

# Supporting Transitions: Overview

## Connections to *Aistear* and *Síolta*

### *Aistear*

*Themes:* Well-being, Identity and Belonging, *Communicating*, Exploring and Thinking  
*Guidelines for good practice:* Building partnerships between parents and practitioners (pp.6-25), Learning and developing through interactions (pp.27-30 and 46-47), Supporting learning and development through assessment (pp.78-79)

### *Síolta* Standards

1: Rights of the Child, C1.1, 1.2, 1.3

6: Transitions, C13.1, 13.2, 13.3

Research Digests linked to the above *Standards*

The *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* is intended to help you in your role as curriculum-developer to build, reflect on and extend your curriculum to support babies', toddlers' and young children's early learning and development. Drawing on the early childhood sector's experiences of using *Aistear* and *Síolta*, the Practice Guide includes:

- **Curriculum Foundations** and
- six interconnected **Curriculum Pillars:**
  1. Building Partnerships with Parents
  2. Creating and Using the Learning Environment
  3. Learning through Play
  4. Nurturing and Extending Interactions
  5. Planning and Assessing using *Aistear's* Themes
  6. Supporting Transitions.

This document gives an overview of the pillar, **Supporting Transitions**. This pillar has a range of resources to help you support children's transitions into, through and out of your setting.

## Why focus on supporting transitions?

*Aistear* and *Síolta* highlight the importance of supportive and smooth transitions in early childhood. A transition is the process of moving from one situation to another and taking time to adjust. Major transitions often represent significant milestones in a child's life and signify change for children and their families. The move from home to the first out-of-home setting is a very big milestone for children. Other types of transitions are more frequent, for example, the transition from one room to another in a setting, or from one activity to another during the course of a day. Good relationships are key in ensuring all transitions happen as smoothly as possible.

The two frameworks provide ideas and suggestions on how to facilitate transitions in a sensitive, responsive and thoughtful manner. Personal characteristics and dispositions, family and cultural background, and previous experience of early childhood settings or transitions, all impact on children's adjustment to a new setting, a new room or to transitions in the daily routine.

Practitioners play a key role in supporting children to predict and cope with change by providing reliable and stable relationships, continuity of care and a secure base. Children's experience of transitions can be very positive when key people in their lives liaise by sharing important information and when they work in partnership with each other. It is also important that practitioners help children to understand routines and to explain what is going to happen next in a consistent, loving manner.

*Supporting transitions* is one of the curriculum pillars in the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide*. This short introduction reminds us why transitions are important, gives a brief overview of the resources in this part of the Practice Guide and provides suggestions on how you might use these.

*Aistear's* principle on relationships says,

*Children have a fundamental need to be with other people. They learn and develop through loving and nurturing relationships with adults and other children, and the quality of these interactions impacts on their learning and development*  
(Principles and themes, 2009, p.9).

Similarly, *Síolta's* principle on relationships acknowledges that,

*Positive relationships, which are secure, responsive and respectful and which provide consistency and continuity over time, are the cornerstone of the child's well-being*  
(2006, p.7).

Standard 13 of *Síolta, Transitions*, highlights the importance of sensitive management of transitions, continuity of care, relationships and experiences for children. It also stresses the importance of sharing information between all those involved in children's early childhood years including parents, practitioners and where appropriate, relevant professionals. Practitioners should be proactive in communicating and connecting with parents to create effective lines of communication and should keep transitions throughout the day to a minimum with unnecessary transitions avoided.

Table 1 outlines different types of transitions that require careful planning and collaboration.

**Table 1 : Categorising transitions**

	<b>Type of transition</b>	<b>People involved in supporting children to make the transition</b>
<b>Daily transitions</b>	Daily arrival in the setting	Central: Parents, key person Additional: Other practitioners working with the child, manager or setting receptionist, childminder
	Home-time	Central: Parents, key person Additional: Other practitioners working with the child, manager or setting receptionist, childminder
	Moving from one activity to another	Central: All practitioners working with the child, peers in the group/pair Additional: Other peers
	Beginning and end-of-care routines such as nappy-changing, toileting, sleep or meal-times	Central: Key person Additional: Other practitioners working with the child, other peers
	Moving from indoors to outdoors (and vice versa)	Central: All practitioners working with the child; peers in the group/pair Additional: Other peers
	Tidy-up time	Central: All practitioners working with the child; peers in the group/pair Additional: Other peers
<b>Regular transitions</b>	Moving to a new room in the setting	Central: Parents, current and new key person Additional: Setting manager, other practitioners working with the child, peers
	Change of key person	Central: Parents, current and new key person Additional: Setting manager, other practitioners working with the child, peers
	Attending an additional service, for example, speech and language therapy	Central: Parents, key person, relevant professionals Additional: Other practitioners working with the child

	Type of transition	People involved in supporting children to make the transition
<b>Major transitions</b>	Into the setting	Central: Parents, setting manager and key person Additional: Child's wider family, other practitioners working with the child, childminder
	On to primary school	Central: Parents, key person, primary teacher Additional: Setting manager, principal or Home School Community Liaison teacher, childminder
	On to another setting	Central: Parents, current setting manager/key person, new setting manager/key person Additional: Other practitioners working with the child
	Transitions in a child's life such as arrival of a new baby, house move, bereavement or relationship break-up	Central: Parents and family Additional: Key worker, setting manager, other professionals working with the child and family, for example, social worker

## Using the resources in this pillar

As with all the pillars in the Practice Guide, there are five categories of resources in *Supporting Transitions*:

### 1. Self-evaluation Tools

These provide prompts to help practitioners reflect on their work in order to identify successes and challenges and to note changes

This tool looks at four elements:

1. Moving from home to daycare/sessional setting
2. Transitions within the daily routine
3. Room-to-room transitions
4. Transition to primary school.

### 2. Examples and Ideas for Practice

These materials show examples of how different early childhood settings support transitions.

### 3. Resources for Sharing

These include tip sheets with ideas for supporting transitions.

### 4. Action Planning Tools

These help practitioners plan for changes in a particular area of their work in supporting transitions.

Each category has resources to help you reflect on your practice. You might like to look at the **Self-evaluation Tools** first to help identify your strengths in supporting children's learning and development through play as well as noting changes you would like to make. After this, you might be interested in looking at examples and ideas from other practitioners.

You will find these in Learning Experiences linked to *Aistear's* themes, short podcasts, photo presentations, video clips and practical tip sheets in the sections, **Examples and Ideas for Practice** and **Resources for Sharing** at [www.aistearsiolta.ie](http://www.aistearsiolta.ie). **The Action Planning Tools** can then help you plan specific changes you want to make in your setting. Finally, a **Gallery** of captioned photos from a variety of early childhood settings, offers additional ideas about supporting transitions. Table 2 below provides an overview of all resources available in this pillar.