feedback and highlight the interconnectedness of the four themes.
Approximate time required	25 minutes

Activity: Exploring *Aistear's* learning goals

Decide which 3 learning goals go with each of the 4 aims in your assigned theme (*Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communicating; Exploring and Thinking*).

The 4 aims and 12 of the 24 learning goals in your theme are contained in the envelope. (The aims are numbered 1 – 4. The learning goals are not numbered).

Theme: *Well-being* – Aims

Well-being

Aim 1: Children will be strong psychologically and socially.

Well-being

Aim 2: Children will be as healthy and fit as they can be.

Well-being

Aim 3: Children will be creative and spiritual.

Well-being

Aim 4: Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life.

Theme: *Well-being* – Learning goals

Well-being

Children will make strong attachments and develop warm and supportive relationships with family, peers and adults in out-of-home settings and in their community.

Well-being

Children will be aware of and name their own feelings, and understand that others may have different feelings.

Well-being

Children will handle transitions and changes well.

Well-being

Children will make healthy choices and demonstrate positive attitudes to nutrition, hygiene, exercise, and routine.

Well-being

Children will show good judgement when taking risks.

Well-being

Children will understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own.

Well-being

Children will care for the environment.

Well-being

Children will develop and nurture their sense of wonder and awe.

Well-being

Children will demonstrate a sense of mastery and belief in their own abilities and display learning dispositions, such as determination and perseverance.

Well-being

Children will think positively, take learning risks, and become resilient and resourceful when things go wrong.

Well-being

Children will respect life, their own and others, and know that life has a meaning and purpose.

Well-being

Children will discover, explore and refine gross and fine motor skills.

Theme: *Identity and Belonging* - Aims

Identity and Belonging

Aim 1: Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 3: Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 4: Children will see themselves as capable learners.

Theme: *Identity and Belonging* - Learning goals

Identity and Belonging

Children will understand that as individuals they are separate from others with their own needs, interests and abilities.

Identity and Belonging

Children will feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment.

Identity and Belonging

Children will appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday).

Identity and Belonging

Children will know that members of their family and community are positively acknowledged and welcomed.

Identity and Belonging

Children will understand the different roles of people in the community.

Identity and Belonging

Children will see themselves as part of a wider community and know about their local area, including some of its places, features and people.

Identity and Belonging

Children will express their views and help make decisions in matters that affect them.

Identity and Belonging

Children will have a sense of social justice and recognise and deal with unfair behaviour.

Identity and Belonging

Children will demonstrate the skills of co-operation, responsibility, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Identity and Belonging

Children will show increasing confidence and self-assurance in directing their own learning.

Identity and Belonging

Children will develop a broad range of abilities and interests.

Identity and Belonging

Children will be motivated, and begin to think about and recognise their own progress and achievements.

Theme: *Communicating* - Aims

Communicating

Aim 1: Children will use non-verbal communication skills.

Communicating

Aim 2: Children will use language (listening, speaking, signing, drawing, and writing).

Communicating

Aim 3: Children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language (listening, speaking, signing, drawing, and writing).

Communicating

Aim 4: Children will express themselves creatively and imaginatively.

Theme: *Communicating* - Learning goals

Communicating
Children will use a range of body movements, facial expressions, and early vocalisations to show feelings and share information.
Communicating
Children will interpret and respond to non-verbal communication by others.
Communicating
Children will combine non-verbal and verbal communication to get their point across.
Communicating
Children will explore sound, pattern, rhythm, and repetition in language.
Communicating
Children will use an expanding vocabulary of words and phrases, and show a growing understanding of syntax and meaning.
Communicating
Children will become proficient users of at least one language and have an awareness and appreciation of other languages.

Communicating Children will use language to interpret experiences, to solve problems, and to clarify thinking, ideas and feelings.
Communicating Children will have opportunities to use a variety of mark-making materials and implements in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
Communicating Children will develop counting skills, and a growing understanding of the meaning and use of numbers and mathematical language in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
Communicating Children will listen to and respond to a variety of types of music, sing songs and make music using instruments.
Communicating Children will respond to and create literacy experiences through story, poetry, song, and drama.
Communicating Children will show confidence in trying out new things, taking risks, and thinking creatively.

Theme: *Exploring and Thinking* - Aims

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 1: Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 2: Children will develop and use skills and strategies for observing, questioning, investigating, understanding, negotiating, and problem-solving, and come to see themselves as explorers and thinkers.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 3: Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects, and actions through symbols.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 4: Children will have positive attitudes towards learning and develop dispositions like curiosity, playfulness, perseverance, confidence, resourcefulness, and risk-taking.

Theme: *Exploring and Thinking* - Learning goals

Exploring and Thinking

Children will engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will develop a sense of time, shape, space, and place.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will come to understand concepts such as matching, comparing, ordering, sorting, size, weight, height, length, capacity, and money in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will gather and use information from different sources using their increasing cognitive, physical and social skills.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will use their experience and information to explore and develop working theories about how the world works, and think about how and why they learn things.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will collaborate with others to share interests and to solve problems confidently.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will become familiar with and associate symbols (pictures, numbers, letters, and words) with the things they represent.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will use letters, words, sentences, numbers, signs, pictures, colour, and shapes to give and record information, to describe and to make sense of their own and others' experiences.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will use books and ICT (software and the internet) for enjoyment and as a source of information.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will demonstrate growing confidence in being able to do things for themselves.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will make decisions and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Exploring and Thinking

Children will act on their curiosity, take risks and be open to new ideas and uncertainty.

Well-being: Overview of the 4 aims and 12 of the learning goals

The theme of <i>Well-being</i> is about children being confident, happy and healthy.	
Aims	Learning goals
Aim 1: Children will be strong psychologically and socially.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ make strong attachments and develop warm and supportive relationships with family, peers and adults in out-of-home settings and in their community ▪ be aware of and name their own feelings, and understand that others may have different feelings ▪ handle transitions and changes well
Aim 2: Children will be as healthy and fit as they can be.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ discover, explore and refine gross and fine motor skills ▪ show good judgement when taking risks ▪ make healthy choices and demonstrate positive attitudes to nutrition, hygiene, exercise, and routine.
Aim 3: Children will be creative and spiritual.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop and nurture their sense of wonder and awe ▪ care for the environment ▪ understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own.
Aim 4: Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ demonstrate a sense of mastery and belief in their own abilities and display learning dispositions, such as determination and perseverance ▪ think positively, take learning risks, and become resilient and resourceful when things go wrong ▪ respect life, their own and others, and know that life has a meaning and purpose

Identity and Belonging: Overview of the 4 aims and 12 of the learning goals

<p>The theme of <i>Identity and Belonging</i> is about children developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community.</p>	
Aims	Learning goals
<p>Aim 1: Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories.</p>	<p>In partnership with the adult, children will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday) ▪ understand that as individuals they are separate from others with their own needs, interests and abilities ▪ feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment.
<p>Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended.</p>	<p>In partnership with the adult, children will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ know that members of their family and community are positively acknowledged and welcomed ▪ see themselves as part of a wider community and know about their local area, including some of its places, features and people ▪ understand the different roles of people in the community.
<p>Aim 3: Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.</p>	<p>In partnership with the adult, children will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ express their views and help make decisions in matters that affect them ▪ have a sense of social justice and recognise and deal with unfair behaviour ▪ demonstrate the skills of co-operation, responsibility, negotiation, and conflict resolution.
<p>Aim 4: Children will see themselves as capable learners.</p>	<p>In partnership with the adult, children will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop a broad range of abilities and interests ▪ show increasing confidence and self-assurance in directing their own learning ▪ be motivated, and begin to think about and recognise their own progress and achievements.

Communicating: Overview of the 4 aims and 12 of the learning goals

The theme of <i>Communicating</i> is about children sharing their experiences, thoughts, ideas, and feelings with others with growing confidence and competence in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes	
Aims	Learning goals
Aim 1: Children will use non-verbal communication skills.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use a range of body movements, facial expressions, and early vocalisations to show feelings and share information ▪ interpret and respond to non-verbal communication by others ▪ combine non-verbal and verbal communication to get their point across
Aim 2: Children will use language.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explore sound, pattern, rhythm, and repetition in language ▪ use an expanding vocabulary of words and phrases, and show a growing understanding of syntax and meaning ▪ become proficient users of at least one language and have an awareness and appreciation of other languages
Aim 3: Children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use language to interpret experiences, to solve problems, and to clarify thinking, ideas and feelings ▪ have opportunities to use a variety of mark-making materials and implements in an enjoyable and meaningful way ▪ develop counting skills, and a growing understanding of the meaning and use of numbers and mathematical language in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
Aim 4: Children will express themselves creatively and imaginatively.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ listen to and respond to a variety of types of music, sing songs and make music using instruments ▪ respond to and create literacy experiences through story, poetry, song, and drama ▪ show confidence in trying out new things, taking risks, and thinking creatively.

Exploring and Thinking: Overview of the 4 aims and 12 of the learning goals

The theme of <i>Exploring and Thinking</i> is about children making sense of the things, places and people in their world by interacting with others, playing, investigating, questioning, and forming, testing and refining ideas.	
Aims	Learning goals
Aim 1: Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials ▪ develop a sense of time, shape, space, and place ▪ come to understand concepts such as matching, comparing, ordering, sorting, size, weight, height, length, capacity, and money in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
Aim 2: Children will develop and use skills and strategies for observing, questioning, investigating, understanding, negotiating, and problem-solving, and come to see themselves as explorers and thinkers.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ gather and use information from different sources using their increasing cognitive, physical and social skills ▪ use their experience and information to explore and develop working theories about how the world works, and think about how and why they learn things ▪ collaborate with others to share interests and to solve problems confidently
Aim 3: Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects, and actions through symbols.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ become familiar with and associate symbols (pictures, numbers, letters, and words) with the things they represent ▪ use letters, words, sentences, numbers, signs, pictures, colour, and shapes to give and record information, to describe and to make sense of their own and others' experiences ▪ use books and ICT (software and the internet) for enjoyment and as a source of information.
Aim 4: Children will have positive attitudes towards learning and develop dispositions like curiosity, playfulness, perseverance, confidence, resourcefulness, and risk-taking.	In partnership with the adult, children will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ demonstrate growing confidence in being able to do things for themselves ▪ make decisions and take increasing responsibility for their own learning ▪ act on their curiosity, take risks and be open to new ideas and uncertainty.