

Aistear

Creatchuraclam na Luath-Óige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework



Communicating:
Learning experiences

Learning experience 3: Helping me to learn**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 3 and Learning goal 2****Age group: Young children****Setting: Home and infant class (primary school)**

Kara (4 years) is in junior infants. Her parents left school early. They have difficulties with literacy and know this is a disadvantage. They really want Kara to do well in school and to get a good education. But Kara says she doesn't like school. Kara and her family have the support of a Home School Community Liaison co-ordinator, Betty. Betty encourages Kara's parents to talk to her teacher, Ms. Nugent, and she suggests some questions they might ask. Ms. Nugent encourages them to help Kara in whatever way they can. She suggests that they use a picture book to read a story or to tell her stories themselves about when they were children. They can draw pictures together at home and talk about them. If they have time they can come in some days and help out in the classroom.

Ms. Nugent also encourages Kara in school by asking her what kind of books she likes to look at and read. Kara replies, *Books about babies are good and books about dressing up and going to my friend's house.* Ms. Nugent regularly uses books on these topics when reading stories to Kara and her friends. She puts dress-up clothes and props such as tiaras, dolls, buggies, and hand-bags in the pretend play area. Ms. Nugent regularly talks to Kara's mam to see how they can continue to work together to support Kara at home and in school. Betty also liaises with Ms. Nugent and Kara's parents regularly to ensure Kara and her family have positive school experiences.



Reflection: What can I do to give extra support and encouragement to some parents?

Learning experience 8: Dan the music man**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 4 and Learning goal 3****Age group: Babies, toddlers and young children****Setting: Home and childminding**

Dan is a musician. His own children love music, and he has sung with them at home since they were babies. Now he comes to their childminding setting once a fortnight on one of his days off work to play his guitar and sing songs with the children. They are fascinated by his guitar. They want to know how heavy it is, what it is made from, and how strings make music. Dan shows them how it works. One day he brings along his drums and introduces them to drumming. He uses spoken rhythms to help them tap out the beat: *An-nie Lou-ber* (names with the younger children) and *Do you want a cup of tea?* (sentences with the older children). The children look forward to his visits. They practise almost every day so they can show Dan how good their clapping is when he returns. Before his next visit Noeleen the minder and the children make guitars and drums from junk materials. They can't wait to show Dan their band!



Reflection: What special talents do the parents have that I could tap into and share with the children I mind?

Learning experience 9: It's never too late**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 3 and Learning goal 2****Age group: Young children****Setting: Home and sessional service (pre-school)**

When Sonia was young she missed a lot of school. As a result, she had difficulties reading and she found it hard to work with written information. When her children's pre-school sent notes home she had to ask her sister to read them for her. Over time she got to know Maggie, another parent. Maggie persuaded her to go along with her to the classes in the parents' room. There was a crèche in an adjoining room where Sonia's toddler could stay. Sonia and Maggie chose a craft course for beginners. Sonia's four-year-old Evan was delighted to see her coming into his pre-school. Sonia enjoyed the course and felt more confident about talking to Evan's practitioner. Next, she attended a parenting course and felt that she was able to contribute a lot to it from her own experience. The teacher who organised the courses encouraged her to enrol in an adult literacy class. Sonia is making good progress. She especially enjoys reading to her children and looks forward to notes coming home, which she can now read herself.



Reflection: What can my colleagues and I do in our setting to help parents in their role as their children's educators?

Learning experience 14: Feeding the ducks**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 1 and Learning goal 1****Age group: Babies****Setting: Home**

Leah (13 months) and her dad are feeding ducks at the lake. Leah is pointing towards the ducks animatedly. Her Dad points to the ducks and agrees, **Yes they are ducks Leah and now we are going to feed them.** Leah points to the bread. Her Dad gives her some, smiles and comments, **You like feeding them don't you Leah?** Leah nods. She babbles, **kak kak.** Her Dad affirms her contribution, **The ducks say 'quack, quack' don't they Leah?** He recounts a rhyme about ducks and she claps her hands and points excitedly at the ducks while he does this.



Reflection: How can I use everyday experiences to help children understand more about the things around them?

Learning experience 17: The big base drum**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 1 and Learning goal 6****Age group: Babies****Setting: Home**

Callum (9 months) and his Da are sitting on the floor at home playing together. Callum has been playing with some of his toys but Da senses he is getting bored. His Da gets an empty biscuit tin from the kitchen. He gives it to Callum. Callum lifts it, and moving it notices a sound inside it. He searches for the source of the sound. After a few minutes he looks at Da and screeches, indicating he wants to see inside the tin. Da takes the lid off. Callum reaches in for his set of play keys. They put other nearby things into the tin and take them out. Da talks about what they are doing. After a while Da goes to the kitchen and brings back a wooden spoon. He puts the lid on the tin and starts to bang on it with the wooden spoon as he sings, *I am the music man*. Callum shrieks with laughter. Da gives the spoon to Callum and he bangs loudly on his new drum copying what his Da was doing. Da sings again while Callum drums. Da talks to Callum describing and affirming his actions. Callum shows his delight in his achievements through taking turns in the conversation, laughing, gurgling, and smiling. Callum shows his new skills to his uncle Jimmy later that day.



Reflection: What new skills can I model for children?

Learning experience 22: Happy St. Patrick's Day**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 3 and Learning goal 5****Age group: Young children****Setting: Infant class (primary school)**

The group of 25 senior infants are making St Patrick's Day cards. They have been working on them for a couple of days sticking, gluing and making pictures. Today they are writing messages to their families on them. The children have lots of opportunities to write each day, for example shopping lists and phone messages in the pretend play area, labels for working in the block corner, names for junk art designs, chalk and mini blackboards in the writing corner to write messages and news, copy-books for writing stories, and letter games on the computer and interactive white board. Alongside these the teacher uses mini lessons to show the children how to form letters.

John (5½ years) doesn't like making mistakes when writing. He asks Ms Fogarty if she will scribe the words for him as she does when the class are telling and creating stories. Trying to build his confidence with writing, Ms Fogarty encourages him to have a go. *No, I will mess it all up*, he responds. Ms Fogarty takes a note from John's portfolio, which he made for the elves in the story, *The Elves and the Shoemaker*. She kneels beside John saying, *Do you remember the day you wrote the note for the elves?*

That was a great note. Look, let's read it together. John smiles as he looks at his note. She also reminds him of the shopping lists they made earlier in the week, and about the books and posters with words around the room. Ms Fogarty suggests, *I'll stay beside you and help if you need me to.* John nods. The teacher asks him what he would like to put on the card. He responds, *Happy St Patrick's Day Mammy and Daddy. Love John.* Suddenly John jumps out of his seat and goes to the wall where there is a poster with 'Happy St Patrick's Day' on it. *I can write this*, he exclaims with delight. John carefully copies it. He asks the teacher to spell mammy and daddy. Ms Fogarty wonders if any of the other children are using those words, and a discussion with the rest of the group results in suggestions. John makes a stab at spelling mammy, M-A-M-Y. Ms Fogarty uses positive body language to support him. She explains that there are two ms in mammy. As each word is completed she affirms his efforts and encourages him: *I think your mammy and daddy will get a lovely surprise when they open your card and read your message that you wrote yourself.* John is delighted with himself when he finishes. At 2 p.m. he rushes out the door to greet his mammy with the card in hand.



Reflection: Do I help children to see the progress they are making and to build on this?

Learning experience 35: A mat with a difference**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 1 and Learning goal 3****Age group: Toddlers****Setting: Childminding**

Zoe (20 months) can't do her zip so Emma, her childminder, asks Conor (nearly 3 years) to help her to do it. She observes from nearby to make sure that Conor is able to do up the zip and thanks him for his help. She asks Zoe and Conor if they would like to hold hands on the way out to the garden and supports them in playing together outside with the clothes pegs, which they give her as she hangs the clothes on the washing-line. Spotting the doormat at the entrance to the utility room, Conor begins to attach the pegs making a decorative edge for the mat. Intrigued by what he is doing, Zoe joins him and together they empty Emma's clothes peg basket. Though Zoe has few words, her big smile and her body language show she is clearly delighted to be playing with Conor.



Reflection: Do children have lots of opportunities to spend and enjoy time with each other?

Learning experience 49: Valuing our languages**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 2 and Learning goal 6****Age group: Babies****Setting: Full and part-time daycare (crèche)**

Pema's mother Marta is keen that Pema (17 months) grows up able to speak both Polish and English. Pema's grandpa, Thomas, from Poland has come to stay with Marta and Pema for a month. As always, he brings some new books and toys for Pema. This time he brings a doll with long black hair. They name her Paula. Every afternoon Thomas, Pema and Paula sit together in the kitchen reading the new books. Thomas proudly points to the pictures and names them in Polish. Pema copies him and looks at him with delight as he smiles to affirm her efforts.

Pema attends the local crèche from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. three days a week while Marta works. This morning Thomas, Marta and Pema are walking together to the crèche. Pema and Paula are in the buggy. They have time to stop and point to interesting things along the way: a dog, an ambulance going by with its siren flashing, flower sellers, and the church. Thomas takes time to name the objects and describe them in Polish as Pema points and attempts some of his words. Thomas repeats the words, nods, and smiles to encourage Pema.

When they arrive at the crèche, Aveen, the practitioner greets the family with 'hello' in Polish. Marta proudly shows her father the family wall where there are photographs of all the families in the crèche and a welcome sign in the mother tongue of every child. Marta and Thomas give Pema a kiss and a hug and Aveen takes her to the window so she can wave bye-bye before they play with Paula.



Reflection: Can I do more to bring the children's home languages into the setting?

Learning experience 50: I love to dance and sing**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 4 and Learning goal 3****Age group: Toddlers****Setting: Full and part-time daycare (nursery)**

Emily (2½ years) is a shy, quiet little girl. She attends the local nursery everyday while her ma, a lone parent, works. When she dances in the nursery Emily's whole expression changes and her sense of happiness and delight are clearly communicated. She particularly enjoys the songs, *I'm a dingle dangle scarecrow* and *Five fat sausages*. She also loves singing and doing the actions for *I'm a little teapot* and *Ring-a-ring a rosy*, particularly when they are sung in Latvian. She and her two special friends, Victoros and Seán, fall about the place laughing at the end. Victoros loves to hear his home language being used in the setting and starts to talk excitedly in Latvian when he hears it in the nursery rhymes.

Emily also enjoys it when the room leader suggests they take out the musical instruments. She loves marching around the room with her friends making lots of music and noise. She loves it, especially, when she gets the opportunity to do this outside. Máire, the room-leader often makes video recordings of the children's music making and dancing so that the children can share these experiences with their parents. Expressing herself in a variety of ways is important for Emily. Although her mastery of language is excellent she is quite reserved when interacting with other children, yet she loves to dance and move to music.



Reflection: How can I help children express themselves in a variety of ways?

Learning experience 51: Re-enacting the match**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 3 and Learning goal 1****Age group: Young children****Setting: Sessional service (playgroup)**

Brazil and Ireland are due to play a friendly soccer match. There are a number of children from Brazil in the playgroup so there is great excitement. Many of the children are wearing their team jerseys. During the morning they make banners and flags. Some of the children are going to watch the match that evening at home and some of their parents are actually going to the match in Dublin. The children and Liz, the playgroup leader, talk about what this will be like at circle time. Some of the children use Portuguese, the official language in Brazil, which promotes additional discussion and curiosity from other children. Liz listens to their stories about who is going to win and what players are the best. After the discussion the children draw pictures related to the football theme. As they draw, Liz listens to the stories about their drawings and writes a sentence beside each picture based on what the children say. She reads this with the children. Some of them join in and help her read their 'stories'.

Outside in the yard some of the children want to be the soccer players on the Irish and Brazilian teams. They make goalposts with their jackets. Liz encourages the other children to come and support the teams. She suggests they charge matchgoers for tickets. They use stones for money and leaves as tickets and Seán and Rianna run inside to get the banners and flags. Other children take chairs outside and organise the viewing stand. Olivia decides she wants to sell ice creams at the match and uses pieces of paper for ice creams. Again, stones are a great currency for making purchases!

Teams are chosen and the rules of the game are clearly outlined. Liz lends the referee, Ciara, a whistle. She blows it loudly and the match begins. The matchgoers scream when the goals are scored and shout words of encouragement when they are not. They wave their flags and banners enthusiastically. The referee blows the whistle a number of times to signal the end of the match, which finishes in a draw. Both sides shake hands and are affirmed by the crowd. Back inside, Liz organises a pretend microphone and she interviews the teams. She extends the conversation by commenting and asking questions.



Reflection: How can I provide opportunities to extend children's play outside as well as inside?

Learning experience 52: Going to the dentist**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 2 and Learning goal 4****Age group: Young children****Setting: Infant class (primary school)**

Ms Murphy, the junior and senior infant class teacher, uses the pretend play corner to support children's learning across *Aistear's* themes, as well as language, maths, SESE and SPHE in the *Primary School Curriculum*. Every fortnight or so the play focus changes. Children use the corner to pretend they are cooking and baking or minding babies, in the café, at the doctor's, at the local social welfare office, at the garage, at the library, in the garda station, fishing on a trawler, or going on holidays. This month due to the number of children expressing an interest in teeth, Ms Murphy and the children have decided to play *going to the dentist*. Several children have started to lose their baby teeth while others have gone on visits to the dentist themselves or with older siblings or parents.

The pretend play corner is used as the children arrive in school and at different times of the day and the week, depending on what activities the children are doing. Ms Murphy organises the pretend play corner so that it includes relevant play materials to support children's learning and development, including literacy and numeracy skills. For example, there is a telephone and computer for the dentist's receptionist. There is also a notepad and pencil for making appointments and there are books and magazines in the waiting area.

The children are really excited about creating their own dentist's surgery. Over the next week they organise and reorganise the surgery expanding their patient list as they go. They make posters and price lists for the services on offer. Sometimes Ms Murphy plays with the children; at other times she observes the play from a distance. Occasionally she intervenes to extend the play, especially when it seems to become repetitive. She sometimes adds a new prop, introduces a new word or idea, makes a suggestion, helps resolve a conflict, or models a new role. During the course of the week, as well as playing in the pretend area, the children have conversations about their visits to the dentist. They listen to stories about the dentist and read relevant books in the library corner. They play with props such as goggles, mouthwash, dental picks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, white coats, drills, magnifying lenses, mirrors, and injections. They play games such as *I spy*, *Spot the difference*, *Pick the odd one out* using pictures and objects connected to the dentist. Most children are using lots of words associated with the dentist. On Friday the dental nurse from the local health clinic comes in. She uses a giant brush and teeth to explain how to brush your teeth. By the end of the week business is booming in the dental surgery with treatments such as making false teeth and fitting braces being offered.



Reflection: How regularly do I observe and listen to children in pretend play scenarios, and identify ways to extend their play?

Eispéireas foghlama 67a: Mothúcháin a chur in iúl**Téama: Cumarsáid, Aidhm 1 agus Sprioc foghlama 1****Aoisghrúpa: Leanaí****Suíomh: Seisiún naíonra**

Freastalaíonn Caoimhín (3 bliana d'aois) ar naíonra. Is breá leis ceol. Phléigh a thuismitheoirí leis an stiúrthóir, Eimear, an chaoi a bhfuil sé deacair air a mhothúcháin a chur in iúl i gceart agus an chaoi a gcuireann sé sin as dó. Le cúpla seachtain anuas bhí Eimear ag múineadh amhrán do Chaoimhín agus do na leanaí eile sa ghrúpa i dtaobh mothúcháin éagsúla. Bhí úsáid á baint acu as uirlisí ceoil freisin fad is a bhí na hamhráin á gcanadh acu agus ag bhí siad bogadh leis an gceol chun cuidiú leo mothúcháin éagsúla a chur in iúl. Lena linn seo go léir, agus le linn am sárghartha, bhí Eimear ag breathnú ar Chaoimhín chun a fháil amach conas a chuir sé é féin in iúl. Ghlac sí nótaí mionsonraithe mar gheall ar a eispéiris foghlama. Léirigh na nóta sin go raibh dul chun cinn á dhéanamh ag Caoimhín ag léiriú do na leanaí eile conas a bhraith sé. Chuir Eimear an t-eolas seo in iúl dá mhamaí agus dá dhaidí an chéad uair eile a chonaic sí iad.

Samplaí de nótaí Eimear ina comhad cleachtóra.

Dé Luain 18 Feabhra, 12.10 i.n. Súgradh lasmuigh

Bhí Caoimhín ag súgradh ina aonar sa chlais ghainimh. Rinne sé an gaineamh a chur isteach i dtrucail. Tháinig Anraí agus Sorcha sall chun cuidiú leis. Dúirt Caoimhín, "Ná déan" agus rinne buicéad eile in aice leis a thairiscint dóibh.

Dé Céadaoin 27 Feabhra, 9.40 r.n. Súgradh laistigh

Bhí Caoimhín, Eoin, Niamh, agus Amy ag imirt le foireann taeghréithe. Thug Eoin cupán tae do Chaoimhín. D'fhiafraigh Amy de Eoin an bhféadfadh sí roinnt tae a bheith aici. Rinne Eoin neamhaird den iarratas seo agus d'éirigh Amy corraithe. Rinne Caoimhín a chupán tae a thairiscint di.



Ábhar Machnaimh: An gcuirim am ar leataobh chun athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar mo bhreathnadóireachtaí ar eispéiris foghlama na leanaí mar bhealach le feiceáil cén dul chun cinn atá ar siúl acu?

Learning experience 67b: Sharing emotions**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 1 and Learning goal 1****Age group: Young children****Setting: Sessional service (naíonra)**

Caoimhín (3 years) attends a naíonra. He enjoys responding to music. His parents have discussed with Eimear, the stiurthóir (playgroup leader), how he finds it difficult to express his emotions clearly and how this frustrates him. Over recent weeks Eimear has taught Caoimhín and the other children action songs about different emotions. They have also been using instruments while singing the songs and moving to different pieces of music, in order to help them express different feelings. Throughout these experiences, and during play, Eimear has been observing Caoimhín to see how he expresses himself. She makes detailed notes about some of his learning experiences. This documentation shows the progress Caoimhín is making in showing his peers how he feels. Eimear shares this information with his mammy and daddy the next time she is talking to one of them.

Examples of Eimear's notes in her practitioner's file.

Monday 18 February, 12.10 p.m. Outside play

*Caoimhín plays by himself in the sand pit. He shovels sand into a play truck. Anraí and Sorcha come over and try to help him. Caoimhín says, *Ná déan* (don't) and offers them a spare bucket beside him.*

Wednesday 27 February, 9.40 a.m. Indoor play

Caoimhín, Eoin, Niamh, and Amy are playing with the tea set. Eoin serves Caoimhín tea. Amy asks Eoin can she have some tea, Eoin ignores the request and Amy gets upset. Caoimhín offers her his cup of tea.



Reflection: Do I take time to review my detailed observations of children's learning experiences as a way of seeing the progress they are making?

Learning experience 70: A rainbow of colours

Theme: *Communicating, Aim 2 and Learning goal 4*

Age group: Young children

Setting: Sessional service (playgroup)

Ten children (between 3 years and 4 years and 4 months) attend the playgroup. Eilis, the playgroup leader, noted the children’s excitement and interest the day they saw a rainbow in the garden. She immediately brought crayons and paper outside and the children each drew their own rainbow as they observed it in the sky. She noted their interest in some of the names of the colours, especially indigo and violet. Over the next few weeks Eilis plans a number of experiences designed to help the children learn more about colours.

With Eilis’ assistance the children talk about and name colours as they walk in the nearby park, do various painting and play-dough activities, sort vegetables and fruit in the play supermarket, and make costumes for Cinderella’s ball. They also experiment with mixing colours, and declare that they have done ‘magic’ when they generate, under Eilis’ guidance, green from a mixture of blue and yellow, and orange from a mixture of red and yellow. As the month progresses Eilis sets up colour areas in the room. Each area features a character such as Blue Bird and Red the Fire Engine, as well as objects in the matching colours. During the following weeks she uses a variety of tasks to assess the children’s ability to match, name and select individual colours. One of these involves a sock shop which the children enjoy. Each day she asks two children to play the shopkeeper role. The customers (including Eilis) ask for particular colours of socks. Eilis observes how each shopkeeper fills the customer orders. As the days progress, she notices that some children begin to request socks with particular patterns and combinations of colours and, not content with the range on offer in the shop, bring socks from home to the playgroup! A busy shop selling multicoloured socks and socks with exotic designs is soon trading in the playgroup. News spreads, and the children’s parents and minders visit to make purchases as they drop off and collect the children. Building on this, Eilis shares stories with the children that include references to patterns, and she introduces them to factual books which illustrate patterns on animals’ coats.

In her practitioner’s file Eilis makes a checklist to record her observations in the sock shop during the course of the week, and uses this information to plan further colour and pattern experiences.

Exploring and Thinking, Aim 1 and Learning goal 1, Sock shop

	Date - Oct	red	orange	yellow	violet	green	blue	purple	brown	black	while	stripey	spotty
Fion	15	✓	✓	✓							✓		✓
Deirdre	15	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Sasha	16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Billy	16	✓					✓						
Yussef	17	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
George	17		✓	✓		✓	✓						✓
Alisha	18												
Cara	18												
Leon	19												
Aesha	19												



Reflection: Do I set tasks which capture the children’s interest and imagination?

Eispéireas foghlama 71a: Forbairt scríbhneoireachta**Téama: Cumarsáid, Aidhm 2 agus Sprioc foghlama 4****Aoisghrúpa: Leanaí****Suíomh: Rang naíonáin (Gaelscoil)**

Tá rang naíonáin á mhúineadh ag Iníon Uí Mhurchú i ngaelscoil. An tseachtain seo bhí sí féin agus an rang ag léamh agus ag plé an scéil, *Goldilocks agus na trí bhéar*. Mar chuid de seo bhí plé ann i dtaobh céard a dhéanfadh na trí bhéar dá mbeadh fhios acu cá raibh cónaí ar Goldilocks. Chuir siad tuairimí in iúl maidir lena dtarlódh agus ceann de na moltaí ná go ndéanfadh na beáir praiseach de theach Goldilocks. Thug Iníon Uí Mhurchú tasc do na leanaí agus d'iarr orthu scéalta a scríobh faoi *Goldilocks agus na trí bhéar*. Thug sí tascanna éagsúla do leanaí éagsúla sa rang. Do roinnt de na leanaí thug sí sé phictiúr chun iad a chur in ord an scéil agus chun an focal cuí a roghnú ó liosta focal le cur faoin ngrianghraf cuí. Scríobh grúpa eile leanaí an scéal ina bhfocail féin ina leabhair - leabhair a raibh cruth teachín tuaithe orthu. Scríobh an tríú grúpa leanaí an scéal ina bhfocail féin agus rinne iarracht a shamhlú conas mar a bheadh an scéal dá dtabharfadh na beáir cuairt ar theach Goldilocks. Chuir an múinteoir na príomhfhocail agus na príomhfhrásaí ar fáil bunaithe ar phlé an ranga.

D'imigh Iníon Uí Mhurchú ó ghrúpa go grúpa de réir mar a d'oibrigh na scríbhneoirí óga ar a scéalta. Spreag sí iad le litriú a úsáid nuair nach raibh an focal a bhí á lorg acu ar an gclár bán. Uaireanta bhí sí ag smaoineamh os ard in éineacht leo chun cuidiú leo deireadh an scéil a phleanáil: ***Chuir Goldilocks glaoch ar a mamaí nuair a chonaic sí an praiseach a bhí déanta!*** Gach lá ag am inste scéil thug sí an deis do sheisear a scéalta a léamh, ag léiriú a gcuid leabhar nó na pictiúir a chuir siad in ord an scéil. Gach tráthnóna nuair a bhí na leanaí imithe abhaile scríobh sí cuntas gearr ar scríbhneoireacht na sé leabh agus chuir leis an eolas a bhí ar taifead aici cheana féin faoina scileanna scríbhneoireachta. Chuir sí freisin cóip d'obair na leanaí ina bhfillteáin oibre.

Sampla de nótaí Iníon Uí Mhurchú ar scéal Mheadhbh ina comhad cleachtóra.

10 Márta 2009: Choinnigh sí na buncharachtair mar an gcéanna; thug sí isteach carachtar amháin nua (mamaí Goldilocks) ar bhealach loighciúil. D'úsáid sí a litriú féin ag léiriú feasacht mhaith fóineolaíochta. Chuir sí ceithre abairt nua sa bhreis leis chun deireadh eile a chur leis an scéal. Dul chun cinn an-mhaith.



Ábhar Machnaimh: Conas a bhainfidh mé úsáid níos fearr as eolas measúnaithe chun tascanna éagsúla a thabhairt do leanaí éagsúla agus ar an gcaoi seo cuidiú leo lena bhfoghlaim agus a bhforbairt?

Learning experience 71b: Emergent writing**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 2 and Learning goal 4****Age group: Young children****Setting: Infant class (Gaelscoil)**

Iníon Uí Mhurchú is a senior infant teacher in a Gaelscoil. This week she and her class have been reading and discussing the story, *Goldilocks agus na trí bhéar*. Part of this has involved the children speculating about what the three bears might do if they knew where Goldilocks lived. They predict many actions for her some of which involve a messy ending for her house. Iníon Uí Mhurchú sets the children a task that involves them in writing stories about *Goldilocks agus na trí bhéar*. She differentiates the task for the class. Some children are given six pictures to sequence the story and to write the relevant word for each from a list. Another group of children write the story in their own words in their books, shaped like a cottage. A third group of children write the story in their own words, including how they imagine the story might end with the bears visiting Goldilocks' house. The teacher provides key words and phrases based on the class discussions.

Iníon Uí Mhurchú moves from group to group as the young writers work on their stories. She encourages them to try spellings when their words are not on the whiteboard. She sometimes thinks aloud with them to help them plan their story ending: *Goldilocks rings her mammy when she sees all the fuss!* Each day at story time she invites six children to read their stories, showing their books or sequenced pictures. Each afternoon when the children have gone home she adds a comment on the writing of the six children to the information she has already recorded about their writing skills. She also adds a copy of the children's work to their learning portfolios.

Example of Iníon Uí Mhurchú's notes on Meadhb's story recorded in her practitioner's file.

10th March 2009: Retained original characters; introduced new one (Goldilocks' mammy) in logical way. Used her own spellings showing good phonological awareness. Added four sentences for new story ending. Great progress.



Reflection: How can I make better use of assessment information to differentiate for children's learning and development?

Learning experience 72: Screening in senior infants**Theme: *Communicating*, Aim 2 and Learning goal 1****Age group: Young children****Setting: Infant class (primary school)**

Ms Clarke teaches 29 senior infant boys. As part of the school's assessment policy Ms Clarke uses a literacy screening test with the whole class in late January. When correcting the tests she identifies six boys who score below the test threshold. Through observations and conversations, she has been carefully monitoring these boys as she knows they sometimes find letter sounds challenging, and two require ongoing support in developing listening skills. She considers the possibility that their low scores on the test may be attributable to factors other than difficulties in literacy. She takes account of particular factors, such as the language, the complexity of the instructions, and the anxiety that the testing situation can create for some children. Having talked with the boys' parents, Ms Clarke refers them to the Learning-support teacher, Mrs Fitzgerald. After establishing a good relationship with the children this teacher carries out individual diagnostic tests.

Having considered all the available information, Mrs Fitzgerald invites the parents of the six boys to take part in an early intervention programme for 6-8 weeks, in order to assist them in supporting specific aspects of their children's learning. Ms Clarke and Mrs Fitzgerald also agree on some additional learning activities that Ms Clarke can use to work with the boys on both an individual and group basis.

At the end of the early intervention programme the six children are re-tested. Five now score well. While the sixth child has made some progress, Ms Clarke plans to continue to give one-to-one support to him in class. He will also have further diagnostic assessment and support with Mrs Fitzgerald.



Reflection: Does my school have a screening policy in place to help identify children who may need extra and/or specialised support?

Learning experience 74: Working in a special education setting**Theme: Aims and Learning goals across the four themes****Age group: Young children****Setting: Infant class (special primary school)**

Stephen (6 years) attends a special school. He has muscular dystrophy and mild general learning disabilities. His parents tell his teacher Linda that he loves his cat, Tabby and dislikes noise. Based on assessments of Stephen's learning and development, Linda and the team of therapists working in the school devise a programme of learning experiences for him.

Linda focuses on Stephen's language, his challenging behaviour, his motor skills, and his early reading. She observes, assesses and records his speech and language: he shows delayed expressive language, for example calling a train a *choo choo*. He also finds sentence structure challenging and experiences articulation difficulties, for example calling a doggy a *goggy* and substituting *t* for *s* and *ch*. Linda shares this information with the speech therapist Nora who carries out further testing and, using the information from this, designs a daily language and speech programme for Stephen.

Based on Kate's (Special Needs Assistant) and her own observations of Stephen's challenging behaviours, Linda changes Stephen's afternoon routine. She refers him to Joan the physiotherapist who takes Stephen to the clinic's hydrotherapy pool for two afternoons per week, and to Gill the occupational therapist who takes Stephen to the Snoozaleen Relaxation Room on two other afternoons.

To support the development of Stephen's motor skills Joan provides Linda with suitable physical exercises, which include altering the time he spends sitting and standing. To make it easier for Stephen to move around the classroom Gill investigates the possibility of accessing an electric wheelchair for him. She also organises a range of aids to help him overcome some of the difficulties he is experiencing with fine motor skills. These aids include a pencil-grip and a modified computer keyboard.

Finally, Linda's assessment of Stephen's early reading skills shows his sight-word recognition is confined to his own name. Various tests have shown that he also experiences challenges with visual discrimination, sequential memory, and auditory sequencing. Considering this information, Gill suggests that Linda would arrange for Stephen to have sensory integration sessions.



Reflection: How can I continually build the practice of interdisciplinary work in order to provide children, where necessary, with specialised support to help them progress in their learning and development?