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National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

***Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is launched on
October 22nd***

Tomorrow the NCCA launches *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* at <http://www.ncca.ie/earlylearning>. This new framework is for all children from birth to six years. It is the outcome of extensive research, consultation, planning, and development by the NCCA in partnership with the early childhood sector. Children as young as nine months contributed to *Aistear* as part of an NCCA enquiry into their experiences of learning and developing in various early childhood settings in Ireland.

Aistear sets out broad goals for children's learning and development. This is the first such statement of what we aspire to for the nation's youngest children. Guided by these goals, the Framework gives practical information, ideas and suggestions to help adults provide experiences that motivate and challenge children, and that are fun and exciting for them. Commenting on the importance of the Framework, Batt O'Keeffe, TD, Minister for Education and Science noted in his introductory remarks in *Aistear*:

Such a curriculum framework can contribute greatly to helping our youngest citizens grow up with a strong sense of well-being; proud of themselves, their families and communities; confident and competent communicators; curious and resilient explorers; and creative thinkers.

Aistear can be used by practitioners in the range of early childhood settings including childminding settings, sessional services, full and part-time daycare settings, and infant classes in primary schools as well as by parents in children's own homes. The launch of this framework is timely as noted by Barry Andrews, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in his message in *Aistear*:

I am confident that, together with Sólta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, it [Aistear] can provide much practical support and guidance to practitioners participating in the Pre-School Year in Early Childhood

Care and Education, and to those working with younger and older children in the early childhood period.

Highlighting the fact that children learn many different things at the same time, the Framework uses four interconnected themes to describe the content of children's learning and development: *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, and Exploring and Thinking.*

Aistear highlights the critical role of play, relationships and language for young children's learning. In doing this, it provides a guide to using play, interactions, partnerships with parents, and assessment to help children progress in their learning and development.

For more information on *Aistear* including a presentation with audio, visit the NCCA website at www.ncca.ie/earlylearning.

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Further information:

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Note for Editors:

The NCCA is the statutory body that advises the Minister for Education and Science on matters relating to the curriculum and assessment for early childhood education and for primary and post-primary schools.