

Communications and information technology and legislation

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. The Framework helps children grow and develop as confident and competent learners through fun, interesting and challenging experiences. The Aistear Toolkit is the place where you can access lots of practical resources online to help you get started with using Aistear. One of the topics discussed on the Aistear toolkit is learning through play. Children love to play and these resources will help teachers to support children to learn through their play as suggested throughout the curriculum.

We will now review one of the Aistear videos named Planning and Organising Play. The video is produced by an infant teacher. The teacher looks at pedagogical framing and her experiences of planning and organising her own classroom. There are many excellent suggestions as to how to set up play in a classroom environment which I will explain next, however there are one or two weaknesses that if I was given the opportunity I would change to this video.

Overall the video is very helpful and it does give excellent advice from an experienced infant teacher that would be like gold dust to an inexperienced teacher new to this profession. We will name the teacher Mary for the purpose of this critique as Aistear does not state the name of the presenter. Mary looks at pedagogical framing which she states lays the foundations for play. She calls it behind the scene work. According to Mary it includes the provision of resources, arrangement of space, and the establishment of daily routines, thematic planning and assessment.

Mary communicates her message across in an orderly and mannerly tone. She is easy to listen to and reminds me of a teacher that I had many years ago wise and well experienced. I would be confident to implement her suggestions just by the tone of her voice. If I had one negative point in relation to the speaker that would be that she does not appear at any point throughout the video. It would be nice to be able to connect with her as she explains her view. The video has many strengths and I found many parts very helpful for planning play activities in the past.

Mary uses her past experiences to help give advice with planning and organising a class room. The video starts by recommending different play areas that could be introduced into the classroom, Mary recommends that the teacher should choose five or six areas for the academic year. Such as sand area, water area, block area, small world, creative and social dramatic areas. Mary takes each play area that she recommends and explains the benefits of using these for the children's learning and development.

Using her experience she explains that the sand area works very well in her classroom, she goes on to explain that sand areas are excellent for small group play and that it encourages the children to use their imagination. Her advice is very helpful when she suggests that the children should select other resources from other types of play e. g. small world. I found her suggestions very helpful when planning my own activities and my learning goals were achieved when using the ideas from this video.

The video explains the learning goals that can be achieved using these play areas such as having a sand area in the class room creates a learning environment, children learn sorting, counting and learn mathematical questions naturally. When I was planning activities and trying to introduce the Aistear themes such as Exploring and Thinking I introduced the sand activity to help the children understand concepts such as matching, ordering, counting, sorting, and capacity in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Mary explains that by using a water area for play it arouses the children's curiosity and that whilst children play in the water area they are verbally interacting together. Asking questions and making comments bring forward ideas and suggestions and helps groups agree on solutions. She talks about real life or imaginative experiences using the blocks area. That play must be purposeful. This is very relevant to Aistear as throughout the Aistear curriculum it is suggested that play must have meaning so that the children will achieve there learning goals.

Mary explains all the areas of play in great detail and links are evident throughout that the Aistear Curriculum is at the heart of this video, however if you as a viewer were not familiar with the curriculum and were using this video to help you to create your activity plans your plans would not meet the level that the curriculum would expect because the video does not make any distinct links to the actual layout of the Aistear curriculum. She does not mention the themes such as Well-being, Identity and Belonging,

Communicating or Exploring and Thinking.

The play areas that are mentioned do cover the learning goals for the themes and for an inexperienced person training to be a teacher they would not make this connection. If the video had captions throughout of the themes it would link the curriculum and the video perfectly. The Curriculum is designed around different age groups (birth to six years). The video does not mention the age groups or how each play area could be used for the different age categories. Throughout the Aistear Curriculum examples are given for babies, toddlers and young children and Mary does not implement this important distinction in the video once.

The video suggests types of play that are low cost for materials and easy to set up using everyday items. The teacher recommends that the play areas be changed annually to prevent boredom for the teacher and the children. However the teacher recommends that the socio dramatic area should always be present in the classroom but does not explain why. Mary talks about the physical layout of the classroom finally which I feel was not necessary as there is a separate video in the toolkit which explores this topic in great detail.

The video in my opinion is not long enough for this topic to be mentioned. This time could have been allocated to the Aistear themes and how they were achieved using the play areas discussed throughout the video. Overall the video has many useful ideas that can easily be taken and used to create a playful environment but I feel from all the information available to me that

there is not a strong enough connection between the actually hard copy of Aistear and the video.

References

1. Aistear Curriculum [www. ncca. ie](http://www.ncca.ie)
2. Aistear Toolkit [www. ncca. ie/aisteartoolkit](http://www.ncca.ie/aisteartoolkit)
3. Video: Planning and Organising Play [http://vimeo. com/21112275](http://vimeo.com/21112275)