Westmeath County Childcare Committee

Inspiring Literacy & Numeracy Development in Pre School

2013

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Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life – A summary

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life – A summary

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life is the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy standards among children and young people in the education system.

The policy acknowledges that traditionally literacy was considered as the skills of reading and writing but goes on to acknowledge that *" literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media"* (National Strategy, P8)

It also notes that numeracy is no longer considered as the ability to use numbers, add, subtract, multiply and divide. The policy states that *"numeracy encompasses the ability to use mathematical understanding and skills to solve problems and meet the demands of day to day living in complex social settings."* (National Strategy, P8)

The policy states that all young people need to be literate ad numerate as we use these skills in all walks of everyday life.

The strategy looks at the development and improvement of literacy and numeracy across all areas of education from early years to primary and secondary levels.

In relation to early childhood it states that

"Early childhood, the period from birth to six years of age, is a time of significant opportunity for learning. During these early years, children take their first steps along their journey of lifelong learning. They have an inherent capacity to learn from birth and the experiences they have in their homes and wider environment impact significantly on their development and future learning."

The strategy outlines a number of key areas for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes. Specifically in relation to early years these include:

1. Involving parents and communities to support children's learning

2. Improve professional skills of those who teach in ECCE settings

3. Clarify what we expect children to learn and develop in the ECCE setting.

The main targets of this strategy in relation to the ECCE sector are to:

1. Raise awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy

2. Foster an enjoyment of reading in young children

3. Develop and encourage positive attitudes towards literacy and numeracy

In particular the strategy states it aims to improve outcomes at early childhood level

"improve the communication and oral language competence of young children in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings and their readiness to develop early mathematical language and ideas."

The strategy acknowledges that ¾ of children who attend a high quality pre school are likely to be more successful, both academically and socially in primary school and beyond. It also states that the quality of the interactions between the child and the adult is central to the learning experience.

One of the objectives of the strategy is to ***encourage and support the up skilling of early childhood care and education practitioners.***

There are four points on how they aim to do this –

1. ensure that training courses relevant to ECCE practitioners include units on both content and pedagogical knowledge in literacy and numeracy

2. continue to provide incentives for the continuing professional development of ECCE practitioners by continuing to link higher capitation rates with higher qualifications

3. work with relevant bodies to ensure that there is sufficient training provision to enable formal qualifications in early literacy and numeracy development to be made a requirement for all ECCE leaders in state funded ECCE settings

4. increase the minimum qualification requirements for ECCE practitioners involved in the delivery of state funded ECCE programmes.

The strategy sees libraries as a valuable resource for families and communities in supporting children's literacy. Through the expert selection and provision of a wide range of books and other materials, libraries can both support the acquisition of literacy skills and help foster children's love of reading. Public libraries enable families to support their children's literacy development through the range of resources and information they make available in a free, open and informal setting.

The strategy acknowledges the importance of parental involvement in developing the literacy and numeracy skills of young children and aims to work in partnership with parents, grandparents and the wider community to foster these skills.

We at Westmeath County Childcare Committee are absolutely committed to the development of literacy and numeracy in the early years and hope that this booklet with help give practitioners ideas on how to implement high quality play based activities in their own curriculum.

We hope you enjoy this booklet and find it beneficial to your service.

Literacy through Play

How to Create a Literacy-Rich Environment

Creating the right learning environment for children is a very important aspect of developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Children will seize opportunities to question, talk, solve problems, think, wonder, debate, argue and listen in an environment that is stimulating, challenging and supportive. (French, 2012)

There it is the responsibility of the early year's practitioner to provide a learning environment that is rich in opportunities for children to extend their experiences of literacy and numeracy. In establishing this learning environment we don't have to divert from everyday practise, we simply need to become 'literacy and numeracy aware' and see how we can develop already existing areas to capitalise on learning opportunities.

There are a number of ways to do this –

- Use word and language games, songs, poems, nursery rhymes, books, and finger plays every day.
- Use nametags. For young children, the most important letter is the first letter of their first name. Create activities that use children's names, such as having children distribute nametags at the start of the day.
- When displaying written words, such as children's names (Niamh) or furniture labels (table), use lower case and upper case letters as appropriate.
- Establish a literacy centre and supply it with pens, pencils, markers, paper, envelopes, old greeting cards, stationary, stamps, a dictionary, telephone books, a list of teacher's and children's names with photos, mailboxes, and anything else that you can think of!
- Use small groups of 4 to 5 children for direct teaching about early literacy concepts, such as the sounds of language.
- Be a good role model — write notes, wear a nametag, keep a calendar and daily planner, post lists of children's responsibilities, share program policies and weekly activity plans with parents, introduce new vocabulary words ("How many different ways can you say big?").

Language can be divided into four broad categories:

1. Listening

2. Talking

3. Writing

4. Reading

We will now look at some more detailed activities for developing these skills through play and link the activities directly to Síolta & Aistear.

Name – Sound Boxes

Aim – children will be given the opportunity to listen carefully and to make fine distinctions between the things they hear.

Materials Required – small identical containers (i.e. pint sized plastic milk containers), rice, pasta, buttons, cotton wool, pebbles.

Group size – 1 / 2 children

Activity –

- Introduce children to the empty containers. Encourage them to explore their texture and sound.

- Give each child two containers and ask them to fill them both. Supervise the children to ensure that they are filled identically.

- Continue this process until all containers are filled.

- Mix the containers up and invite the children to try to match the sounds.

- Encourage the children to talk about what they hear and provide the language required to do this i.e. the same, nearly the same, loud, quite, noisy etc

Links with Síolta –

Standard 5: Interactions.

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.

Links to Aistear –

Communicating (Aim 2. Learning Goal 1)

Children will use language. In partnership with the adult, children will interact with other children and adults by listening, discussing and taking turns in conversation.

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 1, Learning Goal 6)

Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them. In partnership with the adult, children will come to understand concepts such as matching, comparing, ordering, sorting, size, weight, height, capacity and omen in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Name – Story Telling

Aim – children will be given the opportunity to listen carefully to language and to use their imagination to the full.

Materials Required – a well rehearsed story and attentive children

Group size – whole group

Activity –

- Sharing stories with children for them to enjoy is a great gift and pleasure for the children.

- Invite the children to sit comfortably, turn on their imagination and listen to your story. Explain that this story is coming from your imagination and the pictures of the story are in their imagination.

- Chose a story that you are familiar with and that you are comfortable telling. You may want to rehearse it once or twice before engaging with the children. Traditional tales are always a good option as the children will already be familiar with them and they are often repetitive and have patterns of language e.g. 'a great big one, a middle sized one and a baby one….', 'I'll huff and I'll puff…..', which can encourage children to join in and become part of the story.

- Actively engage with the children throughout the story and make it as personal to the group as possible.

- Motivate the children to listen by communicating special effects in the tone of your voice – sink for a dramatic whisper or rise to a shout. Maintaining eye contact keeps the spell intact. It also helps the storyteller to know when someone is getting frightened and needs a happy ending quickly or when the children are lapping it up and need more of the same.

- If you relax, have fun and enjoy it, the children will too.

Links with Síolta –

Links to Aistear –

Name – Fun with Words

Aim – to teach children poems, songs and nursery rhymes. Learning and repeating them gives children a store of language to use and builds up pleasure and confidence in using it.

Materials Required – variety of poems, songs and nursery rhymes to choose from. Some good websites include:

- www.poetryarchive.org

- www.theteachersguide.com

- www.nurseryrhymes.com

Group size – whole group

Activity –

- Invite the children to get comfortable and join you for some songs, poems and nursery rhymes.

- Ask the children do they know any songs, poems or nursery rhymes and would they like to share them with you.

- Introduce children to new songs, poems and nursery rhymes gradually and talk about them as you learn them. Ask the children what they understand by the songs, poems or nursery rhymes just learned and encourage discussion.

- Repeat often with the children. Link the songs, poems or nursery rhymes in with other areas of your curriculum such as arts & crafts, music, numeracy etc.

Note: Poetry and rhymes can make language more accessible to children. Rhyme and rhythm make things easier to remember and using rhyme also makes children more aware of how words are put together.

There is some research evidence that children who have lots of early experience of rhymes find it easier to learn to read later on.

Links with Síolta –

Links to Aistear –

Name- Music

Aim- Music develops listening skills for children and heightens a feeling for language. It also aids imagination, concentration, sequencing, classification, creativity and discrimination.

Materials – CD player or cassette player. Range of compact discs and cassette tapes containing music and sounds from around the world. Simple instruments such as drums, tambourine or tin whistle. Space for movement.

Group Size- All Children

Activity-

- Invite all children to gather around and play your music of choice for them

- Encourage the children to listen and respond to what they hear

- Ask the children to count the number of songs they hear this can clarify the concept of number

- Include songs that encourage children to count, copy a beat, repeat a pattern, move and sort, match and make comparisons.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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.

Standard 14: Identity & Belonging

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.

Links to Aistear –

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 1, Learning Goal 5)

Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them. In partnership with the adult, children will develop a sense of time, shape, space and place.

Communication (Aim 4, Learning Goal 3)

Children will express themselves creatively and imaginatively. In partnership with the adult, the children will listen to and respond to a variety of types of music, sing songs and make music using instruments.

Name- Shape Puppet Play

Aim- To capture the children's imagination and to inspire creative language.

Materials- For the puppets a variety of different shaped objects that can be used for modelling (small cardboard boxes, sponge balls, plastic bottles, paper cups, cardboard tubes, lids or trays etc) wool, fabric pieces, felt tipped pens, strong adhesive, adhesive tape, ribbons, lace, scissors. For the puppet theatre a large cardboard box.

Group- Small groups of children

Activity-

- Invite each of the children to select one of the shapes and turn it into a simple shape puppet by drawing a face on to one of its sides using the pens and then gluing on clothes made from small pieces of coloured fabric, lace, ribbon and so on.

- Organise a session for the children to use their shape characters in the puppet theatre

- Encourage them to give their puppet a name, let them create personalities for their puppets during these role play situations for example by speaking for their character and giving him/her an unusual voice or distinctive tone

- Allow each group the opportunity to perform their "play" for the other children. Help the children to record these stories in writing or pictures.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

Component 6.5 – play opportunities for the child encourage her/him to explore, to be creative and to use her/his pervious learning to make new meanings.

Standard 6: Play

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.

Links to Aistear –

Communicating (Aim 3, Learning Goal 6)

Children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language. In partnership with the adult, children develop counting skills and a growing understanding of the meaning and use of numbers and mathematical language in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 3, Learning Goal 2)

Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects and actions through symbols. In partnership with the adult, children will become familiar with and associate symbols 9pictures, numbers, letters and words) with the things that they

Name- Hide & Seek Letters/Numbers/Shapes

Aim- To invite the children to search for letters/numbers/shapes in their environment

Materials- Space for children to sit in a group. Comfortable mat and their listening ears.

Group- All children

Activity-

- Encourage the children to gather around in a group and to talk about letters/numbers/shapes

- Introduce the letters/numbers/shapes that you will hide and the children should find.

- Encourage all children to close their eyes and you will hide the number. Ask them to count to a predetermined number, agreed by the whole group.

- Ask the children to open their eyes and find the letter/ number/shape you have hidden. If they find a similar letter/number/shape to the one you have hidden they should also get recognition for their efforts.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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.

Standard 2: Environments

Component 2.6 – the indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Links to Aistear –

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 4, Learning Goal 1)

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

Well Being (Aim 4, learning Goal 2)

Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life. In partnership with the adult, children will demonstrate a sense of mastery and belief in their own abilities and display learning dispositions such as determination and perseverance.

Name- Role Play

Aim- Encourage the children to use their imagination through Role Play. This stimulates language and the use of new vocabulary. It presents opportunities for children to direct and organise activities, promotes creativity and may lead to writing imaginative stories.

Materials- Role Play corner and domestic play equipment. Dressing up clothes particularly hats, wigs, and pieces of material and clothing by different cultural groups. Doll's and doll's clothes. Empty cardboard boxes, tubs and containers.

Group- Small groups of children

Activity-

- Introduce the activity to the children and provide them with the time and space to explore the equipment and materials.

- Encourage the children to take turns and share equipment.

- Encourage children to explore different cultural backgrounds in the use of multicultural domestic equipment and clothes and discuss these.

- Role play encourages children to speak with each other and to discuss what they are doing.

- Playing roles empowers children and lets them glimpse and begin to come to terms with the adult world.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 14: Identity & Belonging

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

Standard 5: Interactions

Component 5.1 – each child is enables to interact with her/his peers and with children of different ages in pairs, small groups and, to a lesser degree, in large groups.

Links to Aistear –

Well Being (Aim 3, Learning Goal 6)

Children will be creative and spiritual. In partnership with the adult, children will understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own.

Communication (Aim 2, Learning Goal 5)

Children will use language. In partnership with the adult, children will become proficient users of a t least one language and have an awareness and appreciation of other languages.

Name- Sand

Aim - Sand gives opportunities to express needs, communicate decisions and learn new vocabulary with words such as 'gritty' and 'sifting'. Making patterns and marks in sand is linked to early literacy. Many conversations take place around the sand tray.

Materials- Two containers, one for wet sand and one for dry sand. Broom, dust pan and brush. Tools and containers such as rakes, buckets, spades, scoops etc.

Group- large or small group

Activity-

- Sharing, planning and co-operating with other children is encouraged.

- Asking the children to touch the sand and explain what sensation they feel.

- Encourage the children to talk about what they are doing with the sand aids conversation.

- Children should be encouraged to wash their hands after playing with the sand and should be involved in clearing away and sweeping up at the end of session.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 2: Environments

Component 2.6 – the indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Standard 7: Curriculum

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.

Links to Aistear –

Communication (Aim 2, Learning Goal 4)

Children will use language. In partnership with the adult, children will use language with confidence and competence for giving and receiving information, asking questions, requesting, refusing, negotiating, problem solving, imagining and recreating roles and situation, and clarifying thinking, ideas and feelings.

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 1, Learning Goal 1)

Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them. In partnership with the adult children will engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials.

Numeracy through Play

Numeracy Development through Play

Play is the natural way in which children learn. It is the process through which children explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. Play is an activity in which everything that a child knows and can do is practised or used to make sense of what is new.

Role of the Adult

The quality of children's play is greatly influenced by the adults around them. Adults can provide materials and encouragement and open the door to new activities and learning. Play cannot be directed by adults. An adult can support, enhance or extend play, but the moment they interfere or dictate its progress then it ceases to be play.

Play & Numeracy

To many adults, the words Numeracy and Play have absolutely nothing to do with each other. For many of us, numeracy was a torture, something we had to do, and something we didn't understand and couldn't do. Play on the other hand was something we loved. Young children are learning numeracy concepts all the time through a wide variety of play experiences. From the time they are born, babies are surrounded by sense impressions. Shapes in particular are of immediate importance: babies react instinctively to the arrangement of shapes which make up the human face.

In the home, in parent and toddler groups, and pre-school settings, children have many opportunities to enjoy and learn Numeracy through Play.

"Play is an effective vehicle for fostering Mathematical concepts and developing positive attitudes to mathematics… Adults in the pre-school setting should seek to extend informally the mathematical experiences the children have already had in their home environment. Play is the natural way in which children learn. It is the process through which children explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. Play is an activity in which everything that a child knows and can do is practised or used to make sense of what is new.

Numeracy in the Early Years Environment

Numeracy is everywhere in the early years environment. With the support of adults, children can grasp many mathematical concepts through their play.

Children will begin to:

• know and understand early numeracy language of measurement, shapes, spaces, positions, early numbers, order and patterns
• know the sequence of numbers
• begin to understand positional words, e.g. in, on, outside
• show an awareness of time
• be aware of shapes in their environment
• be aware of 1-to-1 correspondence
• acquire new vocabulary
• learn number rhymes and songs, e.g. one, two, buckle my shoe etc.
• be aware of conservation

When we say a child "knows her numbers" what we often mean is that she can recite the names of numbers in ascending order. This is quite useful to be able to do, but it means very little in itself.

Children need to come to know what the number system really means. They can be helped to do this through play.

One of the first things they have to learn is about conservation – that 3 is always 3 no matter how it is arranged or presented, whether it is the number 3, the letters for three, 3 bricks, 3 buttons on a coat or 3 Billy Goats Gruff.

Before a child can understand numbers for things that can be seen – 3 miles, 3 years old – s/he needs real objects which can be seen and handled with a chance to check that the count is right each time.

Young children have many mathematical experiences in their everyday environment. For example:
• they learn about money as they go shopping with parents
• become aware of numbers as they count the stairs to bed
• start to understand the concept of time as they become familiar with the routine of their day – wash, dress, breakfast etc.

A child's daily life offers many practical opportunities to learn about number, shape, space, sorting and matching. For instance:
• setting places at the table – a cup for me, a cup for you
• playing with water
• steering the pram
• helping to sort the washing, matching socks, big shirt / small shirt
• tidying up – putting similar items together
• matching lids to saucepans

Linking Numeracy development with everyday Pre School Activities

Sand and Water
• Using sand can develop mathematical concepts and language, e.g. heavy, light, empty, full, big and little.
• Conservation – how much will it hold
• Make shapes and patterns
• Provide boxes and materials of different shapes and sizes to compare weight and quantity
• Look at the differences between wet and dry as a means of looking at weights

Language
• You can help to promote mathematical language such as – heavy, light, empty, full, long, short, big, small in relevant contexts
• Look at your pre school environment to develop language, especially positional words – small object in front of big object, behind, in, on

Play Dough
The use of dough can help to develop a mathematical understanding for pre-school children.

• Develops mathematical language – short, long, fat, thin
• Make shapes of different dimensions – fl at shapes, 3-d shapes
• Create opportunities to compare things that float with things that do not

Imaginative Play
• Simple activities like encouraging children to set the table for meal times can help develop counting skills, e.g. getting out three pieces of cutlery.
• Involve children in everyday activities. In the dress up corner encourage children to sort clothes into different colours, or different types of clothes, e.g. t-shirts and socks. This will help to develop a child's knowledge of shapes and colours.

Books and Rhymes
Enjoy stories and rhymes with children that have a mathematical element, e.g. "One-two, Buckle my Shoe",
This can also help to develop literacy skills by showing children that the print reads from left to right. Encourage children to count out items in the books – how many animals are on the page, how many items are blue.
Using rhymes can also help develop children's awareness of sequencing.

Physical Play
• Develop fine motor skills through physical activity, e.g. Sorting out a jigsaw, threading beads
• Block play or playing with toy cars can help to develop sequencing by encouraging children to sequence according to size, colour, use (e.g. bike, car, lorry)
• Playing with different sized blocks can help to develop an understanding of weight and dimensions.
• Tidying toys away allows children to sort into different sizes and colours.
• It can also develop mathematical language – first, second, third, how many are blue, which is largest / smallest.

Nature
By planting seeds you can help to develop children's understanding of time and the life cycle of plants.
Watch as the plants grow and even measure your plant – develop language such as taller.
Teach children about the different seasons and plant different items at different times of the year to compare colours, flowers, smells.

The core content of a mathematics curriculum for young children should include concepts about:

Number	Colour
Counting	Pattern
Shape & Space	Measure

We will now look at some more detailed activities for developing numeracy concepts through play and link them directly to Síolta & Aistear.

Activities

Name – Sorting Colours

Aim – children will sort and match objects with reference to their colour. They will recognise the names of the most common colours.

Materials Required – lots of brightly coloured socks, a washing line and some pegs

Group size – 1 / 2 children

Activity –

- Place all socks in a pile. Chose a red sock and hold it up.

- Ask the children what colour is it? Begin a 'colour hunt'. Ask the children does anyone have red on their clothes. Are there any other red things in the classroom? Point to as many red things as you can.

- Ask a child to find the other red sock on the pile. Use language to promote recognition of colours – is this sock red? Is it the same as the first one?

- Peg red socks together on the line.

- Continue the process with all colours until the activity is complete.

Note –

With colour, little and often is better than too much at once. Repeat the above activity on many different occasions with socks (or anything else that is appropriate to your group) of different colours.

Help the children grasp the primary colours first (red, yellow & blue) and then move on to the secondary colours (green, purple & orange)

Make reference every day to the colours around the children, particularly in relation to things which vary only in colour. Toy cars which are identical except for their colour are often an easy way for children to learn the colours.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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.

Standard 2: Environments

Component 2.2 – the environment (including equipment & materials) is adaptable for, and accessible to, all children and adults within the setting.

Links to Aistear –

Communicating (Aim 2. Learning Goal 1)

Children will use language. In partnership with the adult, children will interact with other children and adults by listening, discussing and taking turns in conversation.

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 1, Learning Goal 6)

Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them. In partnership with the adult, children will come to understand concepts such as matching, comparing, ordering, sorting, size, weight, height, capacity and omen in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

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Name – Bubble Painting

Aim – children will recognise and name colours

Materials Required – bright powder paints (mixed with a little washing up liquid), straws, tissue paper (cut into small pieces)

Group size – 3 / 4 children

Activity –

- Mix paint with a little washing up liquid in paint pot

- Encourage each child to chose a colour

- Show them how to place straw carefully in the paint pot and blow gently to create bubbles

- Carefully then place a piece of tissue paper over the paint pot and blow to create a print of bubbles.

- Place the print aside and make several more prints in similar colours

- Then swap paint with another child and make more prints in a different colour

- They should name each colour as they are engaging in the activity

- When all prints are dry, stick them onto matching coloured sugar paper. Label each piece of sugar paper with the name of its colour.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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

Standard 2: Environments

Component 2.6 – the indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Links to Aistear –

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 3, Learning Goal 1)

Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects and actions through symbols. In partnership with the adult, children will make marks and use drawing, painting and model making to record objects, events and ideas.

Identity & Belonging (Aim 4, Learning Goal 3)

Children will see themselves as capable learners. IN partnership with the adult, children will show increasing confidence and self assurance in directing their own learning.
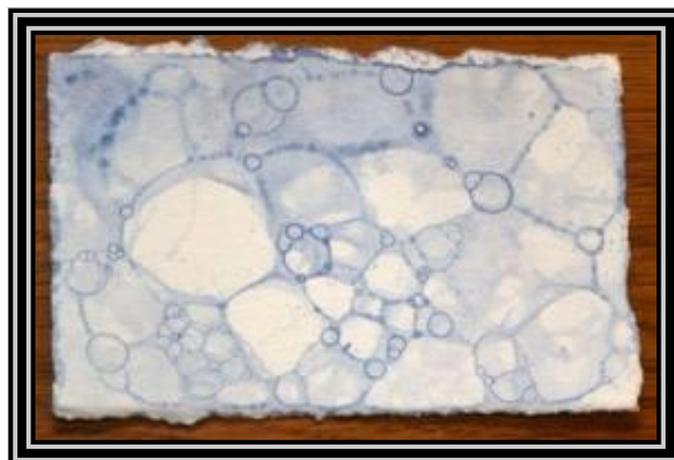
Name – Sorting & Matching

Aim – children will sort and match objects with reference to a given criteria e.g. colour, size, shape, texture etc

Materials Required – a set of toy vehicles (a mixture of cards, cans, lorries etc), two hoops and two pieces of card.

Group size – up to 8 children

Activity –

- Share out all vehicles to that each child has at least one. Place the hoops where they can be seen. Label with pictures, one hoop 'cars' and the other hoop 'not cars'.

- Point to the first hoop and tell the children that we will place all the cars in here.

- Point to the second hoop and tell the children that we will pace all the vehicles that are not cars in here.

- Chose a child and hold up their vehicle. Is it a car? Which hoop shall we put it in? Encourage the child to put their vehicle in the correct hoop.

- Continue until all vehicles are assigned to a hoop.

- Introduce the concept of 'set'. Ask the children which set has more. Count the number of vehicles in each set.

Note – this sorting into sets activity can be done with any materials that the pre school teacher feels appropriate i.e. hats, animals, colouring pencils etc.

Links with Síolta –

Standard 7: Curriculum

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.

Standard 6: Play

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.

Links to Aistear –

Well Being (Aim 4, Learning Goal 1)

Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life. In partnership with the adult, children will show increasing independence and be able to make choices and decisions.

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 3, Learning Goal 2)

Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects and actions through symbols. In partnership with the adult, children will become familiar with and associate symbols 9pictures, numbers, letters and words) with the things that they
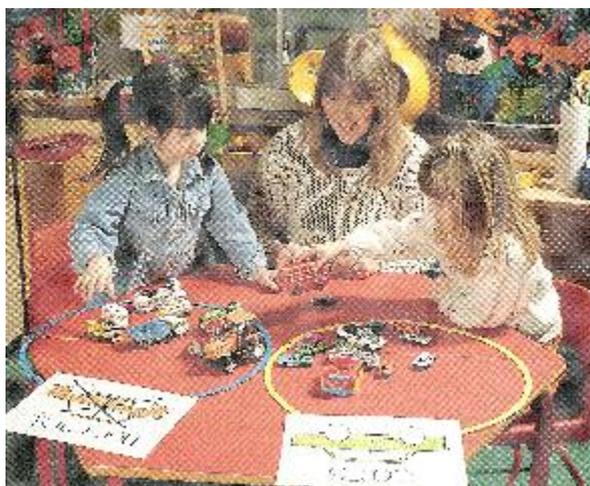
Name – Counting

Aim – children will chant the numbers in order up to ten.

Materials Required – a washing line or a number line with brightly coloured numbers clearly visible on it.

Group size – up to 8 children

Activity –

- Point to the number line. Ask the children to point to their age.

- Ask the children do they recognise any other numbers? Chose children in turn and ask them to point to numbers that they recognise.

- Chant the numbers in order slowly, starting at 1. Point to each number as you say it. The children can point as well.

- Chant the numbers in order, holding up the corresponding amount of fingers as you do it. Encourage the children to copy you.

- Ask the children to 'hide their fingers' i.e. behind their back. Ask "who can show me two fingers?" "who can show me five fingers?". Praise the children as they get it right.

- Ask the children to close their eyes and alter the number line, one number at a time

    - Turn one number upside down

    - Turn one number back to front

    - Take away one number

    - Swap two numbers so that they have changed place

- Lay the number line on the ground and ask the children to chose a number and find a corresponding number of objects e.g. blocks, cars etc.

Note:

Once the number line is established in the room it can be used at any appropriate moment to attract the children's attention to the numbers and their order. If a child is counting or a number is mentioned the number line is always there as a visual image of the numbers.

Links to Síolta –

Standard 2: Environments

Component 2.1 – the indoor and outdoor environment is well planned and laid out to accommodate he needs of all children and adults in the setting.

Standard 5: Interactions

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.

Links with Aistear –

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 1, Learning Goal 1)

Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them. In partnership with the adult children will engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials.

Identity & belonging (Aim 4, Learning Goal 3)

Children will see themselves as capable learners. In partnership with the adult, children will show increasing confidence and self assurance in directing their own learning.
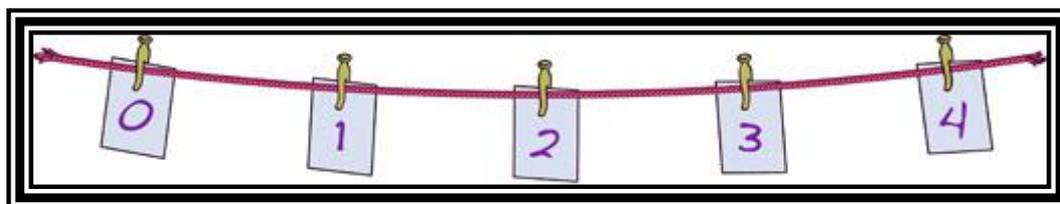
Name – Counting: Reading & Writing

Aim – children will recognise and name numbers 1 – 10

Materials Required – large number cards (from your clothesline) & playdough

Group size – up to 8 children

Activity –

- Give each child some playdough and keep some for your self. Ask the children to play with the playdough so they can experience the texture and consistency of it.

- Explain to the children that today we are going to make playdough numbers

- Encourage the children to choose a numeral and to manipulate the playdough to make the corresponding numeral.

- When they have finished praise the child "well done, you have made number one with the playdough" encourage them to tell you how they did it and to repeat the process with the other numbers available.

- When all numbers have been made ask the children to place them in numerical order.

-

Links to Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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.

Standard 4: Consultation

Component 4.3 – the adult used all aspects of the daily routine (both formal and informal) to interact sensitively and respectfully with the child.

Links with Aistear –

Well Being (Aim 3, Learning Goal 2)

Children will be creative and spiritual. In partnership with the adult, children will express themselves through a variety of types of play.

Communicating (Aim 3, Learning Goal 6)

Children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language. In partnership with the adult, children develop counting skills and a growing understanding of the meaning and use of numbers and mathematical language in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
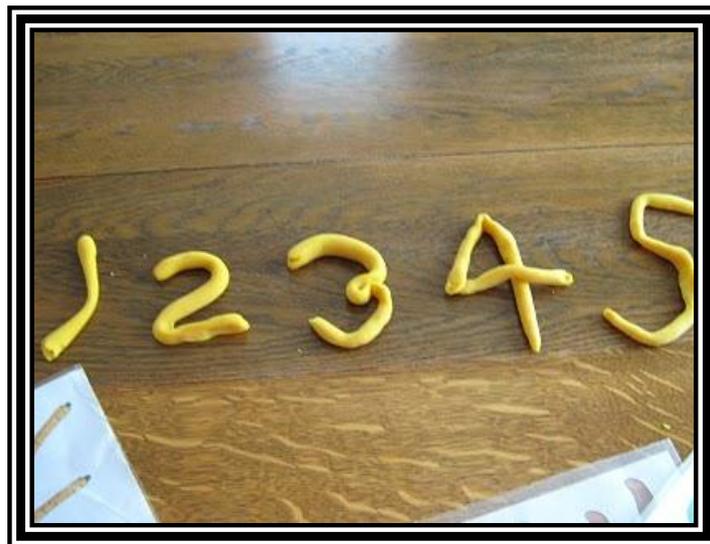
Name – Patterns

Aim – children will recognise simple repetitive patters and to continue these as required. They will also generate their own patterns and describe them.

Materials Required – red & yellow paint, paper

Group size – 10 children

Activity –

- Choose two children, and give each a piece of paper. The first paints a large yellow circle on the card, and the second paints a large red circle.

- They then stand in front of the group holding up their cards.

- This process is continued until all children are holding a card.

- Take a picture of the children and show it to them.

- Illustrate to the children that they have made a pattern using their painted cards.

- Now encourage the children to sit down and to recreate the pattern without your input.

- This process can be repeated on another day using different colours and as the children become more familiar with the concept of patterns more colours or indeed shapes can be added.

- Patterns can be found and created everywhere in the early years setting. Encourage the children to develop patterns when working with threading, beading, colouring, playing with cars or any other appropriate materials in the setting.

Links to Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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.

Standard 6: Play

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

Links with Aistear –

Identity & Belonging (Aim 4, Learning Goal 3)

Children will see themselves as capable learners. In partnership with the adult, children will show increasing confidence and self assurance in directing their own learning.

Well Being (Aim 4, learning Goal 4)

Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life. In partnership with the adult, children will motivate themselves and welcome and seek challenge.
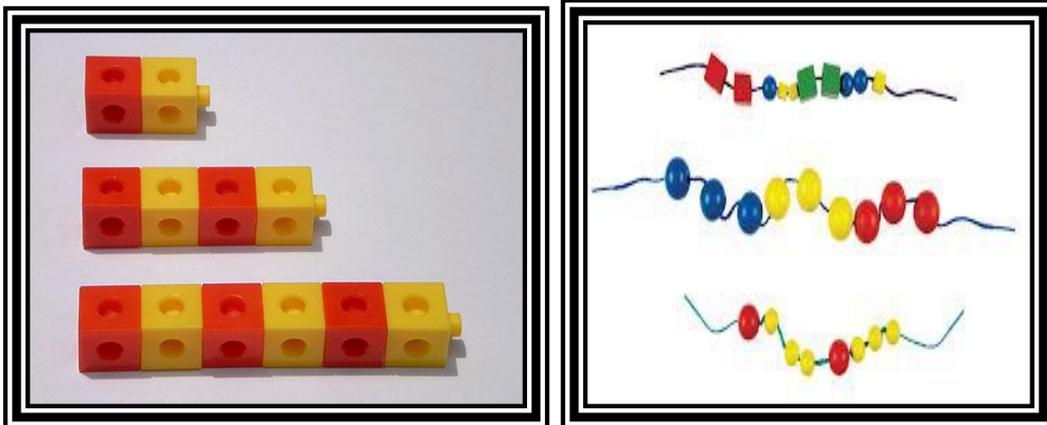
Name – Shapes

Aim – children will recognise, match and sort similar shapes.

Materials Required – a selection of shapes, paper and pencils, blu tack.

Group size – 3/4 children

Activity –

- Spread all the shapes out over the table. Chose one shape and hold it up ,. Ask the children to find a corresponding shape.

- Talk about the shape – how many sides does it have? How many corner?

- Encourage the children to trace around the shape on their paper. Label the drawing and pin it up with blu tack.

- Repeat this process with different shapes.

- Create a bingo board with the children and extend this activity to shape bingo. Children will then have to match both shape and colour.
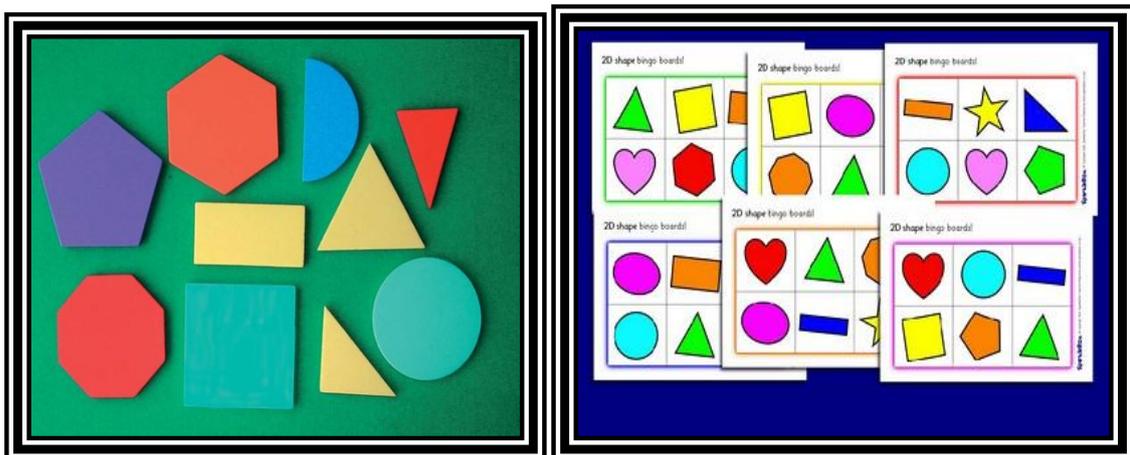
Links to Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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.

Standard 7: Curriculum

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.

Links with Aistear –

Well Being (Aim 4, learning Goal 4)

Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life. In partnership with the adult, children will motivate themselves and welcome and seek challenge

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 3, Learning Goal 2)

Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects and actions through symbols. In partnership with the adult, children will become familiar with and associate symbols 9pictures, numbers, letters and words) with the things that they

Name – Measures

Aim – children will compare two objects in terms of their length or height.

Materials Required – playdough & selection of sticks of different lenghts

Group size – 1 / 2 children

Activity –

- Give some playdough to each child and ask them to make a snake.

- Chose a child who has made a particularly long snake and ask her to stand the front holding the snake by the tail.

- Choose another child who has made a shorter snake to stand at the front also. Ask whose snake is longer?

- Repeat the process using different children

- Now introduce the sticks. Ask the children to make a snake that is longer/shorter than the snake. Ask them to find something in the classroom that is longer/shorter than the stick.

Note – comparing length can be problematic for children. They first need to realise that they have to align ends before measuring to establish a common baseline.

Links to Síolta –

Standard 6: Play

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

Standard 2: Environments

Component 2.6 – the indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Links with Aistear –

Exploring & Thinking (Aim 1, Learning Goal 5)

Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them. In partnership with the adult, children will develop a sense of time, shape, space and place.

Identity & Belonging (Aim 4, learning Goad 3)

Children will see themselves as capable learners. In partnership with the adult, children will show increasing confidence and self assurance in directing their own learning.

Links within our Community

Library Service

Do you know there are 7 public libraries in Westmeath?

The seven libraries are:

Athlone Library

The Aidan Heavey Library enjoys a town centre location as part of the Civic Offices.
Tel: (090) 6442157 Email: athlib@westmeathcoco.ie

Ballynacarrigy Library

Ballynacarrigy Library is in the heart of the village.

Tel: (044) 9373882 Email: bnclib@westmeathcoco.ie

Castlepollard Library

This purpose built library is part of the Westmeath County Council Civic Office complex on the Mullingar Road. Tel: (044) 9332199 Email: cpdlib@westmeathcoco.ie

Killucan Library

Killucan Library, is at the back of the Working Men's Club, Rathwire Hall, Killucan

Tel: (057) 9333148 Email: klnlib@westmeathcoco.ie

Kilbeggan Library

Kilbeggan Library can be found upstairs in the Council Offices in The Square, Kilbeggan.

Tel: (057) 9333148 Email: Killib@westmeathcoco.ie

Moate Library

Moate Library, Main Street, Moate, is a community library which offers a selection of books and audio material for all ages. Tel: (090) 6481888 Email: moatelib@westmeathcoco.ie

Mullingar Library

This library enjoys a central town location as part of the County Buildings complex, in close proximity to Blackhall car park. Tel: (044) 9332161 Email: mgarlib@westmeathcoco.ie

Join your local library

Joining the library is easy. All you need to do is call into your local library and

- Fill out an application form
- Provide official identification
- Pay the annual registration fee (if relevant)
- Remember, children and Secondary school students need their application forms signed by a parent or guardian as guarantor.

Most items can be borrowed for 3 weeks. They may be renewed online, by telephone or by calling in to the library in person, provided the items are not required by another member.

Adult members may borrow 8 items at a time. Secondary school students are entitled to 6 items, and junior members may borrow 4 items.

Block Loans

Pre Schools have the opportunity to block loan up to 20 books per loan period. To find out more about this membership, please talk to your local library

What happens if I am late returning my books?

Fines are currently charged at 20c per item per week. You can avoid fines by renewing your books in person, online or over the telephone.

Internet

Internet facilities are available to members in all libraries. Parents must give consent for their children to use the internet. Free Wi-Fi is also available to library members using Athlone and Mullingar Libraries.

Membership Fees

Adult   10.00 euro

Unwaged/ Third Level Student   5.00 euro

Old Age Pensioners   Free

Children and Secondary school Students   Free

Block Loan   10.00 euro

Internet Fees

Adults pay 1.50 per 50min session

Unwaged, OAP, Students and junior members pay 1.00 euro per 50 min session

15 min sessions are available to all members for 50c

Word Processing facilities are free but there are charges for printing.

Children's resources

Each library has a variety of children's resources and events. Resources include a wide range of picture books, easy readers for those starting to read and support material such as Oxford Reading Tree series. The libraries also hold a storybooks and fact books for all ages. But there's more… Westmeath libraries also hold books in other languages such as Irish or dual language books so parents and children can enjoy stories together. The libraries also have books on cd for children to listen to, and dvd's for entertainment.

Check out what's in the library by visiting the catalogue at www.westmeathcoco.ie/library from the comfort of home or whilst visiting the library.

Children's events

Visit your local library or check out www.westmeathcoco.ie/library as there are often events and competitions suitable for children. Watch out for Parent & Toddler sessions, Teddy Bears picnics, story-times and competitions. Also get involved in our Summer Reading Challenge which encourages families to read together.

We welcome visits by pre-school groups and depending on staff availability may be able to provide someone to read a story for the children. Even when we cannot provide a reader we can provide a welcoming space for you to read to your group. Contact your local library to arrange a group visit for your pre-school or nursery.