APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Early Years Intervention: Information about Early Learning & Care Settings

Understanding the importance of children's early experiences on later development

Research shows that early childhood (birth-5yrs) is the most important time for child development. From the time a baby is born, the emotional and social attachment they develop with their primary carer/s (parents/guardians) is critical (Brazelton, 1992). During these early years children learn best through loving and trusting relationships, through positive and nurturing interactions and through hands-on play and exploration opportunities. Children who are supported to be adventurous, creative, and confident learners will develop a positive sense of personal well-being and will interact with their surroundings in ways that promote successful development.

Providing children with the best start in life, helps develop strong healthy brains. A healthy and active brain, supported by safe, enriching and challenging environments, and healthy nutrition in early life, enhances children's brain functions and life-long learning skills (Arias & Sharpko, 2015).

Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare in Ireland

Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) is the term given to the range of services offered for children outside the family home. It includes full day care for working parents, pre-school for 2.5 years olds to the start of formal schooling, school age childcare for older children after their school day has finished or in the school holidays and childminding in the home. Typically, ELCs/Creches, Pre-schools and SAC are both community and privately run services in local communities.

All ELC and SAC services are registered and inspected by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and the Department of Education. All staff must be qualified in Early Childhood Education and Garda Vetted to work in an ELC setting.

Importance of Quality Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Early Years Education (EYE) is the combination of education and care provided to young children, which is based upon the beliefs, values, knowledge, understanding and experience of those providing it, namely early years educators. Practice must be informed by theory to be effective, particularly in supporting young children's development and learning, educators need to possess an acute understanding of 'what we do and why we do it'. This enables educators to create and construct early years curricula, which is observable in practice such as Montessori, Play-Based, Steiner, HighScope, Naíonra (Irish Medium) (Hayes, 2013).

Research on the Benefits of Quality Early Childhood Education

Benefits of quality early childhood education for young children into later life is widely documented internationally, through longitudinal research studies, such as the United States (US) HighScope Perry Preschool Project and United Kingdom (UK) Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project. Research evidence concludes that;

- High-quality early childhood education leads to immediate and measurable gains in children's social, emotional and educational development.
- High-quality early childhood education results in better developmental outcomes for children at school entry.
- Specialised support in the areas of social learning, language, and pre-reading skills benefits all children, particularly children at disadvantage and for whom English is an additional language.
- Quality early childhood education leads to life-long social and cognitive benefits for children, which continue through adolescence and adulthood.
- Investment in quality early childhood education provides significant economic benefits back to society.
- Finding results (Perry Preschool Project) from adults at 40yrs, who as children experienced high-quality early childhood education found that they were; more likely to remain in education and have better 3rd level educational outcomes in later life, gain employment and have higher earnings, own their own home and car, fewer teen pregnancies and lower criminal activity.

 (Sylva et al., 2004; Hodmann, Weikart, 2002; OECD, 2006).

What is Quality in Early Childhood Education?

Síolta (CECDE, 2006), meaning 'seeds' in Irish, is The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education developed by the government, through The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE). Its purpose is to inform and increase quality in early learning and care settings in Ireland.

Síolta defines principles of quality as follows.

- Valuing early childhood as a significant and distinct time in life that must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported. Children have the right to be listened to and have their views on issues that affect them, heard, valued, and responded to.

- The child's individuality, strengths, rights, and needs are central in provision of quality early childhood experiences.

- Parents/Guardians are valued as primary educators of the child and have a pre-eminent role in promoting her/his wellbeing, learning and development. Respectful partnership with parents/guardians is essential to promoting the best interests of the child.

- Responsive, sensitive, and reciprocal two-way relationships are developed with adults, peers, family and the extended community. Positive relationships, such as key worker systems which are secure, responsive, and respectful are the cornerstone of a child's well-being.

- Equality is an essential characteristic of quality early childhood education, which requires individual needs and abilities of each child be recognised and supported from birth.

- Quality early childhood settings acknowledge and respect diversity and ensure all children and families have their individual, personal, cultural, and linguistic identity validated.

- Environments, the physical indoor and outdoor environments should stimulate curiosity, foster independence, and promote a sense of belonging, all of which extends and enrich children's development and learning,

- The safety, welfare and well-being of children must be protected and promoted in all early childhood environments. The opportunity to form trusting relationships with adults and other children is a key characteristic of quality.

- The role of the adult in providing quality early childhood experiences is fundamental to practice. The professional competencies, qualifications, dispositions, and experience of early years educators is essential to supporting children's learning and development.

- Provision of quality early childhood experiences requires effective teamwork, cooperation, communication, and mutual respect. All educators work professionally, sharing knowledge and understanding as a team, among other professionals involved with the child and with parents. This is a prerequisite of quality practice and reflects 'a whole child perspective'.

- Pedagogy in early childhood is a term used to refer to the whole range of interactions which support the child's development, this is observed within the curriculum or programme of activities offered to children.

- Play is central to the well-being, development and learning of the young child. It is an important medium through which the child interacts with, explores, and makes sense of the world around him/her. Play is a source of joy and fulfilment for the child and as such, play will be a primary focus in quality early learning and care settings.

Aistear (NCCA, 2009), meaning 'journey' in Irish, is The National Early Childhood Curriculum

Framework for children from birth to six years. Its aim is to help adults, parents/guardians and early years educators, plan for and provide stimulating, enjoyable, and challenging learning experiences for children. There are four interconnected themes in Aistear: **Well-being:** Children will be happy, healthy and confident. **Identity and Belonging:** Children will value themselves and feel respected as part of their family and community. **Communicating:** Children will develop their confidence in sharing their experiences, thoughts, and ideas with others and **Exploring and Thinking:** Children will learn more about the world through playing, observing, questioning, with others and for themselves. In Ireland, all Early Childhood Education curricula and programmes must be informed by *Aistear, The National Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.*

All Early Learning and Care settings are inspected by the early years education inspectorate of the Department of Education (DE). Their inspections are based on a quality framework that is informed by the principles of Aistear and Síolta as well as national and international research related to early childhood education and care and inspection.

Supporting the Child's Early Childhood Learning and Developmental Journey

Aistear (NCCA, 2009) promotes the ideal that planned and challenging experiences provided by trusting adults, will support children to grow and develop as competent and confident learners. The types of learning children gain in their early years is important to them acquiring new skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values and dispositions (perseverance, independence, problem-solving, resilience, confidence, trust etc.).

Supporting Parents/Guardians to Make Successful Transitions to Early Learning and Care Settings and Primary School

Attending Early Learning and Care/Preschool settings offers many benefits to children. It can be a great place for children to interact with peers and learn valuable life lessons such as how to share, take turns, and follow rules. It also can prepare them academically for Primary School, in regard to routine and socialising.

Going to preschool does come with some emotions, for both the parent and the child. For a child, entering a new preschool environment filled with unfamiliar educators and children can cause both anxiety and excitement. Parents might have mixed emotions about whether their child is ready for preschool.

Easing Your Child's Fears

Spend time talking with your child about preschool before it starts. In the months and weeks before preschool, gradually introduce your child to activities that often take place in a classroom (learning environment). A child who's used to scribbling with paper and crayons at home, for example, will find it comforting to discover the crayons and paper in the preschool classroom.

Attend story time in the library before entry to pre-school – allows your child to begin mixing with others.

Visit the preschool classroom with your child a few times before school starts. This can ease concerns about this unfamiliar territory. Visiting is also a chance to meet your child's educator/teacher and ask questions about routines and common activities. You can introduce some of those routines and activities at home, so they become familiar.

While you're in the classroom, let your child explore and observe the class and choose whether to interact with other children. This helps familiarize children with the classroom and lets them explore the new toys/materials they'll play with when pre-school starts.
You can also ask how the educator handles the first tear-filled days. How will the first week be structured to make the transition smooth for your child?

While acknowledging this important step your child is taking and providing support, too much emphasis on the change could make any anxiety worse. Young kids can pick up on their parents' nonverbal cues. When parents feel guilty or worried about leaving their child at pre-school, the child will probably sense that.

The calmer and more assured you are about your choice to send your child to preschool, the more confident your child will be.

Resources
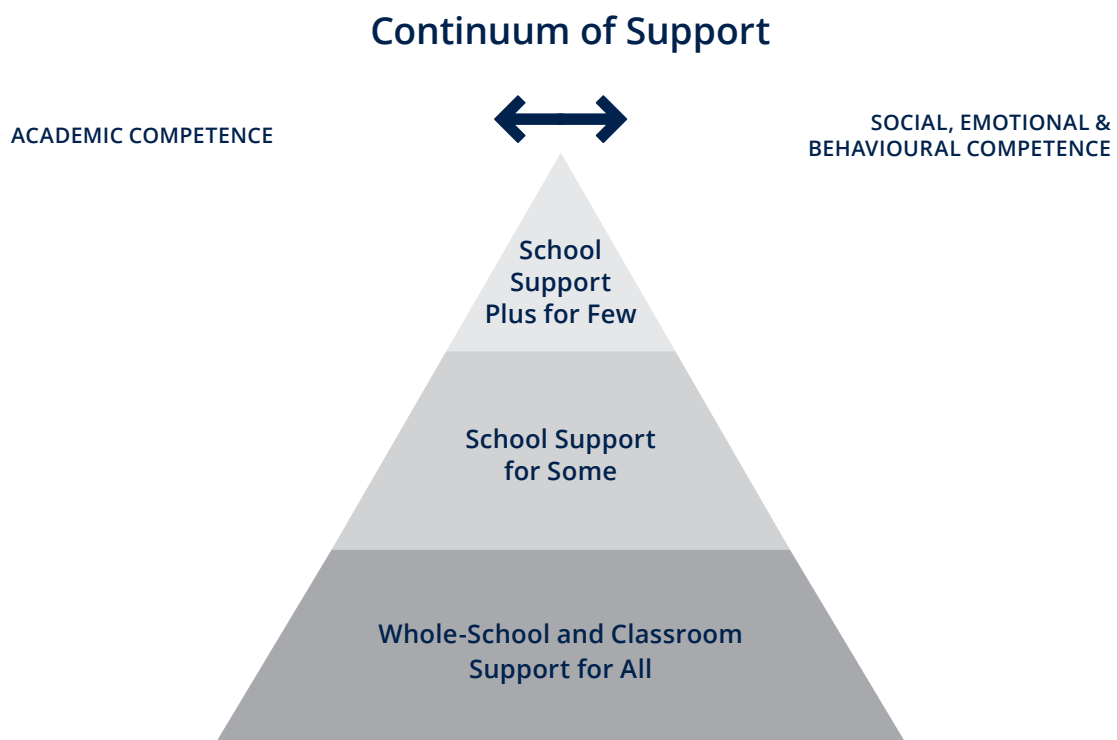|	
Aistear	https://curriculumonline.ie/Early-Childhood/
Síolta	https://siolta.ie/standards.php
Aistear Síolta Practice Guide	https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/introduction/
Mo Sceál	https://ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/mo-sc%C3%A9al/

Appendix 2:
Visual Representation of EBSA Support

Image credit: Aoife Power

Appendix 3: Student Support Plan

STUDENT SUPPORT FILE (DRAFT)	
Name of Student	
Date of Birth	
School	
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	

Continuum of Support

ACADEMIC COMPETENCE ⟷ SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCE

School Support Plus for Few

School Support for Some

Whole-School and Classroom Support for All

Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem-solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

Student Support File, Log of Actions

Date	Actions

Support Checklist		
Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	**Date Checked**	**Comments**
1. Parents/Guardians Consulted		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered		
3. Hearing		
4. Vision		
5. Medical Needs		
6. Basic Needs Checklist completed		
7. Assessment of learning- screening		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning		
9. Observation of behaviour		
10. Interview with pupil		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		
Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20		

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s).

For help, see SEN: A Continuum of Support-Guidelines for Teachers: BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers pp.71-74; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
Priority concerns			
Reasons for concerns (Hypothesis)			
Targets for the student			
Strategies to help the student achieve the targets			
Staff involved and resources needed			
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

For help, see SEN: A Continuum of Support-Guidelines for Teachers; BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools.

Student's name		**Age**	
Names of those present at review		**Class/year**	

What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?
Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?
Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?
Any comments from the student?

Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)	
Signature of teacher	

Outcome of review (tick as appropriate)	
Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support	Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
Continue at Current Level of Support	Request consultation with other professionals

A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this plan.

Appendix 4:
Activity Sheet for working with CYP

Source: https://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Pages/Download/4055a9a3-1c3d-4aa7-8553-4d1e7d088fe0/PageSectionDocuments

Appendix 5:
My Thoughts about School Checklist

My Thoughts about School Checklist

My Thoughts About School...

NAME | CLASS | DATE

The things I like best at school are:
The things I don t like about school are:
The things that I am good at are:
The things I find hard are:
I am happy in class when:
I am happy during break and lunch times when:
My friends are:
I need help with:
Teachers in school can help me by:
My teacher would describe me as:
My parents would describe me as:
My parents would describe me as:

The following questions can be asked if children have an emotional and behavioural difficulty in school.

Adults I get on best with in school are:
I get into trouble in school when:
The things I do that make my teacher feel unhappy are:
The things my teacher does that make me feel unhappy are:
I make my teacher happy when:
The things my teacher does that make me feel happy are:
The class rules are:
If someone breaks the rules:
Rewards I like best are:
The things that I need to change are:

Appendix 6:
Sample "Return to School Plan" Template

Support Plan	
Name	Date

At school these things can make me feel upset

My school support person/(s) is/are:
Details of checking in with my school support person (When, where)

Until _____ my return to school plan includes the following changes to my attendance
(Identify any changes to days or time they come in)

Changes to my timetable include
(Identify any changes needed and what should happen/ where they should go instead)

Any other changes include:
(Identify any other changes to routines (break, lunch times, changes between lessons etc) to classroom expectations (not expected to read aloud, work in pairs etc) homework

When I start to get upset, I notice these things about myself

When I start to get upset, others notice these things about me

Things I can do to make myself feel better when I'm at school

Things that other people (staff and friends) can do to help me feel better when I'm at school

Things that my family can do to support me to attend school

Places in the school where I can go to where I feel safe and supported

This plan will be reviewed regularly so that it remains helpful.
Review date:

My signature	School support persons' signature	Parent signature

Other people who have access to the plan are?

Appendix 7: Whole School Audit

Whole school systems for promotion of emotional well-being and prevention of EBSA			
	Whole School Provision Currently Available	In Need of Development	Comments/Next Steps (Including by Whom and When)
School Culture and Ethos			
Committed and inclusive senior management team - values all students and allows them to feel a sense of belonging			
All staff working within school are valued. Clear protocols regarding emotional support and stress management for staff including supervision			
Continuous professional development for all staff which makes clear the promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing is everybody's responsibility (including EBSA)			
The importance of pupil voice and viewing the child holistically are approaches which are embedded within the culture of the school.			
Recognition of the importance of communication and partnership working with parents and external agencies			
School systems. policy and practice			
Clear policies on attendance, behaviour, bullying, equality and transition which sets out the responsibilities for all and the support in place			
Curriculum includes the teaching of resilience, coping and social skills.			
Curriculum appropriately differentiated according to individual need			

Whole school systems for promotion of emotional well-being and prevention of EBSA			
	Whole School Provision Currently Available	In Need of Development	Comments/Next Steps (Including by Whom and When)
Promotion of supportive literature regarding emotional well-being and mental health for young people and parents.			
Clear roles and responsibilities for SENCo and emotional wellbeing leads.			
A member of senior staff is responsible for over-seeing arrangements for EBSA students			
Clear systems in place for the early identification of school avoidance.			
Nominated member of who has a responsibility to investigate and act on concerns			
Staff are aware as to whom they should convey any concerns regarding EBSA.			
Provision of interventions within a graduated response - assess, plan, do & review			
Staff are aware of the role of other agencies and local arrangements with regard to assessing and supporting students experiencing EBSA.			
Access to indicated provision e.g., safe places within the school, key person.			
All staff are aware of specific strategies and programmes in place to support those experiencing EBSA			

Appendix 8: Child Profiles & Passports

Child profiles or 'one-page profiles' have been developed as a useful tool particularly for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) to use in schools in order to share information about the needs and capabilities of a range of students with additional needs across the staff. This can help staff ensure their practice is in line with consistent approaches for the child in a setting. Children interact with numerous adults during the course of a day, and there needs to be a shared understanding across the staff.

Child profiles are best when based on person-centred planning approaches. This is a way of capturing a child holistically. How can we begin to understand what helps a child if we only ever know what things they can't do? So a child profile will cover what we appreciate about the child, what they can do, what they find difficult, what works, what doesn't work, how we can help and what outcomes we are working for. These profiles are best when the child, the parent and the school (this could be more than one member of staff) have all contributed ideas, so we are all working together to ensure vital information can be shared about effective strategies.

The general idea is to give enough information to enable any adult working with your child to be able to support them for the time they are with them.
Other important points:
 • Depending on the age and understanding of the child, it can be very helpful for the child to contribute their ideas and also know what is on this profile;

Positive language and focusing on the underlying skill which is under-developed is better than focusing on the behaviours children exhibit i.e. say 'Difficulty with sharing space'

Example of Pupil Profile/Passport (Primary)

Things About me	How I communicate	Things I'm good at
Things that help me	My favourite things	Tricky things

Example of Student Profile/Passport (Post Primary)

Difficulties/needs....

- [insert child's name] has Autism which affects his ability to interact successfully with others and he often experiences extreme anxiety when he does not feel familiar with or in control within a given situation. These are the difficulties [insert child's name] experiences;

- **Anxiety:** I may show resistance, claiming to be frozen or legs not working, silliness, avoidance, running away, hiding or panic;

- **Rigid thinking:** I tend to get stuck thinking and find it difficult to accept when the idea or plan I have in my head cannot take place. I need help to agree an alternative if my plan cannot happen;

- **Difficulties with friends:** I like being with friends but I can be controlling or reactive. I need help so that situations with friends run smoothly;

- **Transitions:** If I am enjoying something I will find it hard to stop and move onto to another activity. Negotiation and ensuring I know and understand what the next activity will be can help;

- **Sensory needs:** I can find certain sensory experiences intolerant or my behaviour might change in crowded/busy situations;

- **Waiting for things:** Waiting in queues or waiting for my turn can be stressful and increase my anxiety;

- **Sharing:** Sharing equipment but also sharing my physical space if I have asked someone to play with me can cause me to feel anxious. I may find it hard to share friends and adult attention also;

What are we working for....

For [insert child's name] to be included in [name of group or class] so he can learn to [insert skills] and be a part of his community. These outcomes would be more specific for a school setting...

[Child's name and picture always go in the middle – the child is as the centre of everything!]

Things I like and am good at...

- Being honest
- I like the number 10
- I like LEGO and Star Wars
- Science is interesting to me
- I like holding equipment being given special jobs
- I am good at diving underwater
- I can remember interesting facts
- I love playing with water
- I like iPads and TV

What works/how you can help....

- Give processing time;
- Negotiation;
- Help other children understand me;
- Never try to force me into anything I do not feel ready or comfortable doing;
- Giving me some control by offering choices;
- Show you like me, smile and say that you understand how I feel before trying to change my mind;
- Let me be amongst the first few children to take a turn or line up;
- Help me explain what happened after an incident by asking non-judgemental open ended questions like 'what happened just before that?' or 'How did you feel at the point that happened?'

What to do if I panic....

- Try to work out what has led to panic/meltdown and ensure a need is met as soon as possible – it can be resolved later if I have made mistakes;
- Make the area safe and move others away;
- Someone I feel safe with should stay;
- Offer a quiet space;
- Offer sympathy, acknowledge the fear/anxiety and why you think I have it. Tell me we can find a different way;
- Wait and give me time;
- Talk about it later when I am calm;

APPENDIX 9:
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