

Mayo Students Achieve Excellent Results BA in Early Years Care Level 7

15 Mayo childcare workers have just completed their level 7 degree after two and a half years study with the Department of Lifelong Learning, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) in Ballyheane Community Centre. The course was operated on an outreach basis with lecturers travelling from Athlone two nights per week plus one Saturday per month to deliver the programme.



Back Row (left - Right):

Annette Regan, Antoinette Duffy, Aideen Tierney, Avril Green, Emma Sloyan, Sheila Prendergast, Paula Canning, Maeve Thompson, Ceire Loftus, Sinead Cooney, Mary Hunt

Front Row (left - Right):

Felicia Akinsulire, Cathrina Concannon, Sandra Molloy, Patricia Rowland

The students have achieved fantastic results, with 7 being awarded distinctions. The students funded the programme themselves and are commended for the exceptional commitment of their time, money and effort in order to make a positive contribution to the development of early years care and education in Mayo.



County Childcare Committee

Coiste Chúram Leanaí

Chontae Mhaigh Eo

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RÁITEAS AN CHATHAOIRLIGH Chairperson Foreword

*Edith Geraghty, Chairperson -
Mayo County
Childcare Committee*

Hello everyone, well Spring has sprung, and we hope you are looking forward to a well-earned break over the Spring holidays. In this edition of the Mayo CCC newsletter you will find information relating to the National Childcare Funding Programmes, Aistear /Siolta practise and examples of practise in services right here in Mayo. As Chair of the County Childcare Committee I am constantly struck by the level of commitment and dedication of the early years sector. Early years workers, service owners, service managers, service voluntary committee members all bring huge knowledge and commitment to provide a quality early years' service to our youngest citizens and their families. As Chair of the County Childcare Committee I wish to acknowledge and recognise this amazing effort. I wish you and yours a very peaceful and enjoyable Spring holiday break and I hope you get to enjoy time with loved ones and get to enjoy the magic that nature provides all around us at this time of year.

Uasdátú cúram Leanaí Inacmhainne - National Childcare Funding Programmes Update

by Jim Power, Co-ordinator

Hello all, and welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of the Mayo CCC newsletter. Hope this note finds you well.

Here are some updates regarding the main elements of the national childcare funding programmes.

As the local agent of the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, Mayo CCC aim to provide early years services in Mayo with as much support and guidance as possible, to provide positive outcomes for the children attending early years services. Please do not hesitate to contact Mayo CCC (or Pobal where appropriate) for this support and guidance.

Please see below an update for Early Years Services about the national childcare funding programmes and specifically an update on the implementation of the Affordable Childcare Scheme. We hope you find this information useful.

During April 2017 the Minister for the Department of Children & Youth Affairs . Dr. Katherine Zappone TD called on the sector to work with her to deliver a suite of measures to make childcare more affordable to parents from September 2017. The sector responded by delivering these programmes to the families of more than 66,000 children (95% of our expected target). These supports are now available in 9 out of every 10 applicable services. In the meantime, officials from the Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) and from Pobal have been developing the IT, legislative and administrative infrastructure needed to fully roll out the Affordable Childcare Scheme.

The various consultative groups and forums have strongly advised that the DCYA should not introduce the scheme until such time as the necessary IT system is fully functioning and thoroughly tested. The various timescales in relation to peer review of systems, open tender for IT and the passage of legislation through the Oireachtas mean that the minister has decided that the best course of action to take will be to continue the current CCS and TEC schemes in September 2018.

Whilst the launch date for the full Affordable Childcare Scheme is not confirmed as yet the Minister felt it was important to flag to childcare services at this early juncture that it will not be launching in time for September 2018.

In last October 2017's budget the Minister secured a commitment for a further €18m in Programme Support Payments for 2018 and a 7% increase in capitation for the delivery of the ECCE programme. These advances will of course remain in place. The Independent Review of the Cost of Delivery of Quality Childcare is underway and will provide us with the necessary evidence for further, much needed investment into the sector.

Turning our attention to the Capital Funding scheme for 2018, may we wish you every success in your applications for the funding. It is scheduled that you will be informed of the outcome of your application during May 2018 by Pobal.

Also, with regard to the Learner Fund Bursary 2018, it is scheduled that successful applications will be notified during May 2018.

Benefits of Learning a Second Language in Preschool our experience

by Derrywash Preschool

Derrywash Montessori Preschool is located in Derrywash NS just outside Castlebar. Since January 2017 we have been engaging with Nathalie Saive. A native French person who lives locally. I got to know Nathalie when her youngest daughter attended Derrywash Montessori. It was clear Nathalie has a love of children & often shared her French culture and experiences with the children which they loved. Today, we know that a curriculum needs to be child-centred, developmentally appropriate, differentiated, inclusive and fun. When Nathalie approached me about delivering French classes to Derrywash Montessori I was excited to see how the children would respond to the wonderful gift of language.

Nathalie delivers the French sessions through the award winning French Programme, La Jolie Ronde. From the moment Nathalie came to deliver the classes the children were enthusiastic and excited. Nathalie delivers the classes holistically, through role play, sensory play, songs, rhymes, puppetry, stories, and hands on experiences. Nathalie liaises with the preschool and links the French sessions & activities with the relevant theme & emergent curriculum. Week by week I observe the children enjoying a fun & positive approach to language learning while also observing the children's enthusiasm and self confidence in the language and culture grow.



The benefits of learning a second language in preschool are numerous. Children can pick up a second language much more easily than adults, as unlike adults they do not feel self-conscious about the way they sound when pronouncing the words. As well as personally observing the children's social and academic development such as verbal communication, mathematical development & social skills I believe the language experience Nathalie delivers also heightens the children's cultural awareness and understanding of differences which has led to many spontaneous and emergent discussions and projects in our preschool. I believe Nathalie's authentic French accent and love of children are what make the classes so enjoyable for the children. Her background in childcare and current childminding & afterschool business contributes to her understanding of children's behaviour and different needs.

The children's attitude is so positive to learning French & long after Nathalie leaves and throughout the week I hear the children singing french songs & counting through French as they play, as if French was their mother tongue. It is really quite extraordinary. Their ability to absorb the language comes so naturally to them.

La Jolie Ronde classes are interactive and fun. I can only speak from experience about how much the children in our preschool enjoy the classes. I would highly recommend Nathalie & La Jolie Ronde teaching resources to any preschool. For more information visit the website: www.lajolieronde.co.uk or call Nathalie on 087 2704151

Aistear Siolta Practice Guide

Learning opportunities



Hello Everyone. I hope this note finds you well. Over the last number of editions of the newsletter we have provided a brief overview of the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide. In the Spring 2017 edition of the Newsletter we concluded our series of articles. However, we did say that in future editions we would provide examples and ideas for Practice taken from the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide. These examples and ideas will be in the form of Learning Opportunities. The learning experience will be an example or an idea for practice under one of the 6 pillars of practice. We hope you find these useful too.

In our Winter 2017 edition we showed a learning experience example of how one service supports one of the learning goals in Aistear's theme of Well-being.

In this edition we show examples of the learning opportunities in Aistear's theme of Exploring and Thinking. These examples and further examples of learning opportunities can be found on the NCCA website at www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/aistear-siolta-practice-guide.

Theme: Exploring & Thinking

Age group: Babies

The adult...

Promotes a warm and trusting relationship with babies through play and exploration:

1. Maximises opportunities for meaningful adult interactions with babies (observing before interacting) during play and sensory explorations
2. Strikes a balance between adult and babies' initiations so that the interactions can be meaningful, regularly following the baby's lead
3. Focuses babies' attention on a particular object or person, for example by pointing to a feature
4. Affirms babies' explorations and discoveries, for example using wide eyes, a smile, clapping hands, describing what the babies have done, signalling their achievements to another adult or child



Provides opportunities for babies to develop physical skills and spatial awareness:

1. Places appealing objects out of babies' reach encouraging them to move towards them
2. Provides safe surfaces and objects (toys, furniture) which give babies something to hold on to, to balance against, or to pull themselves up with
3. Encourages babies to crawl, lift, slide, walk, or climb in, on, around, under, over, and through things
4. Gives babies playthings and objects such as balls, bean-bags, objects that rattle, spinning tops, cylinders of different sizes, and boxes of different shapes and colours to investigate and make discoveries

Creates opportunities for babies to experience cause and effect:

1. Helps babies to see what happens when they interact with playthings and everyday objects such as cutlery, saucepans, sponges, soft balls and keys in different ways, for example touching, shaking, pushing, rolling, squeezing, throwing, picking up and handing back a toy as babies repeatedly drop it until they tire of the game
2. Provides wheelee objects and toys for babies to push and pull on different surfaces

Provides opportunities for sensory exploration that help babies to develop ideas about how the world works:

1. Creates opportunities for babies to experience different sights, sounds, smells, tastes, movements, textures, and temperatures indoors and outdoors, while being mindful of the babies' sensitivities towards these
2. Plans space for babies to move, explore and touch things
3. Provides safe, natural objects for exploratory play, for example a basket of objects (including shells, wool, and wooden spoons), water for splashing, sand, grass for sitting on



Duty Social Work Team Mayo.

Plays hiding games to help babies to develop the concept of object permanence (the knowledge that things still exist even when they are out of sight):

1. Hides a favourite toy under a towel while babies look on and encourages them to find it, for example, I wonder where ... has gone. Do you know Caitlín
2. Looks at lift-the-flap books with babies
3. Searches for things together with babies: I wonder where your teddy is, Pachie? Let's look under the cot. Not there, maybe it's in the kitchen. Did you see it anywhere?

Provides all babies with opportunities to play and explore:

1. Puts things within reach and gives support to young babies to grab them
2. Encourages babies with visual impairment to explore using touch and sound
3. Encourages and joins in older babies' pretend play and responds to their initiatives, such as pretending to drink from the empty cup that they offer, crawling after the babies on the floor, speaking into the toy mobile phone, stirring the saucepan with the wooden spoon
4. Makes sure that babies with hearing impairment can see what is happening and can see people's faces when they speak
5. Uses blankets to help babies with motor impairment to roll over
6. Uses number in everyday routines, for example putting on two socks, drinking from one bottle, moving four wheels on the buggy or push-toy.

Conclusion

We hope you have found this brief article useful and interesting. To find lots more examples and ideas for practice please use the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide by simply logging into www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/aistear-siolta-practice-guide

Hope this helps. We will be printing more examples of practice in the Summer 2018 edition of the Mayo CCC newsletter.

By Jim Power - Co-ordinator

The purpose of the Duty Social Work Team Mayo is to screen all referrals of Child abuse/child welfare concerns received into the Social Work Department. The Social Workers complete Intake Records and Initial Assessments on referrals received into the department where required. The team diverts referrals as appropriate to Prevention Partnership and Family Support and other appropriate services. The team provides advice and information to the public and other professionals. The team also accepts referrals in relation to retrospective allegations of child abuse.

Assessments are carried out in line with Signs of Safety the national approach to Child Protection.

Referrals are accepted in relation to physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and high end child welfare concerns.

Under the Children First Act 2005 Mandatory reporting was implemented. This means certain people (mandated persons) must by law report to Tusla any incidents of harm to a child that meets a specified threshold. This threshold is as follows:

- a. Assault, ill treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or
- b. Sexual abuse of a child

The Duty Social Work Team Mayo consists of three Social Workers one based in each Social Work Department (Ballina, Castlebar and Swinford). There is an admin linked to the team and a Social Work Team Leader.

Castlebar office- Mary Malee 0949042284

Ballina Office - Kelly Madden 09621511

Swinford Office - Maire Trayers 0949050133

Mill Lane -Laura Durcan Admin and Breda Quinn Social Work Team Leader 0949049137

Referrals can be made directly to each Social Work office or through the portal at www.tusla.ie.

If you have an immediate concern for a child's safety, please contact the duty Social Worker directly (office hours 9 - 5) or outside of office hours please contact An Garda Siochana.

Ain Emergent Inquiry-Based Curriculum

By Angela Cope, Development Worker, Mayo CCC

An Emergent and Inquiry-based Curriculum is at the heart of our Aistear Curriculum Framework. This type of curriculum cannot be bought off-the-shelf as children's and practitioners' interests, questions and experiences are the starting points for curriculum planning.

It is important to explain this approach to learning to parents of young children as they may be more familiar with a prescribed curriculum. One way of doing this is to provide concrete examples of extended lines of inquiry that develop in your setting. Group learning journals/floor books, display panels and your setting's newsletter are ideal for this.

An example of a project that arose from children's interests in a local Early Years Setting, which was carefully facilitated by skilful practitioners, is described below.

Children's Questions

"Can dogs go on planes?" a young boy asked one day at Greeting Time. The topic of where dogs were allowed had been a recurring concern for many of the children in the setting ever since a visit from a local musician with his guide dog. For example, the questions compiled by the children for a visit by the librarian had also included "Why aren't dogs allowed in libraries?" together with "Why do you have to be quiet?", "Why can't you eat in libraries?" and "How many books can you borrow?"

The topic of dogs on planes had been set in the context of a different conversation that Monday morning. It had been a particularly sunny weekend and some of the children's families had taken the opportunity to go to one of the many local beaches. The children were eager to share their experiences with the practitioners and their peers. Discussions ensued about which beaches children had visited, what they had done there, how long the journey had taken, and so on. Some children also spoke about going to the beach when on holiday in other countries with their families. So, the question about dogs had appeared again but this time in connection to planes and holidays.

The enthusiasm about the beach and holidays was noted by the practitioners throughout the day. Several children's increased eagerness to play in the sand area was clearly visible. For others, snack time became a picnic at the beach. Threads of stories from the beach also became evident in several children's pretend play narratives about preparing for the journey. With the help of one of the practitioners, two children made a list of everything that needed to be packed - swimming costumes, sun cream, sunhats, buckets, spades, a picnic, towels etc.

As that day was also particularly sunny a discussion concerning self-care and specifically putting on sun cream and a sun hat before going outside became more meaningful to the children as it had been a lived experience for many of them that weekend.

At home time practitioners took the opportunity to exchange information with some parents about the children's discussions that day on trips to the beach and they managed to build a more detailed picture of where some of the children had been and what they had done.

A Project is Born

A small sample of the activities and conversations which occurred over the coming days and indeed weeks are now described:

Several conversations took place among children about going on holiday. Practitioners extended children's narratives on their stories by asking them questions about how they travelled, how long it took, who went, what they did etc. Practitioners were always mindful of carefully timing questions to extend children's thoughts without overburdening them with questions.

Small group activities which practitioners offered during Free Play Time included a mapping exercise to see how far each beach was in the local area. Beaches included Old Head, Bertra, Keel, Mulranny, Enniscrone and so on. Practitioners brought in a map of County Mayo and helped children carefully fix pieces of string from Castlebar to each of the relevant beaches. Children then used the string to measure the distances of each beach. The adults helped children to make a tally of the distances to see which was furthest. Discussing the distance to the local beach or holiday destination provided practitioners with the opportunity to introduce and/or build vocabulary around the topic of transport and mathematical literacy around distance and the concept of time.

The open-ended art resources on offer included many cardboard boxes and some children chose to make suitcases to pack their belongings for a family holiday. This activity became very popular among the children. Lists of what to pack were drawn up and a weighing scales was added the following day so that children could weigh their suitcases as one child shared their knowledge of how it was necessary to weight suitcases at the airport.

The list of items to pack included a passport and as a result some children chose to make their own. This became a very popular activity and children discussed the information with each other, practitioners and family members about what personal details needed to be included in a passport such as names, dates of birth, places of birth etc. Children's photos were printed off and placed in their very own preschool passports. Children who wanted were encouraged to include their own 'signatures' while others opted to include their fingerprint.

An Expert comes to visit

Conversations about the airport were regularly noted among the children. What happens at the airport and going on an airplane resulted in many interesting discussions. The proximity of Knock Airport afforded a special opportunity for the Early Years Setting as several children had experienced visiting it either to take a flight or collect a family member. These children enthusiastically shared their knowledge with their peers. Vocabulary such as arrivals, departures, check-in desk, shop, café, car park, pilot, air hostess, ground hostess were used and/or introduced.

The practitioners invited a family member who worked at the airport to come to talk to the children about what it was like and what she did in her job. In preparation for the visit the practitioners asked the children to think about what things they would like to know about the airport. A list was compiled and placed on the children's message board so that it could be added to as children thought of more questions. This continued for a number of days before the visitor came in order to give the children adequate time to think about what they wanted to know. The children discussed the questions that morning in small groups before the visitor came and were encouraged and assisted, when appropriate, in asking their questions. Practitioners helped children draw up a ground map of the airport to locate the different features. Use of the Terminal Map on the airport's website added additional information for both adults and children.

Documentation and Self-Assessment

The above activities and many more were captured in the documentation of children's learning in their individual child portfolios, group learning journal/floor books, display panels and the setting's newsletter. For many weeks the children enjoyed recounting or self-assessing their own learning while looking at the documented project. Sharing this project with parents gave families information to build discussions with their children on what they do in preschool.

Concluding Comments

The activities and lines of inquiry which arose out of this project were numerous and the above description can only detail a small sample of them. Space does not permit us to describe everything which occurred as a direct result of practitioners following an Emergent and Inquiry-based approach to curriculum planning. The children in this setting were immersed in meaningful learning activities carefully nested in the context of their families and personal

experiences. They engaged in hypothesizing, predicting, observing and recording their findings. The project provided playful contexts for developing both intellectual and social competences while nurturing positive dispositions for learning.

Thank you

We wish to thank Little VIP's Preschool in Breaffy for sharing the above project with us and we hope you find it helpful in sharing with parents what an Emergent and Inquiry Based Curriculum looks like in practice.

Further Reading and Resources

Katz, L., Chard, S. C. & Kogan, Y. (2014). Engaging children's minds: The project approach. (3rd Ed), Praeger.

Jones, E. and Nimmo, J. (2000). Emergent Curriculum. Washington, D.C. NAEYC.

Aistear Siolta Practice Guide Resources

Understanding an Emergent and Inquiry-based Curriculum (Podcast) by Dr John Nimmo under About, Video. (<http://aistearsiolta.ie/en/About/>)

The Visual Arts in an Emergent & Inquiry-based Curriculum (Podcast) by Evelyn Egan Rainey, under Curriculum Foundations, Element 1. (<http://aistearsiolta.ie/en/Curriculum-Foundations/>)

Information Booklet: Planning & Assessing for Children's learning and Development (Birth 6 years), under Planning & Assessing, Resources for Sharing, Templates. (<http://aistearsiolta.ie/en/Planning-and-Assessing-using-Aistears-Themes/>)

Medium Term Planning Template Spider Diagram, under Planning & Assessing, Resources for Sharing, Templates. (<http://aistearsiolta.ie/en/Planning-and-Assessing-using-Aistears-Themes/>)

Your local library as a resource

It is important to note that throughout this project the practitioners read topic-related books to children both individually and in small groups to stimulate children's sustained interest.

Childcare settings can register for a Block Loan card at their local library. This enables them to take out up to thirty books at a time free of charge. Register an email address when you are signing up, and you will receive reminders when your books are due back. Add a four-digit pin number to your library account and you can renew your own books online and order books from any library in the country.

Mayo library branches near you:

Achill (098) 20910; Ballina (096) 70833; Ballinrobe (094) 9541896; Ballyhaunis (094) 9630161; Bellmullet (097) 82555; Castlebar (094) 9047936; Charlestown (094) 9255934; Clare Island (098) 29838; Claremorris (094) 9371666; Crossmolina (096) 31939; Foxford (094) 9256040; Kiltimagh (094) 9381786; Louisburgh (098) 66658; Swinford (094) 9253120; Westport (098) 25747. Or check out www.mayolibrary.ie for more information on events and a full library catalogue. Follow the library on Facebook at Mayo County Library and on Twitter @mayolibrary.

Soundworlds Early Years Music Programme - September 2018



Mayo CCC & Music Generation Mayo have collaborated over the past number of years to develop an Early Years Music Programme called Soundworlds. The programme has received much positive feedback and we have been continually reviewing it to make improvements and introduce positive changes to impact the experience of the young children and services involved.

Mayo CCC will be taking expressions of interest until the end of April 2018 from childcare services who are interested in participating in the programme for a full academic year, (approx. 23 weeks) September 2018 to June 2019. Services will then be selected

based on an agreed criteria and a willingness to engage with the programme.

In June 2018 it is anticipated that initial selected services will meet with all parties involved in the delivery to explore what engagement in the programme would entail, e.g. aims and objectives, a typical music session, documentation of sessions, integration into your service, available resources etc. Following this information session, services will be given the opportunity to consider if they wish to be involved going forward.

If you feel you would like to have your service participate in the programme and embed music based activities into your daily routine please submit an expression of interest via email to Mary Corcoran at MCCC - mayochildcare@mayococo.ie. The deadline to express interest is Friday April 27th 2018. Mayo CCC will then follow the procedure as outlined above and select services to participate in the programme after applying a selection criteria.

Imeachtair Beartaithe - Upcoming Events

Turning Play Inside Out
Conference in GMT,
Saturday 24th March
with high profile speaker and
workshops on outdoor play.
Log onto
www.turningplayinsideout.ie
for full details.

Coirnéal na Gaeilge Irish Corner

Aon Dó
Aon dó,
Aon, dó, trí
Luichíní istigh sa tuíl!
Aon dó,
Aon, dó, trí
Luichíní istigh sa tuíl!

Ceathair, cúig
Ceathair, cúig, sé
Tháinig gandal is cúpla gé!
Ceathair, cúig,
Ceathair, cúig, sé
Tháinig gandal is cúpla gé!

Seacht, ocht,
Seacht, ocht, naoi
Thosaigh siad ag déanamh spraoi!
Seacht, ocht,
Seacht, ocht, naoi
Thosaigh siad ag déanamh spraoi!

Stór Focal / Vocabulary
An t-Earrach - Spring
Lá Fhéile Pádraig - St. Patrick's Day
Seamróg - Shamrock
An Cháisc - Easter
Ubh - Egg
Ubh Chásca - Easter Egg
Domhnach Cásca - Easter Sunday
Uain - lambs
Glas - green



MAYO

County Childcare Committee
Coiste Chúram Leanaí
Chontae Mhaigh Eo

Cá bhfuil muid - WHERE TO FIND US

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Check out our website

www.mayochildcare.ie

for a complete list of training events organised by MCCC and other organisations
and for a list of childcare services in the county

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