



Word from the Coordinator

In October, our coordinator, Julie McNamara, joined 14 other childcare professionals from across Ireland on a study trip to Edinburgh, Scotland organized by the NCNA in association with Children in Scotland, as part of their commitment to providing continuing ongoing professional development opportunities for childcare professionals. The study trip was part of the Largas, Leonardo Mobility Programme, Lifelong learning, funded by the European Commission.

The week involved intensive study opportunities including ECCE policy meetings from both a Scottish and European perspective with Children in Scotland, an exhibition in Stirling University "Making the joy of learning visible 2000-2010", a visit to Jewel & Eske College a training college for ECCE practitioners and visits to a number of Early Years services in five council areas.

Scotland has just introduced a second year of free pre-school for children aged three to five and its new curriculum "Curriculum for Excellence". Scotland has a dedicated Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram.

Our first study group meeting was with Bronwyn Cowen, CEO of Children in Scotland, who spoke about the Children in Europe magazine which is published in 15 languages bi-annually. The objectives of the magazine are to challenge our thinking and to promote discussion and debate in the sector. Comparatives are made with provision across Europe and best practice compared. Early Years Educators can subscribe to the magazine through Children in Scotland's website www.childreninScotland.org.

Stirling Council, in partnership with Early Learning Associates organized the "Making the Joy of Learning Visible" exhibition as a celebration of 10 years of a special and distinctive way of working with young children, inspired by Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy. The exhibition was an accumulation of work carried out by Early Learning Centers who had specific training on ways to focus on young children's interest through close observations conducted by highly skilled key-workers in busy nurseries.

Scotland, like Ireland, is in the process of raising standards in the ECCE sector by standardizing the qualifications of ECCE practitioners. It too has a complexity of qualifications and is in the process of trying to simplify the qualification system. All those working in the Childcare Sector in Scotland must hold relevant qualifications by 2011. Qualifications are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council and practitioners must register every three years and do 40 hours continuous professional development per year.

Over 40 Early Childhood Centres were visited, which included a mixture of both private and local authority services. We visited centers in both rural and urban settings, large and small and with different levels of funding. For me the main learning was the huge emphasis on outdoor play, and the Forest Schools initiative. Each service had large areas dedicated to outdoor play and children spent a large proportion of their day outside.

Many services took children to the local forests, beaches etc on a daily basis. In one service dedicated solely to children with special needs the outdoor play area resembled an adventure park. There were obvious risks there and when asked about how their Inspectorate felt we were advised that the learning which the children acquired from taking the risks had to be offset against the risk itself. As long as the staff was able to document that they identified the learning outcomes, assessed the risk and showed ways to manage the risk, their inspectorate were happy for the children to be involved in risky activities.

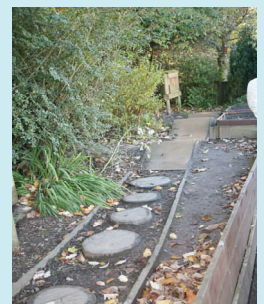
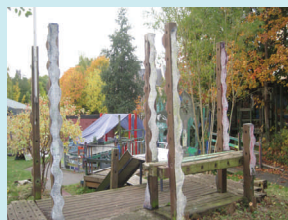
Other ideas which caught my eye were the services newsletter which informed parents of future events, past activities and requests for volunteers etc. Parental involvement was greatly emphasized and they were involved through committees, volunteering on outings, coming into the centers to talk about their work, culture etc.

Transition from nursery to primary school was eased as links were made with primary schools and visits to the schools were a regular occurrence particularly for the local authority services. The trip was a very inspirational one. I for one came back buzzing with hundreds of ideas. I hope to share them with you all in the coming year.

Making the best of the Bad Weather!



Alison with her beautiful daughter Maia enjoying the snowy weather



Some Fun Winter Activities with links to Aistear

During winter a lot of activities can be based around Christmas and other religious traditions. This winter KCCC have decided to suggest some winter activities that are less about the cultural events and more about enjoying and exploring the winter season both outside and inside! Links to each theme of Aistear – the curriculum framework are included to show how a wide variety of activities can be linked to Aistear easily.

Special Points

of Interest in this issue:

- Winter fun activities
- Training Calendar 2011
- Tips for keeping safe in the home this Christmas
- School Aged Childcare

Wellbeing activities

Winter

Babies:

Icy Jelly

You need:

Jelly, Crushed ice, Whisk, Bowl

What you do:

Make the jelly and leave to set, Make the ice and leave to set, Whisk the jelly, Add the crushed ice, Stir and give to the babies to explore and play.

Aistear – Wellbeing – Aim3 Children will be creative and spiritual. – Learning goal 3&4 Develop and nurture their sense of wonder and awe & Become reflective and think flexibly

Toddlers

Wrap up tight!!

You need plenty of: Coats, Hats, Scarves, Gloves, Boots

What you do: Give each child their coat, hat, scarf and gloves and allow the children to practice putting on their winter woolies by themselves. This can be done a number of times allowing the children to also practice taking off their winter woolies by themselves.

After every child has practiced dressing and undressing one student can be chosen to be the "snowman" that you have to dress. Put scarf, mittens, etc. on the snowman and have the other students close their eyes. Change one clothing item (e.g.. put a different hat on) or take a clothing item away. Ask the children to uncover their eyes and guess what is different about the snowman. Make sure they are descriptive and don't just label.

Aistear – Well being – Aim 2 Children will be as healthy and fit as they can be. - Learning goal 3&4 discover, explore and refine gross and fine motor skills & use self-help skills in caring for their own bodies

Young Children

Winter Clothes Mobile

Materials: Hats, mittens, coats and boots tracers (which can be printed from Google images by searching hat, scarf, boot or mitten outline). Yarn and various collage materials.

Description: This is a week long project. We start on Monday with the hat. The children choose which hat they want to trace, then trace it, cut it out and decorate it. On Tuesday we work on the coats, Wednesday the mittens and Thursday, the boots. The children trace all of these and cut out all items and decorate them. Friday is spent finishing up. As the week goes along the teachers punch holes and connect the pieces together.

Aistear: Wellbeing - Aim 2 children will be as healthy and fit as they can be. - learning goal 3 discover, explore and refine gross and fine motor skills





Identity & Belonging Activities

Babies: Winter treasure basket:

You need:

Winter materials such as; hats, scarves, boots, mittens, leaves, wood, picture books showing winter weather, pictures of winter scenes and any other winter themed materials that you come across e.g. pine cones.

What you do:

Allow the babies to explore and play with the materials.

Aistear: Identity & Belonging - Aim 1 Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories. – Learning goal 5 feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment



Toddlers: Frozen Statues:

What you do:

Ask the children to stand in the middle of the room or outside, Play some winter themed music (e.g. frosty the snowman) or sing yourself, When the song is playing the children dance and move, When the music stops the children have to turn into snowmen and stand still

Aistear – Identity and Belonging – Aim 3 Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.

– Learning Goal 3 interact, work co-operatively, and help others



Young Children: All about my winter story sack:

You need:

Winter themed pictures of the children and their families, Objects that relate to the winter themed pictures, Construction paper, Paper/fabric bag,

What you do:

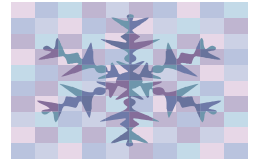
Make up a booklet for each child. , Write a heading on the booklet e.g. All about my winter, Write in a heading for each page. E.g. things I do every winter, special events in my winter, my favourite thing about winter, my family in winter etc., Ask the children to tell you about each topic in their winter and then ask parents to bring in objects and pictures that illustrate each page of the child's booklet. , Stick the pictures into the booklet and add the objects to the story bag. When all the booklets are done gather the children and read through each book asking each child to explain the traditions that they have in their house during the winter season

Aistear: Identity and Belonging – Aim 3 Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.

– Learning Goal 4 be aware of and respect others' needs, rights, feelings, culture, language, background, and religious beliefs



Communicating Activities



Songs, stories and rhymes to use with children of all ages this winter:

Lets play on a winter day

(to the tune of ring around the Rosie)

A winter coat's warm and cosy, A winter coats warn and cosy, Sleeve one, sleeve two, Zip it up and you are through!, A Winter hat covers your ears, A winter hat covers your ears, Warm your head, warm your head, Take it off when you go to bed! Winter mittens warm your hands, Winter mittens warn your hands, Wouldn't it be neat, wouldn't it be neat? To wear them on your feet? Winter boots keep your feet dry, Winter boots keep your feet dry, Do you have any plans, do you have any plans? To wear then on your hands?

Getting ready to play with winter

(to the tune of here we go round the mulberry bush)

This is the way we put on our coats, Put on our coats, Put on our coats, This is the way we put on our coats, Do you know where to find some goats? This is the way we put on our hats.... Do you know where to find some bats? This is the way we put on our mittens.... Do you know where to find some kittens? This is the way we put on our boots... Do you know where to find some newts?



Rhymes:

Icy fingers, icy toes,

Icy fingers, icy toes,
Bright red cheeks and bright red nose.
Watch the snowflakes as they fall,
Try so hard to count them all.
Build a snowman way up high,
See if he can touch the sky.
Snow forts, snowballs, angels, too,
In the snow, so white and new.
Slip and slide and skate so fast.
Wintertime is here at last.

See the pretty snowflakes

See the pretty snowflakes
Falling from the sky;
On the wall and housetops
Soft and thick they lie.
On the window ledges,
On the branches bare;
Now how fast they gather,
Filling all the air.
Look into the garden,
Where the grass was green;
Covered by the snowflakes,
Not a blade is seen.
Now the bare black bushes
All look soft and white,
Every twig is laden,
What a pretty sight!



Stories:

Some winter themed stories can be found at:

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/winter/short-stories/>

http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/stories/winter_wonderland.htm

<http://www.mainlesson.com/displaystoriesbytitle.php>

Aistear: Communication - Aim 2 Children will use language. – Learning goal 2 explore sound, pattern, rhythm, and repetition in language



Exploring & Thinking Activities



Babies: Exploring Ice cubes:

Materials: Bowls, Ice cubes, Food colouring

Instructions: Add a few ice cubes to each bowl, Add different food colouring to each bowl, Allow the babies to explore the ice cubes through, taste, feel and sight., The ice will turn to water and the babies can then explore the coloured water as well.

This activity allows babies to explore the concept of temperature and also the concept of freezing and thawing.

Aistear: Exploring and Thinking - Aim 1 Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.

Learning goal 1 engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials



Toddlers: Add it!!

You need: A wet path, small puddle or container of rain, Two or three of the following additives – sand, bubbles, washing-up liquid, glitter, food colouring, tissues, dry pasta, paint, gravel or flour, Magnifying glass

What you do: Work with a small group to add things to your rain puddle, Add one thing at a time and give the children time to watch what happens, Take photos or record what happens, Talk about the things that change when they get wet and the ones that don't, things that float and things that sink., Add some washing up liquid to a puddle and give each child a straw (with a nick cut at the top to stop them sucking by mistake!). Blow bubbles in the water and spread bubbles onto the surrounding ground to see what happens, add a mixture of cooking oil and ink and marble some sheets of paper

Aistear – Exploring and Thinking – Aim 1 Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.

Learning Goal 1 - engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use new physical skills including skills to manipulate objects and materials

Young Children: Building a Bottle Bird Feeder

You need: A plastic bottle with a cap, Sharp scissors or knife, A stick, A rope

What you do: Poke small holes in the bottom of the bottle as the seeds may sprout in the feeder if the moisture does not get away. Be careful not to cut yourself., About 1-2 inches from the bottom of the bottle, make holes for the

perch. Insert stick and make holes bigger, if needed., Cut holes above the perch for the birds to get the seeds. Holes should be slightly bigger than the seeds. Tie tether or rope around the top of the bottle, where the cap is, and tie a loop for hanging, Carefully fill the feeder with sunflower seeds using your hands as a funnel or get a real funnel. Replace cap and hang in a high tree. It may take three weeks for the birds to find it. Be patient.

Aistear: Exploring and thinking - Aim 1 Children will learn about and make sense of the world around them.

- Learning goal 4 learn about the natural environment and its features, materials, animals, and plants, and their own responsibility as carers





At Christmas time many new hazards for children appear around the home, so don't forget your usual safety routines in all the excitement. You might also want to keep in mind the following tips.

Keeping safe with presents:

For obvious reasons, young children are attracted to presents, regardless of who they are for. So remember to:

- * Keep toys, games and decorations with small parts out of reach of young children – babies and toddlers can choke on small things
- * Make sure presents are suitable for your child's age
- * Keep button batteries (the small circular silver batteries) out of reach of young children – many of these are swallowed every Christmas
- * Put gifts of perfume and aftershave where toddlers can't reach them – they contain alcohol that's harmful if swallowed.

Lights and decorations:

Follow these basic rules to avoid accidents with lights and decorations:

- * Always check Christmas lights for frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections
- * Turn all lights off when you go to bed or go out, as they could cause a fire
- * Avoid decorations like baubles that break easily, as the pieces can be very sharp
- * Put candles out of children's reach, in containers that won't tip over and aren't made of plastic
- * Remember to blow out all candles before going out or going to bed
- * Keep candles away from Christmas trees and decorations
- * Don't hang decorations from lights or heaters as they can burn easily
- * Choking hazards include balloons so be mindful when they burst to pick up all the pieces.

Fire Safety:

- * There is an increased risk of fire in the home at Christmas time, so check your smoke alarms are still working

Walks and outings:

When taking children on walks or outings at this time of year it is important to remember

- * planning and preparation are the key to a successful and safe outing.
- * Both children and adults need to know what is expected of each other.
- * Children need to be aware of the importance of following instructions and behaving in a sensible way.

Always remember when going on a winter outing 'There is no such thing as bad weather... just inappropriate clothing!!'



Association Of Childcare Professionals Kildare Branch

Babysitter??? Early years professional??? What do people see you as????

The Association of childcare professionals Kildare branch is on the way! We in Kildare childcare committee are attempting to aid in the setting up of an association of childcare professionals in County Kildare. The association will encompass all early years workers in County Kildare. The association hopes to give all early years workers in Kildare an independent voice regardless of your position in the facility you work in. A council will be set up in Kildare which will represent its members and spearhead the group in Kildare

Who can join the ACP Kildare branch:

Early years workers who work in, Sessional services, Fullday services, Montessori schools, Naionrai, Steiner schools, Community and Private facilities, Childminders, School aged childcare practitioners

Requirements for joining:

Minimum of Fetac level 5 childcare qualification, commitment to attending 40 hours professional development each year, Signing up to a code of ethics and adhering to best practice, Payment of a membership fee

The first meeting of the Association of childcare professionals Kildare Branch will be held at 7pm on 20th of January 2011 in the Kildare County Childcare Committee Offices, The Woods, Clane, Co. Kildare.

If you are interested in attending this meeting please let us know by calling us on 045-861307



School Aged Childcare

There are many different ways children and young people are cared for after school finishes in Ireland, including Childminders, crèches, school provision (activities such as dancing/music/drama), homework clubs and community-based after school projects. This type of service may also be known as 'after school care', 'after school clubs', or 'summer schemes'.

What to look for in School aged childcare:

- a clean, safe, friendly environment that meets the needs of active school-age children;
- responsible care providers who understand school-age children and enjoy working with them;
- a service which provides a variety of activities that complement the school day, offer opportunities for achievement at differing levels of skill, and encourage school-age youngsters to make choices;
- a programme philosophy that understands that school-age children need time to relax with friends as well as time to pursue individual interests under the watchful guidance of competent adults;
- Respect for the importance of parents and other family members to children and to the child care programme.

If children are attending directly after school it is important to establish whether food is offered or needs to be provided by the Parents as this is a time of rapid growth and development.

Winter sun catchers

Materials

- Disposable foil pan (we used a rectangular cake pan)
 - One orange/lemon cut into rounds
 - A few small pine branches
 - Fresh or frozen cranberries
- Sturdy twine, cut into 4 lengths approximately 2feet/60cm each.
- Instructions



Place the pan on a flat surface.

Arrange the orange rounds and pine branches in the pan and add enough water to cover them. Sprinkle on the berries. For the hanging cords, lay one end of each piece of twine in the pan, submerging it at least several inches. Let the pan freeze outside (or place it in the freezer).

Remove the ice block from the pan (run warm water over the back if needed) and hang it up outside.

A Winter Collage



You will need:

- Twigs
- Cotton wool balls
- Silver glitter
- Large sheet(s) of blue paper
- PVA glue (white glue)
- Pebbles
- Leaves
- Scissors
- Anything else you might find outdoors

You may choose to collect some of these items on a field trip or ask the children asked to bring them in from home. Place all of the items into boxes on the table and encourage the children to make a lovely winter picture by gluing items onto the paper either individually or as a group activity.

Buntús Start for €100 including free bag of equipment

The Buntús Start programme is currently being rolled out by Kildare County Childcare Committee in conjunction with Kildare Sports Partnership, funded by FAS Social inclusion fund. Buntús Start is a comprehensive physical activity programme for children aged 2-5 years old. It has been designed for use in pre-school settings so that pre-school and playgroup leaders can provide a wide range of learning opportunities for young children to develop their fundamental motor skills, manipulative skills, co-ordination and balancing skills and develop a positive attitude to physical activity. Buntús Start helps adults working with children to establish positive attitudes to activity and a healthy lifestyle through enjoyable activities with children. At the end of the training session, each participating group will receive a set of resource cards and a Buntús Start bag containing colourful, child friendly equipment especially developed to suit pre-school children.

For more information please call Kildare County Childcare Committee.



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Promoting quality and accessible childcare provision for all children from birth to 14 years in County Kildare in partnership with all stakeholders



KCCC Training Calendar 2011

KCCC hopes to provide the following childcare training in 2011

- ✦ Childcare Certificate FETAC Level 5 Year 1
- ✦ Advanced Supervision in Childcare Certificate Fetac Level 6
- ✦ Understanding Special Needs FETAC Level 5 Module FETAC Level 5 Occupational First Aid
- ✦ Equality and Diversity in Childcare FETAC Level 5
- ✦ KARE Pre-school Child with Special Needs FETAC Level 5 Module
- ✦ School Age Childcare FETAC Level 5 Module
- ✦ Childminders Quality Awareness Programme



**TRAINING/
EVENTS
2011**

Subject to funding the above training will be offered along with the following training courses and workshops:

January

Speech and Language Development Training

February

- ✦ Speech and Language Development Training
- ✦ Providers Network
- ✦ Beep Beep Road Safety Information Sessions

March

- ✦ Childminders Network
- ✦ Support, Supervision and Management of Staff - NCNA

April

- ✦ Business Skills Training
- ✦ Documentation and Record Keeping - NCNA
- ✦ Parenting & Aistear - Barnardos

May

- ✦ Quality Workshop Day
- ✦ Sustainability Workshop
- ✦ Provider Network
- ✦ Programme Ideas for After School Settings - NCNA

June

Basic Food Hygiene

September

- ✦ Parents Conference
- ✦ Health and Safety Training
- ✦ Providers Network

October

- ✦ Sustainability Workshop

November

Providers Network

Attention!!

KCCC provide a **free** Quality Outreach Service which offers childcare providers the chance to receive onsite support and advice specifically geared towards their own childcare service.

If you are interested in accessing this service please contact us at KCCC to receive an application form.



The above training ideas have been taken from our childcare providers suggestions in 2010. We at Kildare County Childcare Committee would like to thank everybody who filled out an evaluation form for us over the last 12 months. These evaluations guide our training and workshop topics the following year. If there is any training/workshop topics that are not listed above that you would like to see Kildare County Childcare Committee include in 2011 please let us know. We will do our best to include as many suggestions as we can.



IPPA are running the following training in 2011:

- * **FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Childcare: Year 1 – 4** Modules held each Monday 7-10pm (info night Mon 17th January 2011)
- * **FETAC Level 5 Modules – Caring for Children or Work Experience** held each Thursday 7-10pm
- * **FETAC Level 5 Certificate in School Age Childcare – Year 1 – 4** Modules held Each Wednesday 7-10pm (Starting 2nd February 2011)
- * **FETAC Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Childcare Supervision (Daytime) – Full Award, Mandatory Modules.** Held each Thursday 2-6.30pm (info night Thursday 14th January 2011)

For more information on any of these courses or to book into an information session please contact IPPA on 01-4630011

