



CHILDMINDING IRELAND

Supporting Ireland's Childminders; Minding Ireland's Children

SIOLTA AISTEAR GUIDE

Making the Links for Childminding

Yvonne Kelly: MA CFCS, BA (hons) ECE

2015

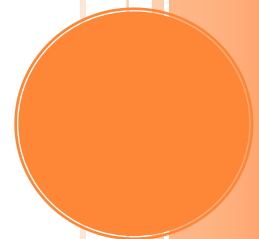


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
AISTEAR THEMES	5
SÍOLTA STANDARD 1	8
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES LINKING STANDARD 1 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES	
SÍOLTA STANDARD 2	12
ENVIRONMENTS CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES LINKING STANDARD 2 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES	
SÍOLTA STANDARD 3	17
PARENTS AND FAMILIES CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES LINKING STANDARD 3 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES	
SÍOLTA STANDARD 4	21
CONSULTATION CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES LINKING STANDARD 4 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES	
SÍOLTA STANDARD 5	25
INTERACTIONS CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES LINKING STANDARD 5 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES	

SÍOLTA STANDARD 6 **31**

PLAY

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 7 **37**

CURRICULUM

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 8 **41**

PLANNING AND EVALUATION

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 9 **44**

HEALTH AND WELFARE

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 10 **49**

ORGANISATION

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 11 **53**

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 12 **56**

COMMUNICATION

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 13 **59**

TRANSITIONS

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 14 **63**

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 15 **66**

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SÍOLTA STANDARD 16 **69**

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CHILD'S ROLE, CHILDMINDER'S ROLE, KEY LEARNING AND OUTCOMES
LINKING STANDARD 6 TO AISTEAR PRINCIPLES

SIOLTA AISTEAR GUIDE

Making the Links for Childminding

Introduction

Childminding is the most popular form of Childcare in Ireland. It is small group care of children of mixed ages undertaken in a family home environment. For statutory notified Childminders the Pre-school Regulations (2006) provide guided practice. However exemptions set out in the current regulatory framework means that the majority of Childminders in Ireland are not required to notify their service to Tusla and are outside inspection processes. This guide links Childminding practice to the national Quality Frameworks of Síolta and Aistear, providing a reference point for Quality practice for all Childminders. It prompts reflective practice and allows Childminders to measure what is done in everyday Childminding.

Ultimately, quality is about providing a positive experience for the children that you care for and educate. Research has found that good quality early years services has the most positive effect on children. Quality Standards in Early Years is guided by Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, (2006) and Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, (2009) and more recently the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (2015). We will focus on the principles underpinning both of these frameworks and how they can be implemented in practice in Childminding settings.

What is Síolta?

Síolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and was developed by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) in 2006 for the Department of Education and Skills. Síolta is the Irish word for “seeds” and reflects the fact that we are sowing the seeds of quality in various types of Early Years settings including Childminding in home based environments, pre-schools, full and part-time daycare and primary schools.

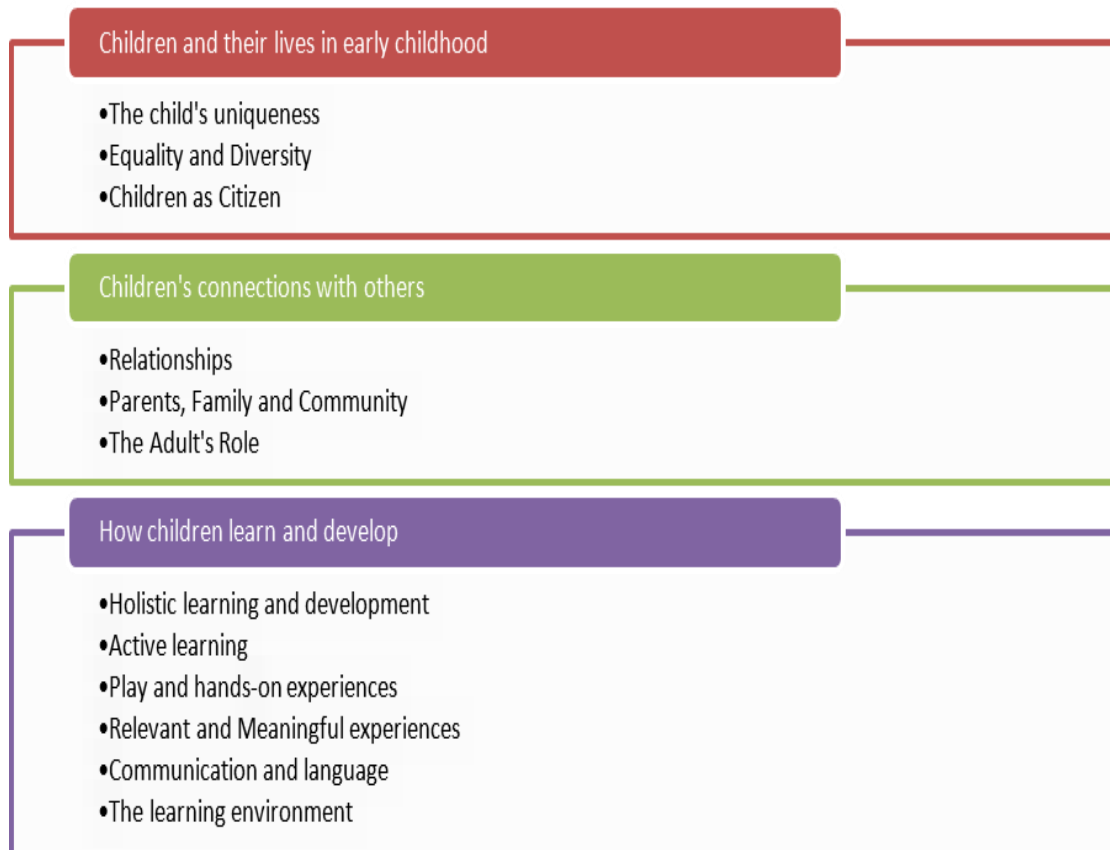
Síolta is a quality assessment programme (QAP) and asks you to think about what you are doing in a very detailed way with the children, to describe it and then imagine if you could do it differently with better outcomes. At implementation stage, you provide evidence, of your high quality Childminding practices and procedures, usually in words, photographs, children’s drawings or pieces of work. Childminding Ireland’s task is to help you identify and gather this evidence. There are sixteen ‘Standards of Quality’, which define quality practice which are further broken down into components. Each component has a number of signposts for reflection and ‘think abouts.’

What is Aistear?

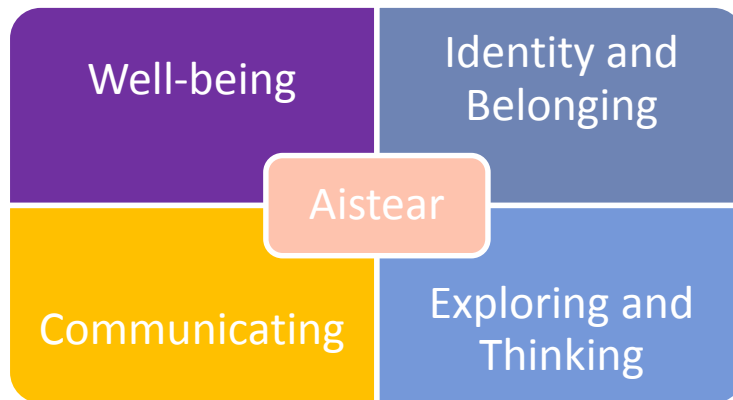
Aistear is the National Curriculum Framework developed in 2009 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Aistear is the Irish word for Journey, reflecting the educational journey of the child. It is designed for use in early years' settings including Childminding. Using the broad learning goals of Aistear you can decide how best to adapt your aspirations to make learning even more enjoyable and rewarding for the children.

Aistear Themes and Principles

Aistear is underpinned by twelve principles of early learning and development which are grouped into three categories. See table below. It also has four interconnected themes and four sets of guidelines.



Aistear uses four themes to describe learning and development. (NCCA, 2009). See figure 2 below.



Well-being is about children being confident, happy and healthy. (NCCA, 2009)

The 4 aims are:

- Children will be strong psychologically and socially
- Children will be as healthy and fit as they can be
- Children will be creative and spiritual
- Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life

Learning Goals provide more detail on this aspect of children’s learning and development. Sample Learning Opportunities give ideas for practice.

Identity and Belonging 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 (NCCA, 2009).

The 4 aims are:

- Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories
- Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended
- Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others
- Children will see themselves as capable learners.

Communicating 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 (NCCA, 2009). The 4 aims are:

- Children will use non-verbal communication skills
- Children will use language

- Children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language
- Children will express themselves creatively and imaginatively

Exploring and Thinking 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. (NCCA, 2009) The 4 aims are:

- Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them
- 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
- Children will explore ways to represent ideas, feelings, thoughts, objects, and actions through symbols
- Children will have positive attitudes towards learning and develop dispositions like curiosity, playfulness, perseverance, confidence, resourcefulness, and risk-taking.

This Guide will look at each of the 16 Síolta Standards and their respective components (75) focusing on how quality practice can be related to your everyday work with Children. It includes the roles of the Child and the Childminder and outlines key learning and the outcomes for children in relation to each of the Standards. Each Síolta Standard is then linked to the Aistear themes and relevant Principles.

Síolta Standard One: Rights of the Child

"Ensuring that each child's rights are met requires that she/he is enabled to exercise choice and to use initiative as an active participant and partner in her/his own development and learning." (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

There are three components in Síolta Standard 1. Try to keep in mind how you can meet these components in relation to the three different age ranges: 0 to 18 months, 12 to 36 months and 2½ to 6 years)

Síolta Component 1.1

Each child has opportunities to make choices, is enabled to make decisions, and has her/his choices and decisions respected.

Place the child at the centre when planning daily routines. Provide opportunities for children to make decisions about play activities and enable all children, particularly those that have communication difficulties in a way that aids the decision making process. A balance between child chosen and adult chosen needs to be achieved.

Síolta Component 1.2

Each child has opportunities and is enabled to take the lead, initiate activity, be appropriately independent and is supported to solve problems.

The child needs to be supported to become independent appropriate to their age and stage of development. Each child needs to be considered and responded to as an individual. Childminders need to provide problem solving activities within the daily routine including conflict resolution.

Síolta Component 1.3

Each child is enabled to participate actively in the daily routine, in activities, in conversations and in all other appropriate situations, and is considered as a partner by the adult.

It is important to ensure that each child is an active participant within the daily routine. Childminders need to be responsive to children of all ages with an understanding of the level of development the child is at. Adults should be supportive of the children within a group situation. Childminders need to know when to give the child the space they need during their play and situations when they are needed to intervene, particularly during

group play situations.

Child's Role

It is a child's right to be an active participant of society who makes independent choices and decisions, and is considered as a partner by the Childminder in the home based environment.

Childminder's Role: to Support the Rights of the Child

Childminders need to ensure that the child is supported in making choices and decisions. High levels of involvement are gained when children are engaged in play made through interest led choices. Childminders need to be able to guide children to be active participants.

This can be supported with an understanding of the level of support that each child needs. Therefore the adult needs to know when to get involved and when to take a step back. The Childminder should be responsive and sensitive when engaging with the children in their care. Childminders should acknowledge and support children's preferences in relation to food, security objects, nap times and play activities. Children's interests should be incorporated into the daily routine. Therefore it is important to balance child led and adult led activities. Childminders must support children with additional needs to make choices for example through the use of visual aids such as Picture PECS.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder should be aware that by giving children choices and enabling children to pursue their interests, they are encouraging children to become active participants in society and therefore promoting children's rights actively.

Outcomes for Children

Children will become independent learners with an ability to make choices and decisions within a home environment. The child will become an active member of society who can contribute to the wider community.

Linking Síolta Standard 1: Rights of the Child to Aistear Principles and Guidelines

Standard 1: Rights of the Child	Aistear Principles Child's Uniqueness Children as Citizens Active Learning
	Aistear Guidelines Interactions Play Assessment

Childminders support children's rights by acknowledging the child's uniqueness with their own life story and recognising that they are part of a family and community. This is reflected by sharing information with parents on a daily basis.

Childminders support children as citizens by recognising children's interests and needs and by involving children in decision making in their play and other daily activities.

Childminders enable active learning by giving children opportunities to explore their environment, learn through their senses, and to learn by doing.

Linking Síolta Standard 1: Rights of the Child to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 1 LG6 Make decisions and choices about their own learning and development

Identity and Belonging

Aim 3 LG1 Express their views and help make decisions in matters that affect them

Síolta Standard 2: Environments

“Enriching environments, both indoor and outdoor (including materials and equipment) are well maintained, safe, available, accessible, adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and offer a variety of challenging and stimulating experiences.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

There are eight components in Síolta Standard 2.

Síolta Component 2.1

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

Childminders need to think about the layout of the home based environment that the children in their care have access to. The environment has been referred to as the ‘third teacher’ and both indoor and outdoor environments need to ensure that children have opportunities that provide a source of learning. It is important to ensure safe surroundings and facilities for children to rest and sleep. Children need to have freedom of movement and be able to participate in both individual and group play. Think about a free flow system between indoor and outdoor environments.

Síolta Component 2.2

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

The environment needs to be accessible and adaptable to all children including those with additional needs. Materials need to be representative of children from all cultural backgrounds. Providing materials that are natural provide children with opportunities for sensory development. Open ended materials enhance creative learning opportunities and can be explored by babies, children, pre-school children and After-school children.

Síolta Component 2.3

The indoor and outdoor environment is well maintained and ensures comfortable and pleasant surroundings for children and adults.

The indoor and outdoor environments need to provide appropriate heating, lighting and ventilation. Health and hygiene needs to be considered.

Síolta Component 2.4

The environment promotes the safety, both indoors and outdoors, of all children and adults.

It is important that Childminders carry out a risk assessment of the indoor and outdoor environments. The environment should not carry any hazards to children. A first aid kit should be kept in your home.

Síolta Component 2.5

The outdoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

Children need to have access to outdoor environments, ideally in your home environment where children have regular access. Children need to engage in different types of play outdoors. Ensure that they have appropriate clothing available to them when it is cold, raining or snowing or that there are shaded areas during hot summer days. Children should be given opportunities to engage in safe risk play. Childminders should provide opportunities for children to visit other outdoor environments such as local parks, playgrounds, library or shops.

Síolta Component 2.6

The indoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children.

The home based environment needs to facilitate the development of social interaction through play activities and during the daily routine.

Síolta Component 2.7

There is an appropriate amount of equipment and materials within the setting (both indoors and outdoors) for use by individual children and groups of children.

Provide materials that offer children various types of indoor and outdoor play opportunities including imaginative play, construction play, floor activities, baking materials, sensory play, creative play, music and movement, ICT, heuristic or exploratory play, physical play or outings. When you are providing activities for children always think about the learning opportunities that children will gain from them. Various themes that you incorporate into play should be based on children's interests.

Síolta Component 2.8

The environment provides for the safe management of food consumption.

When providing food to children you need to think about food safety and hygiene. Think about the purchase, storage, cooking and consumption of food.

Child's Role

Much of the child's time is spent exploring indoor and outdoor environments within the Childminder's home. Children can engage in activities that are developmentally appropriate and provide them with challenging learning experiences. Children can play and explore in diverse environments that allows creativity and enriching experiences through the use of sensorial and natural materials.

Childminder's Role to Support Environments

Childminders will create a safe, pleasant and comfortable environment where good hygiene practices are in place and that offers a healthy eating environment. You need to ensure that both indoor and outdoor environments are child friendly and offer stimulating and challenging learning experiences. The Childminder will ensure that the environment is accessible for young children of varying ages where children can move freely. Both indoor and outdoor environments will offer experiences that are developmentally challenging and age appropriate and will extend children's learning. The adult will observe the child's interests and needs and will plan to accommodate environments that provide opportunities for deep level learning.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will create a safe and engaging environment that enhances creativity and freedom of movement both indoors and outdoors. You should think of the environment as the third teacher and recognise the importance that the environment has on young children's well-being and learning.

Outcomes for Children

Children should feel comfortable to eat and relax in a safe and hygienic environment. The child should be able to use certain areas that are accessible to them in a free and comfortable way where they can engage with the environment in a learning capacity. They will use sensory and open ended materials in a way that allows them to explore, be creative and learn. Children will gain mastery of their physical development through physical activities. Children will develop musical skills and engage in dramatic play. Síolta Standard 2 is closely linked to the following Aistear Themes, and Aistear Principles.

Linking Síolta Standard 2: Environments to Aistear Principles and

Guidelines

Síolta Standard 2: Environments	Aistear Principles The Learning Environment Active Learning Play and Hands on Experiences
	Guidelines Interactions Play

Childminders support children’s learning by ensuring that the learning environment is well planned, accessible and offers a wide range of developmentally appropriate experiences for children.

Childminders support active learning in the environment by ensuring the layout and resources of the indoor and outdoor environments provide challenging diverse and creative experiences for children.

Childminders support play and hands on experience by creating an environment that promotes independence and is stimulating and challenging where children can develop and practice skills.

Linking Síolta Standard 2: Environments to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 1 LG5: In partnership with the adult children will respect themselves, others and the environment.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 1 LG5: Feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment.

Communicating

Aim 3 LG3 In partnership with the adult children will build awareness of the variety of symbols (pictures, print, numbers) used to communicate, and understand that these can be read by others.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim1 LG1 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.

Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families

“Valuing and involving parents and families requires a proactive partnership approach evidenced by a range of clearly stated, accessible and implemented processes, policies and procedures.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Research demonstrates that the more involved parents are in their children’s learning and development, the greater chance children have to succeed, particularly (later on) in their academic performance.

There are four components in Síolta Standard 3.

Síolta Component 3.1

Staff and parents have both formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing about the child.

It is important to have time set aside for both informal and formal meetings with parents. Communication between Childminders and parents lead to a strong partnership approach when information is shared about the child to support the child’s development and learning. Parents should be made to feel welcome in your home and it is important to take their feedback, ideas and opinions into account. Communicate through a medium that suits both you and the parent.

Síolta Component 3.2

There are a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in activities within the setting, taking into account the range of parents’ interests and time constraints.

By encouraging parental participation you will improve the quality of your service. Ask for contributions from parents in terms of their culture, language, skills and interests. Parents contributions will help to create a setting tailored to the children and families that you work with. These shared contributions and skills will also be a great source of learning for all the children and families.

Síolta Component 3.3

Childminders are responsive and sensitive in the provision of information and support to parents in their key role in the learning and development of the child.

Think about how you provide information to the parents. Always respond to parent requests for information about their child or the setting and share information in a way that the parents will receive well. Report facts only and never make a diagnosis. Beware that parents may be aware of an issue but feeling fearful and worried. Time is required for acceptance is required as well as understanding and sensitivity. Some information is overwhelming.

Síolta Component 3.4

The setting has written records of all policies and procedures regarding parental involvement and makes them available to all stakeholders.

You should share your policies and procedures or parents handbook with parents at the induction stages. Parents should be encouraged to give input into these policies and procedures and they should be reviewed regularly.

Child's Role

The child will be part of a central relationship between the Childminder, their parents and families. This collaborative approach will lead to a better understanding of the child's needs and interests.

Childminder's Role to Support Parents and Families

Childminders need to build up positive relationships with the parents and families of the children in their care. It is good practice to have a system of communication where you can share information about the child. This promotes a partnership approach and a shared dialogue between the Childminder and the parents. Childminders involve parents and understand the importance of working with the parent in the best interests of the child. Sensitive information is kept about families which is confidential and information is used on a need to know basis. Childminders are inclusive and reflect the cultures and diversities of families within their work with the child. They are also respectful and mindful of the families' wishes and role in the child's life and understand these may be different to their own. Agreements and policies are shared from the beginning and are clear in order to build and maintain positive relationships with families.

Key Learning for Childminders

Childminders will incorporate a partnership approach with parents into their practice as this is in the best interests of the child.

Outcomes for Children

Children will benefit from positive working relationships between the Childminder and their parents, and families as information is shared about the child as part of a two way communication. Good strong relationships are formed which allow the child to feel safe

and secure and the child's development and learning will be enriched as a direct result of this.

Linking Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families to Aistear Principles and Guidelines

Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families	Aistear Principles Relationships Parents, Family and Community
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Assessment

Childminders nurture relationships and children's connections with adults and other children by acknowledging the importance of attachments and providing interactions that have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

Childminders recognise the importance of parents, family and community in children's lives and the need to share information and work together in partnership to help children to reach their full potential.

Linking Síolta Standard 3: Parents and Families to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 1 LG1: In partnership with the adult, 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.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 2 LG2: In partnership with the adult, children will know that members of their family and community are positively acknowledged and welcomed.

Síolta Standard 4: Consultation

“Ensuring inclusive decision-making requires consultation that promotes participation and seeks out, listens to and acts upon the views and opinions of children, parents and staff, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

There are two components in Síolta Standard 4.

Síolta Component 4.1

The setting actively invites contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders.

You can do this through regular meetings with parents about children’s development, and meetings where parents are encouraged to share their opinions and give ideas on your service. Invite contributions from children, parents, your own family and organisations such as Childminding Ireland or local community groups. You can become actively involved in Childminding networks in your local area or your local County or City Childcare Committee. Consultation with children and families will inform your practice and decision making processes. Incorporate ways that children are involved in decision making and have their views and opinions valued and acted upon.

Síolta Component 4.2

The setting acts upon contributions to decision-making processes and strategies for the development and delivery of the service from a wide range of interested stakeholders, as appropriate.

Opinions and views gained through consultation with stakeholders can be used to review your practice. Policies and procedures of your Childminding setting should inform your practice. You should review and revise your policies and procedures regularly. Policies and procedures should be shared with children, parents and other relevant stakeholders. Think about how you keep records of your policies and procedures.

Child's Role

Children are involved in decision making appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are consulted and encouraged to engage in conversations, share feelings and find solutions to problems. Children's development will flourish as Childminders, parents and various stakeholders are involved in decision making processes and strategies on behalf of the child.

Childminder's Role to Support Consultation

Childminders encourage and develop children's capacity to contribute their views and opinions on various issues relating to their daily experiences. The Childminder will network with other Childminders and be actively involved in local early childhood organisations such as *Childminding Ireland*, City and County Childcare Committees, etc. Ongoing consultation is carried out with the child's family, the Childminder's family and other regulatory officials such as the Pre-school Officer. The Childminder will keep, share and update records of policies and procedures.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will understand that contributions from the child, parents, families and other stakeholders will have a positive impact on the development of their Childminding service.

Consultation with children is valued and this will help children's development to flourish. Consulting with parents will promote a partnership relationship which will ultimately benefit the children. Consulting with organisations, networks or other professionals will enhance your skills as a Childminder and will give you more knowledge with which to offer a quality Childminding service in your home.

Outcomes for Children

"The quality of the relationship between the child's different carers and interested adults is a crucial determinant of the quality of the care and education received by the child...Essentially, working together is about putting the child's welfare first.." (Kay, 2004:121) Ultimately the child will benefit when they are consulted about the matters throughout the daily routine, and when parents, families and other stakeholders such as specialist support services are consulted.

Linking Síolta Standard 4: Consultation to Aistear Principles and Guidelines

Síolta Standard 4: Consultation	Aistear Principles Children as Citizens Communication and Language Parents, Family and Community
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Interactions Assessment

Childminders support children as citizens by listening to their opinions, feelings, ideas and experiences and involving children in decision making.

Childminders support communication and language through conversations with children, giving children time to think and reply, asking children open ended questions, and by encouraging children to name and share their feelings.

Childminders support parents, family and community through ongoing consultation with parents, having regular meetings with parents and community services and seeking input from parents on your service.

Linking Síolta Standard 4: Consultation to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 4 LG1: In partnership with the adult, children will show increasing independence, and be able to make choices and decisions.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 1 LG6: In partnership with the adult, children will express their own ideas, preferences and needs, and have these responded to with respect and consistency.

Communicating

Aim 1 LG5: In partnership with the adult, children will combine non-verbal and verbal communication to get their point across.

Síolta Standard 5: Interactions

“Fostering constructive interactions (child/child, child/adult and adult/adult) requires explicit policies, procedures and practice that emphasise the value of process and are based on mutual respect, equal partnership and sensitivity.”

(Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

There are six components in Síolta Standard 5.

Síolta 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.

Childminders should encourage babies, toddlers and young children’s ability to learn in collaboration with their peers. Children should be encouraged to interact positively and in a co-operative way with the other children. You should be aware of responding to children in a sensitive manner and be conscious of how you engage children’s interests in relation to children’s social interactions with others and in terms of their environment. Babies, toddlers and children will have the opportunity to mix with their peers of other age groups in a home based setting which is a very positive aspect of the service that you offer to children.

Síolta Component 5.2

Each child receives appropriate support to enable her/him to interact positively with other children.

Childminders should support children to interact with their peers other children in your setting. Your role is to provide guidance to children when making friendships, taking turns, sharing and helping one another. This will enable children to develop their social and emotional skills. Children often need support in conflict resolution at this young age and a good approach to use is the High Scope six step approach to conflict resolution. This involves encouraging children to acknowledge their feelings, discuss what the problem is and identify solutions that are agreed by all the children. This will encourage the children to develop problem solving skills when dealing with conflict resolution.

Síolta Component 5.3

The adult uses all aspects of the daily routine (both formal and informal) to interact sensitively and respectfully with the child.

You should think about the interactions that you have with the children during your daily care routines. You should reflect on your verbal and non-verbal interactions with the children. You can develop strong relationships with the child through interactive play. It is important for the children in your setting to feel safe and secure so think about all aspects of your daily routine and how you provide positive and meaningful interactions with the child. It is important that you are sensitive and warm during your interactions with the children and that you consistently respond to children in a sensitive manner.

Síolta 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.

Adults need to think about the ability of each individual child and the level of interaction that they can realistically sustain. You will need to think about the child's concentration span and level of communication in terms of language development and communication abilities. You can support the child's communication skills and language development through play activities provided in your programme. Children with additional needs will need support to do this and you can use visual aids to support this such as using photos. This will support all children as very young children will think and therefore communicate in a concrete rather than an abstract manner. You will need to develop a speaker listener relationship but be aware that you are not the one doing all the talking. Try to use the OWL (Observe, Wait, Listen,) approach when encouraging language development in young children. Try to limit the amount of questions that you ask young children, and when using questions use open ended questions that will challenge and extend children's thinking. When interacting with young children follow their lead. Draw on the child's previous learning to support purposeful play and meaning making.

Síolta Component 5.5

Interactions between the adults within, and associated with the setting, act as a model of respect, support and partnership for the child.

Childminders should also look at their interactions with parents and stand in Childminders, or other adults that you work in collaboration with such as the Public Health Nurse etc. When interacting with parents and other stakeholders you should consider your professionalism and have respect for parents and other adults that you are working with. It is important that when you are sharing information that you have an awareness of confidentiality. You should also think about modelling positive

interactions with the children for other adults. In partnership with parents and other stakeholders you can: discuss ideas, solve problems, listen to each other, share ideas, and value different opinions. You should also have an awareness of other people's cultural differences and beliefs. Think about how these interactions are impacting on the child's learning and development.

Síolta Component 5.6

There is a clear written policy and associated procedures which underpin interactive practice taking place within the setting.

You should have a policy on interactions between children and adults. This should include conflict resolution strategies and procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour or bullying. You should also think about inclusion, anti-bias and cultural awareness in your policies and procedures handbook. It is important to avoid negative stereotypes in your setting. Time should be made to plan how you conduct interactions with the children in keeping with your policy. It is also important to access training if you feel that you would benefit from further knowledge and awareness in this area.

Child's Role

The child is supported and encouraged to interact with children of differing ages in an appropriate and positive way according to their age and stage of development. The child will develop good co-operation, communication and problem solving skills. As a result of this the child will develop language skills and good non-verbal communication. The child will have a good sense of belonging, and a strong positive identity and will have awareness of children's different cultural backgrounds and children with varying needs. Children will develop good social skills and will be able to share with one another and take turns.

Childminder's Role to Support Interactions

Childminders encourage positive interactions throughout the daily routine; at meal times, during indoor and outdoor play, during outings and at tidy up times. They will enable children to interact in pairs and small groups with children of differing ages and support children who have difficulty interacting with other children. Children will be encouraged to co-operate with one another; siblings and children who are older will help younger children. Adults will be mindful of children who have additional needs or English as a second language and how to support these interactions. Adults will support children to resolve conflict using a problem solving approach. Childminders will develop warm, affectionate, sensitive and caring relationships with the children in their care. Meaningful interactions with the child are carried out by the Childminder through good communication practices and by displaying good listening and speaker skills. Positive interactions are built by the Childminder with parents and families that reflect a partnership approach and this will also be underpinned in policies and procedures.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will be aware of the positive impact they can have in terms of interactions with children in their service and within the wider community. You should encourage appropriate and positive interactions between children of different age groups throughout the daily routine and during various activities. Childminders will use a situation that involves resolving conflict as an opportunity for the child to learn new social and problem solving skills. Remember that every interaction that you have with a baby, toddler or young child should be used as a learning opportunity.

Outcomes for Children

The child will be able to sustain positive interactions with children of different ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds, and with adults in a home based environment. The child will have a strong identity and will learn about managing and resolving conflict and building on their own communication, language and social development skills. This will be a basis from which the child can build on in later life and within the wider community.

Linking Síolta Standard 5: Interactions to Aistear Principles and Guidelines

Síolta Standard 5: Interactions	Aistear Principles Play and Hands on Experience Exploratory Play Active Learning Holistic Learning and Development
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Interactions Play Assessment

Childminders support play and hands on experience by supporting interactions with other children, supporting children in learning how to co-operate during group play with others, empathising with others and learning how to deal with conflict.

Childminders support exploratory play through interactions with the environment and equipment that reflect children's own and others cultures, and experiencing different types of play.

Childminders support active learning by providing experiences where children can learn through their senses to explore surrounding materials in the environment and interact enthusiastically with children and adults.

Childminders support holistic learning and development by understanding children's learning and experiences with their family and community. By observing children Childminders can connect new learning with past experiences and plan for future learning.

Linking Síolta Standard 5: Interactions to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 3 LG6: In partnership with the adult, children will understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 3 LG3: In partnership with the adult, children will interact, work co-operatively, and help others.

Communicating

Aim 2 LG1: In partnership with the adult, children will interact with other children and adults by listening, discussing and taking turns in conversation.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 2 LG5: In partnership with the adult, children will collaborate with others to share interests and to solve problems confidently.

Síolta Standard 6: Play

“Promoting play requires that each child has ample time to engage in freely available and accessible, developmentally appropriate and well-resourced opportunities for exploration, creativity and 'meaning making' in the company of other children, with participating and supportive adults and alone, where appropriate.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

There are seven components in Síolta Standard 6.

Síolta 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

You should consider your daily routine and how much time is spent at play. Think about if your daily routine is child or adult directed and how much time is spent indoors or outdoors. Think about the types of play you offer to babies, toddlers, pre-school children and after-school children. Offer play opportunities during daily routines such as using memory skills on shopping trips.

Síolta Component 6.2

When the child is engaged in play/exploration, the equipment and materials provided are freely available and easily accessible to her/him.

It is important that play materials and equipment are easily accessible for the children in your setting. You should ensure that materials and equipment are accessible to children with physical or additional needs. Children should be able to transfer items from one play activity to another.

Síolta Component 6.3

The opportunities for play/exploration provided for the child mirror her/his stage of development, give the child the freedom to achieve mastery and success, and challenge the child to make the transition to new learning and development.

You need to think about the types of play that the child is currently engaging in and the provision of further opportunities so that children can fully explore various types of play. It is important that children have a sense of competence and control in their learning. Adults need to provide opportunities to further children’s development and to provide

opportunities for different types of play such as socio dramatic, construction, symbolic, and imaginative play.

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

Adults should provide plentiful materials which are enough for all the children in your setting. You should think about using natural materials that don't need to be bought. See www.recreate.ie

Síolta 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.

Think about using open ended materials which encourages children to engage in heuristic or exploratory play and will provide opportunities for sensory stimulation in children.

Síolta 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.

Think about your role in relation to participating in the child's play. Provide opportunities for children to play alone and also facilitate group play. You need to be an observer and a listener of children's play. You also need to be able to extend children's learning and thinking. Think about your role as the playful adult.

Síolta 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.

The Childminder should plan the play based curriculum or programme of activities and think about how often this is carried out. You should plan activities that bear in mind interests and developmental needs of the child. All programme plans should be documented.

Child's Role

Much of the child's time is spent leading and engaging in play when in the Childminder's home. Children need to explore and to be creative through play and therefore need a variety of indoor and outdoor activities with opportunities to play alone, with other children and with supportive adults.

Childminder's Role to Support Play

When looking at the daily routine Childminders need to ensure that the child spends a significant time at play and exploration. A variety of playful activities should be provided for every child both indoors and outdoors. Childminders need to consider the environment and ensure that areas of interest are catered for, that incorporate physical play, imaginative play, sensorial play, and creative play etc. Opportunities should be provided for play exploration with other children, with participating and supportive adults and also on their own. The Childminder needs to provide materials appropriate for the child's age and stage of development and ensure that materials are easily accessible and freely available to the child. The Childminder should be adaptable to the changing needs of the child in relation to their learning and development.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder understands the importance of play in children's development and will provide a programme of activities that is play based and centred on children's interests. The importance of documenting observations and feeding these into the programme is practiced in the Childminding setting. The Childminder will encourage children to become independent learners by giving them opportunities to move freely in the home environment with easy access to learning materials. By building a relationship with the child and through observations the Childminder can then plan activities to extend learning opportunities for the child.

Outcomes for Children

Play is how children learn and make sense of the world they live in. Children will become independent learners when given the opportunity to move freely in the home environment with easy access to learning materials. Children use previous learning to make new meaning through learning opportunities in their play. The child needs to be allowed to build confidence and success in play and challenged to move onto the next stage of development.

Linking Síolta Standard 6: Play to Aistear Principles and Guidelines.

Síolta Standard 6: Play

Aistear Principles

Play and Hands on Experience
Exploratory Play
Active Learning
Holistic Learning and Development
The Learning Environment
The Adult's Role
Relevant and Meaningful Experiences
Communication and Language

Aistear Guidelines

Partnerships
Interactions
Play
Assessment

Childminders understand that children learn through play and hands on experience and by provide time and space for children to play on their own or with others.

Childminders support exploratory play by providing toys, equipment and open ended materials that will provide a variety of meaningful learning experiences.

Childminders support active learning by giving children experiences to explore, learn through their senses and support children's discoveries so they can grow as confident and competent learners.

Childminders support children's holistic learning and development by providing play opportunities and learning experiences in areas of cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, physical, social, moral, creative and spiritual development.

Childminders support play in the learning environment by creating a warm and inviting and well-resourced environment that is: stimulating, empowering and challenging.

Childminders role in play is a reciprocal relationship where some play is child led and some adult led and also understand the type of support needed for each child to support their growing confidence and competence.

Childminders provide relevant and meaningful experiences in children's play and makes learning more enjoyable and positive for children. By observing children's play and speaking with parents, adults will reflect on children's interests and abilities and plan experiences that will enhance children's learning and development.

Childminders support communication and language through play through an awareness of children's abilities, talking and responding to children, interpreting what they say and giving opportunities to share ideas and feelings with others. Childminders can model communication and language skills for children.

Linking Síolta Standard 6: Play to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 3 LG2: In partnership with the adult, children will express themselves through a variety of types of play.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 4 LG1: In partnership with the adult, children will develop a broad range of abilities and interests.

Communicating

Aim 4 LG1: In partnership with the adult, children will share their feelings, thoughts and ideas by story-telling, making art, moving to music, role-playing, problem-solving, and responding to these experiences.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 2 LG3: In partnership with the adult, 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.

Síolta Standard 7: Curriculum

“Encouraging each child's holistic development and learning requires the implementation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme. (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

There are six components in Síolta Standard 7.

Síolta 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.

The Childminder should think about holistic learning and provide activities to enhance all areas of development. This includes social and emotional development, physical development in terms of fine and gross motor skills, creative and sensorial development, language and communication development, emotional and social development, and cognitive development such as memory, concentration, and problem solving skills. Think of activities that you can provide that can integrate these different types of development and learning.

Síolta Component 7.2

There is a well-referenced curriculum or programme in operation, based on established and verifiable principles of child development.

The Childminder should think about the particular programme being used and how it developed. Think about what the influences are in your setting based on child development theories and research.

Síolta 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.

The daily routine should be used to implement the curriculum or programme of activities. Routine is very important for young children but there should also be a certain amount of flexibility that allows for spontaneous learning opportunities. Your

programme should be adaptable for children with additional needs. Transitions should be smooth and fun for children.

Síolta Component 7.4

Curriculum/programme implementation is achieved through a variety of adult strategies, close and supportive relationships in the setting and a wide range of experiences which are made available to the child.

The Childminder should use a variety of strategies to become involved in the child's learning such as facilitating, modelling, imitating, observing and listening, and being a 'playful adult'. Consider your relationship with the child and the range of relationships within the home based setting.

Síolta Component 7.5

The curriculum or programme of activities being implemented is documented and the documentation is available and in use.

You should have a written programme plan that you share with the parents and other professionals if required and this should inform all the activities carried out. Think about how often you document your curriculum for instance, daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal or annual planning.

Síolta Component 7.6

Planning for curriculum or programme implementation is based on the child's individual profile, which is established through systematic observation and assessment for learning.

Your programme plan should be informed by your observations of the children. You can gather photo or video based observations and written anecdotes of children in a portfolio of the child. Children and parents should also be encouraged to share in the portfolio with drawings, photos or learning stories. Portfolios can be used as a form of assessment of the child's interests and developmental stage. Learning stories both on individual children and groups of children can be a great source of observation, assessment and reflection. Observation will encourage you to slow down and really watch and listen to the child.

Child's Role

The child engages in a play led curriculum or programme of activities that is appropriate to the child's age and stage of development and will enhance the child's learning and development.

Childminder's Role to Support the Curriculum

The Childminder will implement a curriculum or programme of activities in the daily routine, including spontaneous learning opportunities. The adult needs to be aware of

her/his own role in supporting these learning experiences, knowing when to be involved in play, take a step back and by modelling and facilitating interactions between children. The Childminder will observe children at play, share observations with children and parents and base activities on children's interests and abilities. The programme is documented and shared with the parents.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will provide a play led curriculum or programme of activities that is led by children and encourages learning and development. Observations of the child will inform activities. Childminders will recognise the importance of slowing down and observing what's really happening for the child.

Outcomes for Child

The child's learning and development will develop through the implementation of play based child led activities. When the child's play is not interrupted they will become highly involved in their play. When children are highly involved in their play they have opportunities for deep level learning.

Síolta Standard 7 is inextricably linked to all four themes from Aistear: Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking. While Aistear can support adults to implement many, if not all, the Síolta standards it gives particular support in the case of the standards related to the Rights of the Child, Environments, Parents and Families, Interactions, Play, Curriculum, and Identity and Belonging.

Linking Síolta Standard 7: Curriculum to Aistear Principles and Guidelines

**Síolta Standard
7: Curriculum**

Aistear Principles

Holistic Learning and Development
Active Learning
Play and Hands on experience
Relevant and Meaningful Experiences
Relationships
Holistic Learning and Development

Aistear Guidelines

Partnerships
Interactions
Play
Assessment

Childminders support play and hands on experiences by implementing a curriculum that is play based and understanding that children’s learning and development is enhanced through play.

Childminders support active learning in the curriculum by giving children experiences where they can learn by doing things.

Childminders support holistic learning and development in the curriculum through the knowledge that children learn a variety of things at the same time and this learning is connected to how, where and with whom they learn.

Childminders offer a curriculum where the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors will influence what children learn.

Childminders offer a curriculum with relevant and meaningful experiences for children based on their strengths, needs, abilities and interests. Childminders will assess

children’s progress and achievements and will plan learning opportunities based on these assessments and communication with parents and families.

Childminders implement a curriculum based on nurturing relationships with young children and helping children form strong attachments. These relationships will lay the foundations for current and future interactions.

Linking Síolta Standard 7: Curriculum to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).



Síolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation

“Enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the setting requires cycles of observation, planning, action and evaluation, undertaken on a regular basis.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

This means thinking about your work with the children in a more formal or organised way, looking at how you do it, how the children enjoy being and learning in your home. You can use the 16 Síolta Standards as headings to guide you in identifying the areas of your Childminding Practice that you will take a good look at, make a note of possible improvements, put together a do-able list for a set period – week or month starting with what you know to be most ‘urgent & important.’ The notes will then make it easy to look back and see what you achieved or improved and to record that. Pat yourself on the back when you observe and note the better outcomes for the children. It is a good idea to have a Síolta Buddy to share planning and evaluation. We all tend to be happy with ourselves and are inclined to resist change. Swapping ideas with another

Childminder, exploring making changes, giving each other feedback and noting the improvements could be inspiring. Don't forget to use this exercise to improve the co-operation of family members to support your Childminding business.

There are four Síolta components in Standard 8.

Síolta Component 8.1

Each Standard area of practice is reviewed regularly through appropriate and tailored processes of observation, planning, action and evaluation.

Childminders should think about review processes that are in place that are appropriate to each of the 16 Standards and how often these reviews are undertaken. These review processes should include management and practice review, external review processes and evidence and documentation.

Síolta Component 8.2

The setting has established and documented review structures.

Childminders should think about what types of review structures you have in your setting such as self-review, progress reports, inputs from children and parents, programme documentation, and external evaluations and audits.

Síolta Component 8.3

There is a mechanism in place to ensure that review processes lead to changes in practice.

Think about the changes that you decided upon in your review process and how this is incorporated into your setting. You should access supports in implementing these changes, through a Childminding network or mentoring group where you can discuss your practice with other Childminders or professionals.

Síolta Component 8.4

The outcomes of review structures and processes are recorded, stored and shared as appropriate.

The Childminder should document review processes such as programme planning notes, practice diaries, and records of meetings held with parents and other professionals. These should always be stored in a confidential manner.

Child's Role

The child will benefit from a system of evaluation of practice carried out by the Childminder.

Childminder's Role to Support Planning and Evaluation

The Childminder will review their service through observations and evaluation. Processes of planning and evaluations are recorded and stored confidentially. You should network with other Childminders or mentors to reflect on your own practice. Think about the reflective practice cycle. Change can be difficult but where needed it can improve the quality of your service.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will establish a system of reflective practice as time is taken to review each standard area of practice. The Childminder will welcome input from children and parents. All areas of practice is reviewed, documented and recorded and plans are developed from these which in turn will be incorporated into practice.

Outcomes for Child

The child will benefit greatly as their interests, ideas and opinions will be reflected in the observations, plans and practice of the Childminder.

Linking Síolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard
8: Planning and
Evaluation

Aistear Principles

The Adult's Role
Relevant and meaningful experiences

Aistear Guidelines

Partnerships
Assessment

Síolta Standard 8 is concerned with the planning and evaluation of the delivery of your Childminding practice, and therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes of Aistear.

Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare

“Promoting the health and welfare of the child requires protection from harm, provision of nutritious food, appropriate opportunities for rest, and secure relationships characterised by trust and respect.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Many of the items of evidence to support Standard 9 are required by the Pre-school Regulations when a Statutory Notified or Voluntary Notified Childminder.

Síolta Standard 9 has seven components.

Síolta Component 9.1

The setting has implemented a full range of policies and procedures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, reduce exposure to environmental hazards and stress, and deal effectively and efficiently with medical situations that may arise.

Childminders should have a policy and procedure in place to deal with infectious illnesses (exclusion policy) and medical emergencies. Emergency contact numbers should be easily accessible. You should have contact details of all the children’s doctors, medicines that are being administered to children and permission from parents to receive medical treatment. It is advisable to be trained in First Aid and have a fully stocked First Aid Kit on the premises. Emergency protocols should be communicated to parents at the induction meeting.

Síolta Component 9.2

The setting endeavours, through the implementation of a range of policies, procedures and actions, to promote the health of all children and adults.

Childminders should inform parents about health promotion practices that are used in the setting and provide information to parents. It is good practice to keep regular contact with the Public Health Nurse. Children should be encouraged to carry out good personal hygiene practices such as hand washing and cleaning up spills. The programme should include activities that promote self-management skills such as putting on coats and shoes and tidy up time. Adults should provide a calm environment for children, be responsive and attentive to children during personal hygiene routines and when children need comfort and reassurance.

Síolta Component 9.3

The setting has implemented the guidelines from *Children First and Our Duty to Care* in relation to child protection.

Childminders should familiarise themselves with *Children First*, the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011. It is important to understand the procedures that you follow should you have any concerns about a child or suspect abuse of a child. Childminders are essentially the Designated Liaison Person in the setting. This knowledge can be enhanced by training in relation to child protection. The respect and dignity of children should always be paramount during personal care routines and children's privacy should always be respected. Your own child protection policies and procedures should be communicated to parents. You should have contact numbers of your local duty social worker, Gardai, and other relevant agencies. Children should be supported in decision making and conflict resolution processes.

Síolta Component 9.4

The setting is proactive in supporting the development of healthy eating habits in children whilst supporting their enjoyment and appreciation of eating as a positive social experience.

Childminders should promote healthy eating practices within the setting and policies should support these and be shared with the parents. Healthy foods should be provided to children, children should be encouraged to make choices about the foods they eat and all dietary requirements should be catered for including vegetarian diets, religious custom and any food allergies that children may have. Children should be given the option of trying different types of food. The Food Pyramid should inform the menus that you provide in your setting. Children should have access to drinking water at all times. It is good practice to have training in food handling. If you are providing cooked meals for the children and are notified to Tusla you will need to attend HACCP training. Babies should always be held and given one to one attention when being fed. Babies and toddlers should be encouraged to feed independently as soon as they can hold a spoon, bottle or cup. Meal times are a time to support social interaction amongst children and you should never rush children when they are eating.

Síolta Component 9.5

The setting has made significant efforts to ensure that children's need for rest, quiet time and privacy is appropriately catered for and respected.

Childminders should provide appropriate space and facilities for rest, sleep and quiet time. This should be away from the play activities in your home. Think about how you

provide comfortable sleep facilities in line with the Pre-school Regulations 2006 and for the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Síolta Component 9.6

The setting has made provision to ensure that children can form and sustain secure relationships with adults, siblings, peers and other children.

Children should be supported to form positive relationships and friendships with all the children, their siblings and adults in your setting. Particularly in Childminding settings, siblings and children of differing ages will be mixed together. This can provide a very positive experience for children with regard to friendship formation as older children can help younger children, older children can learn to empathise and support younger children. Younger children will have an older friend to look up to and learn from. Relationships in a Childminding setting can also be long term meaningful relationships as children may be attending the same Childminder for many years, from babies up to school years.

Síolta Component 9.7

The setting ensures that all adults and children are prepared for emergency situations.

Childminders need to ensure that they are prepared in case of emergency situations. All children, adults, parents and families should have knowledge of fire exits and evacuation procedures such as fire drills which should be carried out monthly.

Child's Role

Children learn to practice good hygiene routines which are incorporated into the programme of activities. Children will also develop self-management skills such as opening and closing fastenings etc. The child will learn about making healthy eating choices and will learn about taking rest and quiet times when needed. Children will form secure relationships with Childminders and form friendships with the other children in the setting. Children will be prepared to deal with emergencies such as a fire drill. The child is respected as a decision maker.

Childminder's Role to Support Health and Welfare

The Childminder will implement policies and procedures in relation to infectious illnesses, good hygiene practices, healthy eating, sleeping or resting. The child will be observed and listened to in terms of any child protection issues that she/he may be experiencing. The Childminder is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) so must act upon any child protection concern and must be aware of the child protection processes of the

Children First. The Childminder will support the child's formation of secure relationships with adults and friendships with each other.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will be aware that they model good practice to children in relation to good hygiene, sleep and privacy, healthy eating practices, and positive relationship and friendship formation. You should also have a good knowledge of child protection guidelines and children's rights. These approaches need to be incorporated into the curriculum.

Outcomes for Child

The child will learn to use good hygiene practices such as hand washing and learn about keeping well and healthy. Children will make healthy eating choices. They will become independent by learning how to use self-management skills such as putting on their coats. Children will learn what to do in case of emergencies. Children will learn about the importance of quiet and rest time. They will develop good skills in relation to developing good relationships and friendships.

Linking Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare to Aistear Principles.

Síolta Standard
9: Health and
Welfare

Aistear Principles

Children as Citizens
Relationships
Parents, Family and Community
The Adult's Role

Aistear Guidelines

Partnerships
Interactions
Play
Assessment

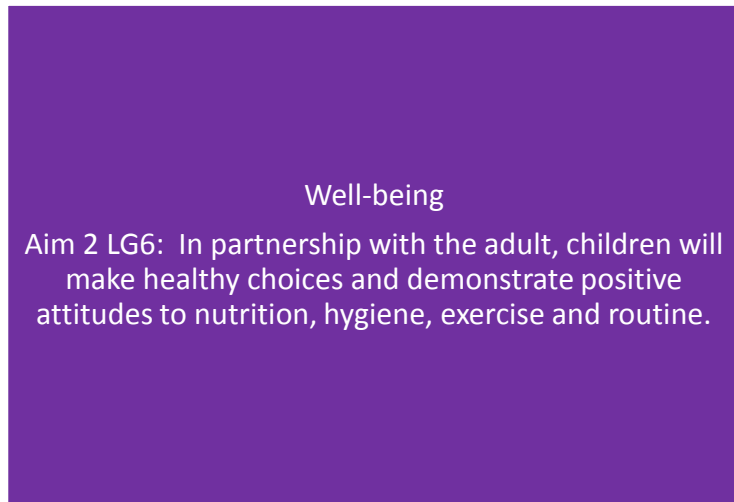
Childminders support children as citizens in terms of health and welfare by protecting children from harm and reporting concerns about children to the relevant people.

Childminders support relationships in terms of health and welfare by providing opportunities for children to learn and develop nurturing and loving relationships.

Childminders work together with parents and family in the context of their community and share information in relation to children's health and welfare.

The Childminder's role is to support children and families if facing difficulties and protect children from harm.

Linking Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).



Well-being

Aim 2 LG6: In partnership with the adult, children will make healthy choices and demonstrate positive attitudes to nutrition, hygiene, exercise and routine.

Síolta Standard 10: Organisation

“Organising and managing resources effectively requires an agreed written philosophy, supported by clearly communicated policies and procedures to guide and determine practice.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Your philosophy of your service is based on the values you hold and is your belief in how you support children to grow and develop. This will manifest during your interactions with the children, the learning opportunities you provide and the policies you put in place in your Childminding setting.

Note: Some of the components listed in this Standard are required by the Pre-School Regulations or Voluntary Notification as a Childminder.

Síolta Standard 10 has seven components.

Síolta Component 10.1

The setting has developed a comprehensive statement or set of statements that clearly describes the vision, values and principles which underpin the nature of the service, and informs all aspects of practice.

You should have a philosophy statement for your Childminding setting. This should inform your practice and be the core values that guide your practice with the children and families that you work with.

Síolta Component 10.2

The setting has a range of clearly documented policies and procedures covering all aspects of practice in the setting. These are developed, and shared appropriately, with all stakeholders.

Childminders should have a policy and procedure document which is shared with parents, families and relevant stakeholders. It is best practice to gain feedback on your policy and procedure document. These policies and procedures should inform practice during your home based daily routines in your Childminding setting.

Síolta Component 10.3

The management of financial resources within the setting is efficient, effective and ensures the sustainability of the service.

As Childminders are self-employed you have a responsibility to maintain financial records which include book keeping, income and expenditure, taxation including revenue returns and accounts. The Childminding setting needs to be sustainable and therefore it is best practice to have a budget in place. Seek out opportunities to access grants for public funding for equipment or training. You may also need to access advice from an accountant or auditor.

Síolta Component 10.4

All adults in the setting are valued, supported and encouraged in their individual roles and responsibilities.

As a Childminder it is important that you have a contract with the parents and that this is given to parents initially. As a self-employed person you will need to make sure that all your entitlements are met such as working hours, holidays and pay. Availing of support from *Childminding Ireland*, City and County Childcare Committees and Childcare Networks can act a support in your Childminding role. Think about the role of a relief Childminder, students or volunteers or the possibility of a supportive adult that can act as a mentor or provide support and supervision. Avail of opportunities to attend networking groups, seminars or continuing professional development training workshops. Professional membership organisations such as Childminding Ireland or the City and County Childcare Committees can provide you with opportunities to share views and knowledge and to gain information.

Síolta Component 10.5

A strong ethos of teamwork is evident in the setting.

As a Childminder the nature of your role is to work alone, however think about creating a culture of teamwork in your setting with children, parents, families, your own family and other professionals. All interactions should reflect support and mutual trust of each other, share information and respect confidentiality amongst all adults involved in the service.

Síolta Component 10.6

The setting keeps relevant and accurate administration records whilst maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

According to the Pre-school School Regulations 2006 Statutory Notified Childminders are required to keep records. It is also good practice for Voluntary Notified and all Childminders to keep records as this reflects good quality practice. It is important that

you keep these records in a confidential manner as they may contain sensitive information. These will include child/family records, attendance register, staff records, accident/incident reports, medication administration records, fire safety records, cleaning records, food safety information and permission forms.

Síolta Component 10.7

The setting has clearly documented, well-developed and functioning management structures and operating processes that support the implementation of the setting's philosophy, in the best interests of children, families and staff.

Structures should be in place to manage your setting efficiently and it is important to set aside time to plan short, medium and long term for the development of your setting.

Child's Role

The Child's views are incorporated within the setting of which the child is an active participant. The service always holds the best interest of the child in mind.

Childminder's Role to Support Organisation

The Childminder has a clear vision and philosophy that defines the service that they offer to children and their families. Children's views and child development theories inform the Childminder's practice. Policies and procedures are in place and are shared with parents and families. These will include: Parental Involvement, Interactions, Health and Safety, Child Protection, Communication and Transitions and Identity and Belonging. As Childminders are self-employed, you need to ensure that your own entitlements are met and that your finances are managed in order to provide a sustainable service. Childminders should seek support in terms of their own practice, from networks or organisations and will avail of training and engage in continuing professional development. Staff in Childminders, volunteers or students are valued, supported and encouraged in their role. Administration records are kept in a confidential manner.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will have a clear vision of what service they provide in terms of a value based system and document these in policies and procedures and share this with families from the onset. The service itself will also develop from the children and families that the Childminder works with throughout the years.

Outcomes for Child

The child will benefit greatly because having a clear vision will inform good decision making by all involved and therefore the best interests of the child will be upheld.

Síolta Standard 10 is concerned with the organisation elements of your Childminding practice, and therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes of Aistear.

Linking Síolta Standard 10: Organisation to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 10: Organisation	Aistear Principles The Adult's Role
	Aistear Guidelines Interactions Play Assessment

The adult's role in terms of organisation is to offer a service to children and families with a clear vision and philosophy where the best interests of the child are upheld. Childminders must consider their beliefs and attitudes when interacting with young children and their families.

Síolta Standard 10 is concerned with the organisation of your Childminding practice, therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes.

Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice

“Practicing in a professional manner requires that individuals have skills, knowledge, values and attitudes appropriate to their role and responsibility within the setting. In addition, it requires regular reflection upon practice and engagement in supported, ongoing professional development.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Professional Practice centres on updating and up skilling your current knowledge.

Síolta Standard 11 consists of five components.

Síolta Component 11.1

All adults working within the setting can provide evidence that they have achieved levels of skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

Childminders should think about what level of qualifications they have achieved. All Statutory Notified Childminders currently need Fetac level 5 in Childcare, and will need to have Fetac level 6 in Childcare by September 2015 as they are considered the Pre-school Leader in the Childminding Setting. This is based on the National Framework for Qualifications in Ireland. Childminders should also think about relevant informal training as well as formal training. Think about the skills and knowledge that you require appropriate to your role and your responsibilities.

Síolta Component 11.2

All adults subscribe to a set of core principles, which inform all aspects of their practice in early childhood care and education settings.

Childminders should think about the key principles that guide your practice in your home. This includes your philosophy statement and your professional code of ethics. National and international regulations and legislation will also guide your practice.

Síolta Component 11.3

The setting supports and promotes regular opportunity for practitioners to reflect upon and review their practice and contribute positively to the development of quality practice in the setting

Childminders need to be reflective practitioners and to look at what areas you could gain additional knowledge, change your practice or share your ideas with a Childminders Network.

Síolta Component 11.4

Adults within the setting are encouraged and appropriately resourced to engage in a wide variety of regular and ongoing professional development

You should think about your continuing professional development in relation to courses, seminars, cluster groups, mentoring, observing other Childminding services and Childminding Networks. Childminders should use working relationships in the community to support their professional development and to develop professional and realistic plans.

Síolta Component 11.5

Adults demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families.

Childminders should respond sensitively to the needs of children, parents and families in their setting. Consider how you acknowledge and encourage children's ideas and efforts. Think about how you communicate information to families and reassure parents about the well-being of their child.

Child's Role

The child will benefit from a qualified Childminder who engages in continuing professional development and is aware of national and international best practice.

Childminder's Role to Support Professional Practice

Childminders will achieve qualifications appropriate to their role and responsibilities. A professional code of ethics should be informed by national and international guidelines and regulations. Childminders should be reflective practitioners and identify areas of practice that they can improve upon. It is also best practice to engage in continuing professional development and take part in Childminding networks. Childminders have realistic and achievable development plans in place.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder is aware that qualifications will enhance and inform their practice and that engaging in continuous professional development will have benefits for the child and families using their service.

Outcomes for Child

The child will benefit from a qualified Childminder as they will be more tuned into the child's developmental needs and what programme of activities to offer.

Síolta Standard 11 is concerned with your own professional practice and therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes of Aistear.

Linking Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 11: Professional Practice	Aistear Principles The Adult's Role Relationships Parents, Family and Community
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Interactions Play Assessment

Childminders will consider their own professional practice in their role as a Childminder and consider training and support from organisations such as Childminding Ireland.

Childminders will consider their professional development in terms of relationships by engaging in a variety of regular and ongoing training and mentoring supports for example through Childminding networks, Childminding Ireland or City and County Childcare Committees.

Childminders demonstrate positive regard, sensitivity and warmth for the parents, family and community of the children they care for.

Síolta Standard 11 is concerned with your Professional Practice and therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes.

Síolta Standard 12: Communication

“Communicating effectively in the best interests of the child requires policies, procedures and actions that promote the proactive sharing of knowledge and information among appropriate stakeholders, with respect and confidentiality.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Stakeholders mean those involved or affected by something, so minded children, their parents, your own family and others whom you would need to share information about minded children would be the stakeholders in your Childminding setting. This Síolta Standard gets to the heart of childcare, addressing how you communicate with children.

Your policy regarding communication should say firstly, that you talk to babies and children in a way that is appropriate to their age, ensuring that babies and young children acquire language, that pre-schoolers are encouraged to talk and ask questions and that you are a receptive listener to what children are trying to communicate to you.

Communication is the third theme of Aistear which provides detailed information and ideas on establishing good communication with children while also, supporting their language development at the same time.

Parents are the next important stakeholders. We know that Childminders usually have direct contact with parents on a daily basis. This means that the communication tends to be spontaneous and informal in the sense that it is a conversation rather than in the form of a written report.

This is fine when things are going well for the child in terms of development and contentment, but if there is a matter which you would like the parents to hear and probably take action on and if things begin to drift, you would be in a stronger position if you had noted a concern and the dates on which you brought it to the parents' attention.

It is a good idea to have included in your Agreement with Parents the obligation on both to have a pre-arranged focused conversation about the child's progress on a monthly basis, without the child present and not on the “doorstep.” It can be a phone call or a cuppa! The value lies in the regularity of the conversation, opening up the possibility for either you or the parent to voice a concern, in a friendly, co-operative way, where the time is given to good listening and forming a plan to overcome the difficulty causing concern.

Evidence for this component for your Síolta portfolio is your Communication Policy which will set out how you plan to communicate with your stakeholders, children, parents, your family members and others with whom it may be necessary to discuss a child. Agreement with parents, the notes you take at your regular meetings/phone calls which record the action you and/or the parents commit to taking.

Síolta Standard 12 consists of four components.

Síolta Component 12.1

The setting undertakes the collection of relevant and appropriate information on all children and stores it in a safe manner.

Childminders should consider how information is collected on individual children and in partnership with parents. Information should be recorded accurately and should always be kept in a confidential manner. Certain information should be easily accessible at all times.

Síolta Component 12.2

The setting is proactive in sharing information, as appropriate, in the best interests of the child, with other stakeholders.

Childminders should consider who has access to information and how this is shared. Information should always be shared bearing in mind the best interests of children. You need to be aware of the sources of information and guidance which can be helpful for supporting a child's development. Parents should have access to the information that is stored on their children. Bear in mind that some parents may have literacy difficulties, additional needs or English as a second language. You need to think about how you share information with other organisations in relation to child health and development such as the Public Health Nurse, Speech Therapist, Psychologist, Social Worker, Assessment of Need Officer etc. You must always seek permission from parents to share information on a child if they are being assessed.

Síolta Component 12.3

Confidentiality is a feature of the way staff record, store and share information in the best interests of children.

Information must always be stored confidentially and consultation with parents is required with regards to sharing information on children.

Síolta Component 12.4

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and actions regarding communication within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

You must have written policies and procedures in relation to how information is recorded and shared, always bearing the best interests of the child in mind.

Child's Role

The child will benefit from information sharing as the Childminder will have an increased awareness of what their needs are.

Childminder's Role to Support Communication

The Childminder will collect appropriate information on the child from parents in order to inform practice and share this information with stakeholders in the best interests of the child. All information about children is recorded and stored in a confidential manner.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will have a greater sense of what the child needs, particularly if they need additional supports.

Outcomes for Child

The child will be supported by the Childminder if they have a different culture, language,

Linking Síolta Standard 12: Communication to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 12: Communication	Aistear Principles Relationships The Adult's Role
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Assessment

Síolta Standard 12 is concerned with Communication and therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes of Aistear.

Síolta Standard 13: Transitions

“Ensuring continuity of experiences for children requires policies, procedures and practice that promote sensitive management of transitions, consistency in key relationships, liaison within and between settings, the keeping and transfer of relevant information (with parental consent), and the close involvement of parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

What are transitions?

Transitions come in many forms. They can be the process of moving from one activity to another (i.e. play, to tidy up, to lunch) one setting to another, venturing into the unknown or introducing a new adult into the environment.

Síolta Standard 13 consists of four components.

Síolta Component 13.1

Smooth transitions are facilitated and promoted through the provision of consistent key relationships within the setting.

Childminding by its nature, is conducive to achieving smooth transitions. Continuity of care between the Childminder and child will build strong and consistent relationships. The Childminder is a secure attachment figure for babies and children and is the base from which transitions can be facilitated securely. Open communication with parents is facilitated by the Childminder.

Síolta Component 13.2

The setting promotes smooth transitions by ensuring there is appropriate liaison within the setting and between settings.

You will need to think about how you support the children’s transitions into your home. It is good practice to have an induction meeting with parents and also to meet the child before they are due to begin in your setting. During this meeting find out as much information as you can about the child. Consider how you will share information with parents and other professionals to make transitions easier for the child. When the child is moving to another setting or to school how do you support the child’s move by making connections and sharing information with other services with parent consent.

Síolta Component 13.3

Parents, children and relevant professionals are consulted and involved in ensuring that transitions are made as smooth as possible for children.

Consultation with children, parents and professionals is important when considering smooth transitions for children. Time should be set aside to discuss any issues with parents. Think about induction meetings with parents prior to child starting and visits for children and parents. Encourage the parent to spend time in your home when their child is settling in. You may need to access information on children from their previous settings or additional settings, or agencies in the community.

Síolta Component 13.4

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and actions regarding transitions within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

Your policies and procedures will help guide Childminders and parents as to how transitions will be supported. Policies should be incorporated into practice.

Child's Role

The child is supported during transition times to the setting, within the setting and from the setting.

Childminder's Role to Support Transitions

The Childminder forms consistent secure attachments and key relationships with children in order to support children's transitions to, within and from the service. The Childminder does this by sharing information and consulting with parents and professionals.

Key Learning for Childminders

By sharing information and consulting with parents and professionals, Childminders can be informed as to the best support to offer children to guide them through transitions. Transitions are considered an important part of the daily routine and should be smooth and carried out in a fun manner.

Outcomes for Child

The child will be guided through transitions by a supportive Childminder. Children will anticipate transitions and will be confident at transitions times throughout the daily routine. Children will be knowledgeable and comfortable about transitions from one setting to the

Linking Síolta Standard 13: Transitions to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 13: Transitions	Aistear Principles The Child's Uniqueness The Adult's Role Parents, Family and Community
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Interactions Play Assessment

Childminders will support the child's uniqueness during transitions by understanding the child's family background and community and the child's individual needs when settling in to the setting, during any transitions in the setting or when moving on to another service or to school.

The Childminders role during transitions is to respect the child's uniqueness and to alter the type and amount of support the child needs by providing key consistent relationships and promoting smooth transitions through consultation with children.

Childminders will build strong relationships with children's parents, family and community and seek out parent's opinions and expertise in order to provide smooth transitions for children.

Linking Síolta Standard 13: Transitions to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 1 LG3: In partnership with the adult, children will handle transitions and changes well.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 2 LG1: In partnership with the adult, children will feel that they have a place and a right to belong to the group.

Síolta Standard 14: Identity & Belonging

“Promoting positive identities and a strong sense of belonging requires clearly defined policies, procedures and practice that empower every child and adult to develop a confident self- and group- identity, and to have a positive understanding and regard for the identity and rights of others.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Identity is a general term for how people think about themselves, and can refer to all aspects of the ‘self’ – physical appearance, personality, ability, age, gender or ethnic group. Furthermore family roles: parent/sibling etc., work roles: employed/manager/professional; social roles: friend/ volunteer etc. also occupy a central role in a person’s sense of identity.

The concept of belonging is inextricably linked to that of identity because it is how a person feels connected to and valued within a particular group (family, peer-group, care setting etc.)

Therefore, the development of a sense of identity and belonging is key to any discussion of child development and is an essential foundation for learning and wellbeing throughout life. Identity and belonging are so important that they are one of the four themes of Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework.

Síolta Standard 14 consists of three components.

Síolta Component 14.1

The setting has written records of all policies, procedures and practice regarding the promotion of positive identities and a strong sense of belonging within the setting, and makes them available to all stakeholders.

Your setting should incorporate an anti-bias and inclusion curriculum which promotes positive identities and belonging in the best interests of the child.

Síolta Component 14.2

The setting promotes a confident self- and group- identity through the provision of an appropriate environment, experiences and interactions within the setting.

Your home based setting should reflect the cultures of the children that attend. Books and equipment should represent all types of family structures, homes and communities. Avoid stereotypical role models and cultural images in terms of gender, culture, age, and ability. Avoid bias within your setting in relation to colour, race, gender, language,

religious affiliation, socio-economic status and family structure. You should be aware of your own beliefs and values when thinking about diversity.

Síolta 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.

Think about how your home reflects and promotes an understanding for the children in your setting and their families' identities.

Child's Role

The child will have a strong sense of identity and belonging within the home based environment regardless of their ethnicity, culture, language, gender, religious beliefs, abilities etc. Children are encouraged to recognise and accept differences amongst one another.

Childminder's Role to Support Identity and Belonging

The Childminder will support a strong sense of identity and belonging within the setting through inclusion and anti-bias policies and procedures. The environment will reflect cultures and backgrounds of all the children. Differences amongst the children in your care are celebrated.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will have an awareness of their own beliefs, values and attitudes to diversity before they can reflect and promote the culture and background of all the children present. Childminders will be careful not to use images or create opportunities that promote gender, family or cultural stereotypes.

Outcomes for Child

Children will feel that their identity is valued through the activities that are carried out and through the equipment provided in the setting. Children will have a positive attitude towards diversity of culture, gender, language, ability etc. Children will have a good sense of belonging which will contribute to a high level of well-being.

This standard has three key components of quality in practice: The Síolta Principles which are particularly related to promoting children's sense of identity and belonging are: Relationships, Diversity and Environments. These are translated into everyday practice through Standard 14 – Identity and Belonging.

Linking Síolta Standard 14: Identity and Belonging to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 14: Identity and Belonging	Aistear Principles The Child's Uniqueness Equality and Diversity Children as Citizens Relationships Parents, Family and Community The Adult's Role Relevant and Meaningful Experiences
	Aistear Guidelines Language Partnerships Environment Interactions Play Assessment

Childminders support the child's uniqueness when considering children's identity and belonging by knowing each child's set of experiences and unique life story.

Childminders support the child's identity and belonging by nurturing equality and diversity, ensuring equal participation for the child with an opportunity to fulfil her/his potential. Childminders welcome children's and families differences and celebrate difference as a part of life.

Childminders support children as citizens by promoting positive self and group identities and a strong sense of belonging within the setting.

Childminders support children's identity and belonging by recognising children's fundamental need to be with other people and nurturing children's relationships with other children and adults.

Childminders support children's identity and belonging by recognising that children's parents, family and community are the most important people in their lives and acknowledging the influence that this has on children's overall development.

Childminders support children's identity and belonging by being good role models, and thinking about their own beliefs and attitudes when interacting with children and their families.

Childminders support children's identity and belonging by providing relevant and meaningful experiences by gathering information from home.

Childminders support children's identity and belonging and acknowledge children's communication skills and language based on the child's home language or other ways of communicating through symbols or sign language.

Childminders support children's identity and belonging by reflecting the child's culture and language in the learning environment for example through books or photographs.

Linking Síolta Standard 14: Identity and Belonging to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Identity and Belonging

Aim 1 LG2: In partnership with the adult, children will appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday).

Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation

“Being compliant requires that all relevant regulations and legislative requirements are met or exceeded.” (Síolta, CECDE, 2006).

Síolta Standard 15 consists of one component.

Síolta Component 15.1

All relevant legislation and regulations are met or exceeded by the setting.

Your home based Childminding setting needs to be compliant with the Pre-school Regulations 2006, Employment Law, Health and Safety, Building and Planning, Data Protection, Equality. You will be the named person that needs to comply with Tusla Inspection, Pobal Inspections if in receipt of ECCE funding or NERA inspections. You should also keep up to date with new legislation and regulations in line with your Continuing Professional Development.

Child’s Role

The Child will benefit from the implementation of Early Years regulation and legislation.

Childminder’s Role to Support legislation and regulation

The Childminder complies with relevant Early Years regulation and legislation and has policies and procedures to comply with these.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder will have a good knowledge of the Regulations and legislation in relation to early years and will implement these into practice.

Outcomes for Child

The Child will benefit as the Childminding service will be of a high level of quality and best practice.

Linking Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 15: Legislation and Regulation	Aistear Principles The Adult's Role
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships Assessment

Childminders role in terms of regulation and legislation is to provide a high quality Childminding service based on best practice that complies with current and relevant regulations.

Síolta Standard 15 is concerned with Legislation and Regulation and therefore doesn't directly link with the Principles or Themes of Aistear.

Síolta Standard 16: Community Involvement

“Promoting community involvement requires the establishment of networks and connections evidenced by policies, procedures and actions which extend and support all adults’ and children’s engagement with the wider community. (Síolta, CECDE, 2006)

Síolta Standard 16 requires you to think about your Childminding service and the Community you live in and consists of four components.

Síolta Component 16.1

The setting has gathered and made available a comprehensive range of information on resources at local, regional and national levels.

Think about how you share information on the range of amenities at local, regional and national level. Connect with the local media, including school and church newsletters and use notice boards in the local community to promote your service to parents. In your professional capacity as a Childminder consider engaging with health centres, libraries, Childminding Ireland or your local Child Care Committee to avail of support and information. Participate on committees or become a volunteer. Your personal and professional development has a direct and profound impact on the children you care for, all the while building the layers of identity and belonging. Think about how you communicate to parents and agencies, including schools, about your positive contribution to local Childcare.

Síolta Component 16.2

The setting has established links which have the potential to extend and develop its involvement in the wider community.

How familiar are you with the roles, responsibilities, programmes and services of other organisations involved with children and families in your local community? How do you make use of local amenities and services to enhance the children’s or parents’ experience, awareness and appreciation of their own local community?

Síolta Component 16.3

The setting is connected and integrated with the local, regional and national community.

Your awareness of the range of amenities, services and opportunities available at local, regional and national level can be used to support and complement the goals and objectives of your service. What services and amenities will enhance your Childminding service, making it more interesting, engaging and attractive for you as a professional Childcare provider, for the Children especially, and ultimately for the community, which in turn reap the benefits of integrated citizens. Communities thrive on engagement. Consider your part in community development which starts with awareness. Children are never too young to engage in their community or to benefit from its services. Consider for example the essential or emergency services, Garda, Fire Services, Schools, etc. Children are fascinated by some of these services and maybe you could organise a visit, or simply locate the service for them as they create their own internal community maps. Recreational facilities such as sports grounds, community halls, cinema, playgrounds, pools, nature walks/bike trails, beaches, parks, zoo, cinema or library indicate a thriving community and provide rich opportunities for fun, awe, happiness and social and personal development.

Think about the extent to which you are actively involved in networks or local, regional and national groups that support and enhance the achievement of your Childminding goals and objectives. What resources and amenities in your local community do you use regularly to enrich and enhance children's experiences and their engagement with the natural and social elements of community?

Be visible in your community and participate where you can. Membership on a residents association or neighbourhood-watch helps build a strong community. Participate in community events such as market day, school fair, community games or the St. Patrick's Day parade, or community initiatives such as arts centres, youth groups, or tidy towns. Local businesses, including Childminders' are intrinsic to community life - the supermarket, post office, post person, farmer, bus or train driver are all important contributors to the place that the child calls home.

Síolta Component 16.4

The setting actively promotes children's citizenship in their local, regional and national community.

As an excellent Childminder you will foster a child's sense of community and belonging. You will be aware of the amenities available within your community and will use them effectively. Your role in building a Child's sense of identity and belonging is a significant one which should never be underestimated. Childminders are the backbone of communities throughout Ireland. Long relationships with Children from babies to pre/early teens where families and childcare intertwine, are significant in determining the future adult of the now child. Childminders have a major role to play in developing children in a holistic way. Early explorations and engagement with the community are very important. They instill in us an intrinsic sense of being part of something bigger. Talk with parents and connect with schools to facilitate transitions and participate in school committees.

Child's Role

The child will be an active citizen of the local community.

Childminder's Role to Support Community Involvement

The Childminder will have a knowledge of what amenities are available in the local service and will engage with these services to support children and families.

Key Learning for Childminders

The Childminder can enhance the service that they offer by networking with local, regional and national support networks and organisations and also services in the local community.

Outcomes for Child

Participation in community events and availing of amenities in the local community will enhance the child's learning.

Linking Síolta Standard 16: Community Involvement to Aistear Principles

Síolta Standard 16: Community Involvement	Aistear Principles Children as Citizens Parents, Family and Community
	Aistear Guidelines Partnerships

Childminders support children as citizens through community involvement by accessing local amenities and activities in the local area on outings, in community events and facilitating visits to your home by representatives of the local community by involving children and making them visible in the local community.

Childminders support community involvement in relation to the child's parents, family and community by valuing the child's community and making this visible within the setting.

Linking Síolta Standard 16: Community Involvement to Aistear Themes, Aims and Learning Goals (LG).

Well-being

Aim 4 LG6: In partnership with the adult, children will be active citizens.

Identity and Belonging

Aim 2 LG5: In partnership with the adult, children will see themselves as part of a wider community and know about their local area, including some of its places, features and people.

Communicating

Aim 2 LG 6: In partnership with the adult, children will be positive about their home language, and know that they can use different languages to communicate with different people and in different situations.

Exploring and Thinking

Aim 1 LG2: In partnership with the adult, children will demonstrate a growing understanding of themselves and others in their community.



