

APPENDIX 2

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE IN IRELAND

Introduction

Both the Expert Working Group on Childcare and the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000 - 2006 which is supporting the development of childcare in Ireland place considerable emphasis on the concept of quality childcare as a key principle which must underpin all childcare development.

The School Age Childcare sector must also be developed to afford our children and their parents the opportunity to avail of a quality childcare experience in those hours when school is closed and parents are at work, studying or otherwise enhancing their skills.

Such a service requires a committed and well trained team of childcare practitioners who care for and relate well to children across a range of ages in a respectful and consultative manner; of adults who understand the need to play a facilitative and supportive role, allowing the child space to develop his or her own ideas to explore real life skills and opportunities to contribute to his or her own care; practitioners who can nurture, support and stimulate and encourage the child and who can build on his/her confidence.

It requires a warm, welcoming and challenging environment, where the child can feel comfortable, accepted and at home and, most importantly, can exercise choice in the daily routine - for example - to engage in the hustle and bustle of free play or can retreat for a quiet period with a favourite book or for a chat with pals.

A quality school age childcare facility will have a set of written policies and procedures to underpin its work which are developed and reviewed in consultation with the children involved with the service, their parents and the staff.

The individual needs and interests of the child will be central to the development of the service, ensuring that all aspects of the service are geared to help them to contribute towards and participate in the range of exciting and challenging experiences being offered by the School Age Childcare facility.

While adopting a positive attitude to Irish language and culture, the School Age Childcare Service must also commit to meet the needs of children coming from different language and cultural backgrounds and of children with special needs and differing abilities.

These guidelines aim to help school age childcare service providers to achieve excellence as they bring new school age childcare services on stream.

Underlying Principles for School Age Childcare

The School Age Childcare Facility should ensure that:

- Children and adults have rights and responsibilities within the service;
- The work and ethos of the service should be underpinned by the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child and on the National Children's Strategy;
- Access and participation in the life of the service is open to all stakeholders;
- Children learn and develop in the context of a caring community which values their individual and combined strengths;
- Links with and between the child, family, service and wider community promote a sense of identity and belonging;
- Mutually respectful relationships are fostered and recognised as being central to the life of the service;
- Children, staff and parents engage in meaningful dialogue;
- The voice of the child is heard, respected and contributes to the service;
- Interactions are sensitive and responsive;
- The ethos and practice of the service values diversity and promotes equality;
- The programme is culturally and socially appropriate to the children, families and staff participating in the service;
- Staff and children work together in ways that are respectful and inclusive,
- Children are protected from bullying and abuse;
- The environment provides opportunities for learning;
- The service should provide opportunities for positive experiences which support learning, development and well being for all;
- The programme should promote healthy life choices;
- The programme should offer opportunities for challenge and risk;
- The programme should be recreational and educationally of benefit to children;
- The programme should have breadth, depth and balance;
- Staff should be valued for the knowledge, expertise and life experience they bring to the service;
- The professionalisation of staff should be supported within the service;
- Programmes, policies and procedures should be responsive to the needs of children, families and staff.

Guidelines on the Physical Environment for School Age Childcare

The School Age Childcare Facility should be designed to ensure that:

- The facility should offer a bright, warm environment;
- It should be accessible by children with disabilities;
- It should have a range of rooms or areas to facilitate more than one activity by a child or group of children at a time;
- It should provide adequate open internal space to facilitate more physical activities including sports and drama, where appropriate;
- It should provide a quiet area for reading, table based activities and homework;
- All areas should be designed for easy and unobtrusive supervision;
- Every room should, as far as possible, have natural light;
- Every facility should have access to an outside play area;
- Every facility should have adequate storage to keep the area as clutter free as possible;

- It should be clean and well maintained;
- It should be well insulated to maintain heat and quiet;
- It should include a kitchen area to facilitate the preparation of food and hot drinks for children after the school day;
- It should have suitably appointed toilet facilities.

Guidelines on the Programme of Activities for School Age Childcare

- A strong focus on play must be a core principle and indeed a distinguishing characteristic of school age childcare.
- The school age childcare service should plan and provide a range of play opportunities and activities to support children's social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional capabilities.
- When planning play opportunities for children, the childcare facility should offer opportunities for a mix of free play and structured play opportunities.
- Homework support should not be the core activity of a school aged childcare service but dialogue with parents and children is critical on this issue.
- Risk taking in the school age childcare setting should be accommodated under circumstances which could include:
 - ◆ good practice;
 - ◆ appropriate supervision;
 - ◆ awareness of the child's capabilities;
 - ◆ appropriate activities;
 - ◆ communication and trust between the parents and the provider as well as the child and provider;
 - ◆ relevant training and qualifications for the activity provider;
 - ◆ risk assessment for purposeful activity; and
 - ◆ appropriate insurance coverage.
- Each school age childcare facility should set aside a period of time each week to enable children and practitioners to work together to review previous activities and to develop the programme of activities for the coming week.

Guidelines on Health and Safety for School Age Childcare

- Every school age childcare facility should prepare a statement with comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures dealing, *inter alia*, with
 - ◆ The identification, handling and reporting of accidents;
 - ◆ Child welfare and protection;
 - ◆ Illnesses;
 - ◆ First aid practices;
 - ◆ Supervision;
 - ◆ Use of potentially hazardous equipment;
 - ◆ Regular safety checks on equipment;
 - ◆ Behavioural problems; and
 - ◆ Hygiene practices.
- To ensure that no child is placed at risk, all staff should be encouraged to undertake first aid training and training in health and safety issues.

- All childcare practitioners should be made aware of procedures to be followed in the case of suspected non-accidental injury to children. They should be trained to watch for evidence of such injuries and of other abuses.
- In line with Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and “Our Duty to Care”, all childcare providers should develop their own local procedures and guidance for dealing with child protection and all staff should be informed of and be aware of these procedures.
- Every childcare facility should have adequate insurance cover to provide against every eventuality. Both management and staff should be aware of the terms of the facility’s insurance and must avoid all activities which do not come within the terms of such insurance.

Guideline on Adult child ratios for School Age Childcare

In a centre based school age childcare facility the ratio should be one adult for eight children

Guidelines on Fostering Partnerships within School Age Childcare

- A spirit of co-operation should be fostered between parents and service managers and childcare practitioners.
- A spirit of co-operation and consultation should be fostered between management, practitioners and children.
- The regular exchange of information with parents should be facilitated.
- Parents should have access to both the school age childcare facility and to the practitioners at all appropriate times.

Guidelines on Training for School Age Childcare

All practitioners working in a school age childcare setting should be appropriately trained.

AGUISÍN 2

TREOIRLÍNTE MAIDIR LE CÚRAM LEANAÍ D'AOIS SCOILE AGUS D'ARDCHAIGHDEÁN A FHORBAIRT IN ÉIRINN

Réamhrá

Cuireann an Sainghrúpa Oibre um Chúram Leanaí agus an Clár Comhdheiseanna um Chúram Leanaí 2000-2006, a thacaíonn le forbairt an chúraim leanaí in Éirinn, béim mhór ar an gcoincheap go mbeadh cúram leanaí d'ardchaighdeán ina bhunphrionsabal riachtanach i ngach forbairt ar chúram leanaí.

Is gá earnáil an Chúraim Leanaí d'Aois Scoile a fhorbairt, freisin, chun deis a thabhairt do leanaí agus dá dtuismitheoirí leas a bhaint as cúram leanaí d'ardchaighdeán sna huaireanta san a mbíonn an scoil dúnta agus na tuismitheoirí ag obair, ag staidéar nó ag feabhsú scileanna ar bhealaí eile.

Éilíonn seirbhís dá sort foireann cleachtóirí cúraim leanaí atá diongbháilte agus dea-oilte, atá comhbhách agus dea-thuisceanach le leanaí thar raon aoiseanna, ar shlí atá urramach, chomhairleach; aosaigh a thuigeann gur bhfuil ról éascaithe agus tacúil acu, ag ligean spáis leis na leanbh chun a smaointe féin a fhorbairt, fíorscileanna saoil a thaiscéaladh agus a thairgeann dó deiseanna chun cabhrú lena chúram féin; cleachtóirí ar féidir leo an leanbh a chothú, tacú leis, é a spreagadh agus a mhisiú agus cur lena fhéinmhuinín.

Éilíonn sí timpeallacht theolaí, fháilteach, dhúslánach, ina mothaíonn an leanbh compórdach, ina bhfuil glacadh leis agus é taithíoch uirthi agus, níos tábhachtaí fós, inar féidir leis roghnú as measc ghnáthaimh an lae – mar shampla – páirt a ghlacadh i bhfuadar an tsaorshúgraidh nó cúlú le haghaidh tréimhse chiúnis lena rogha leabhair nó chun comhrá a dhéanamh le cairde.

Beidh sraith beartas agus gnáthamh scríofa mar bhonn le hobair na háise cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile atá ar ardchaighdeán, a forbraíodh agus a athbhreithníodh i gcomhairle leis na leanaí atá páirteach sa tseirbhís, lena dtuismitheoirí agus leis an bhfoireann.

Beidh riachtanais agus spéiseanna pearsanta an linbh ag croílár fhorbairt na seirbhíse, ag cinntiú go mbeidh gach gné den tseirbhís i riocht cabhrú leo a bheith páirteach sa raon spreagúil dúshlánach eachtraí a chuireann an áis Chúraim Leanaí d'Aois Scoile ar fáil, agus a gcuid féin a chur leo.

Agus dearcadh dearfach á ghlacadh aici i leith na Gaeilge agus chultúr na hÉireann, ní foláir don tSeirbhís um Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile cúram a dhéanamh de riachtanais leanaí ó chúlraí eile teanga agus cultúir, agus leanaí le sainriachtanais agus cumais éagsúla.

Tá sé mar chuspóir ag na treoirlínite seo cabhrú le soláthróirí seirbhíse an chúraim leanaí d'aois scoile, feabhas a bhaint amach sna nuasheirbhísí le haghaidh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile a chuireann siad ar bun.

Bunphrionsabail le haghaidh Cúraim Leanaí d'Aois Scoile

Is cóir don Áis um Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile a chinntiú

- Go bhfuil cearta agus dualgais ag leanaí agus ag aosaigh laistigh den tseirbhís.
- Go bhfuil Cairt na Náisiún Aontaithe um Chearta an Linbh agus an Straitéis Náisiúnta um Leanaí mar bhonn le hobair agus le héiteas na seirbhíse.
- Go bhfuil rochtain ar shaol na seirbhíse agus rannpháirt inti ar fáil ag gach pairtí leasmhar.
- Go bhfoghlaímíonn agus go bhforbraíonn na leanaí i gcomhthéacs pobail chomhbháigh a bhfuil meas aige ar a nirt aonair agus ar a nirt chomhcheangailte.
- Go gcothaíonn na naisc le leanbh, teaghlach, seirbhís agus mórfhobal, agus na naisc eadarthu, cothú féiniúlachta agus bainteachta.
- Go gcothaítear gaoil chómheasúla agus go n-aithnítear iad a bheith ag croilár shaol na seirbhíse.
- Go mbíonn plé éifeachtach idir leanaí, foireann agus tuismitheoirí.
- Go gcloistear guth an linbh, go bhfuil meas air agus go gcuireann sé leis an tseirbhís.
- Go mbíonn na hidirghníomhaíochtaí íogair agus freagrach.
- Go dtugann éiteas agus cleachtas na seirbhíse ómós don ilghnéitheacht agus go gcothaíonn siad an comhionannas.
- Go bhfuil an clár oiriúnach, ón taobh cultúrtha agus sóisialta de, do leanaí, do theaghlaigh agus don fhoireann atá rannpháirteach sa tseirbhís.
- Go n-oibríonn an fhoireann agus na leanaí le chéile ar bhealaí atá ómósach agus cuimsitheach.
- Go gcosnaítear na leanaí ar bhulaíocht agus ar dhrochíde.
- Go gcuireann an timpeallacht deiseanna foghlama ar fáil.
- Go gcuireann an tseirbhís deiseanna ar fáil d'eachtraí dearfacha a thacaíonn le foghlaim, forbairt agus dea-bhail cách.
- Go gcothaíonn an tseirbhís roghanna saoil atá sláintiúil.
- Go dtairgeann an clár deiseanna dúshláin agus fiontraíochta.
- Go bhfaigheann na leanaí tairbhe chaithimh aimsire agus oideachais ón gclár.
- Go bhfuil leithne, doimhneacht agus cothromaíocht sa chlár.
- Go bhfuil meas ar an eolas, saineolas agus taithí saoil a thugann an fhoireann leo don tseirbhís.
- Go dtacaítear leis an bhfoireann a chur ar bhonn gairmiúil laistigh den tseirbhís.
- Go bhfuil na cláir, beartais agus gnáthaimh ag freagairt do riachtanais leanaí, teaghlach agus foirne.

Treoirínte faoin Timpeallacht Fhisiciúil do Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile.

Is cóir an Áis um Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile a dhearadh ar bhealach a chinntíonn

- Go gcuireann an áis timpeallacht gheal theolaí ar fáil;
- Go bhfuil sí inrochtana ag leanaí faoi mhíbhuntáiste;
- Go bhfuil raon seomraí nó limistéar inti a éascaíonn níos mó ná gníomhaíocht amháin ag leanbh nó ag grúpa leanaí san am céanna;
- Go bhfuil go leor spáis oscailte inmheánaigh inti chun imeachtaí níos fisiciúla, lena n-áirítear spóirt agus dramaíocht, a éascú de réir mar is cuí;
- Go gcuireann sí limistéar ciúin ar fáil don léitheoireacht, d'imeachtaí bordbhunaithe agus d'obair bhaile;

- Go n-oireann gach limistéar don mhaoirseacht éasca neamhbhuannúil;
- Go bhfuil, oiread agus is féidir, solas nádúrtha i ngach seomra;
- Go bhfuil rochtain ag gach áis ar limistéar súgartha lasmuigh;
- Go bhfuil leorstóras ag gach áis chun an limistéar a choinneáil chomh saor ó thranglam agus is féidir;
- Go bhfuil sí glan agus dea-choinnithe;
- Go bhfuil sí dea-inslithe chun í a choinneáil teolaí agus ciúin;
- Go gcoimsíonn sí limistéar cistine a éascaíonn ullmhú bia agus deochanna te do na leanaí tar éis an lae scoile;
- Go bhfuil áiseanna leithris cuíchóirithe aici.

Treoirilínte faoin gClár Gníomhaíochta do Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile

- Is gá fócas láidir ar shúgradh a bheith mar chroíphrionsabal agus le fírinne mar thréith shuntasach de chúram leanaí d'aois scoile.
- Is cóir don tseirbhís le haghaidh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile raon deiseanna agus imeachtaí súgartha a phleanáil agus a sholáthar mar thaca do chumais shóisialta, fhisiciúla, intleachtúla, chruthaíocha agus mhothúcháin na leanaí.
- Nuair a bhíonn deiseanna súgartha á bpleanáil do leanaí, is cóir don áis chúraim leanaí deiseanna a thairiscint le haghaidh meascán de shaorshúgradh agus de shúgradh struchtúrtha.
- Ní cóir tacaíocht d'obair bhaile a bheith ina chroíghníomhaíocht ag seirbhís le haghaidh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile ach tá géarghá an cheist seo a phlé le tuismitheoirí agus leanaí.
- Is cóir go mbeadh ionad ag an bhfiontraíocht i suíomh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile, faoi thosca a chuimsíonn.
 - ◆ dea-chleachtas;
 - ◆ maoirseacht chuí;
 - ◆ feachtas faoi chumais an linbh;
 - ◆ imeachtaí cuí;
 - ◆ cumarsáid agus muinín idir tuismitheoirí agus an soláthróir, agus idir an leanbh agus an soláthróir;
 - ◆ oiliúint agus cáilíochtaí ábhartha do sholáthróir na gníomhaíochta; agus
 - ◆ cumhdach cuí árachais.
- Is cóir do gach áis le haghaidh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile tréimhse ama a chur i leataobh gach seachtain chun go mbeidh ar chumas na leanaí agus na cleachtóirí oibriú le chéile, ag athbhreithniú gníomhaíochtaí cheana agus ag forbairt an chláir gníomhaíochta don tseachtain le teacht.

Treoirilínte Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta do Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile

- Is cóir do gach áis le haghaidh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile ráiteas a ullmhú ina bhfuil beartais agus gnáthaimh chuimsitheacha sláinte agus sábháilteachta a phléann, inter alia, le
 - ◆ Sainiú, láimhseáil agus tuairisciú timpistí;
 - ◆ Leas agus cosaint leanaí;
 - ◆ Breoiteachtaí;
 - ◆ Cleachtais chéadchabhrach;
 - ◆ Maoirseacht;
 - ◆ Úsáid trealaimh inghuaise;
 - ◆ Seiceáil rialta ar shábháilteacht trealaimh;
 - ◆ Fadhbanna iompair; agus
 - ◆ Cleachtais sláinteachais.

- Lena chinntiú nach bhfuil aon leanbh á chur i bpriacal, is cóir gach ball foirne a spreagadh chun oiliúint a fháil sa chéadchabhair agus ar shaincheisteanna sláinte agus sábháilteachta.
- Is cóir gach cleachtóir cúraim leanaí a chur ar an eolas faoi na gnáthaimh is cóir a leanacht i gcás gortaithe do leanaí a mheastar a bheith neamhthaismeach. Is cóir go n-oilfí iad chun faire ar fhianaise i dtaobh gortuithe dá short agus drochídí eile.
- Ag teacht le Treoirlínte Náisiúnta Leanaí ar dTús, maidir le Cosaint agus Leas Leanaí agus “Ár nDualgas Cúraim”, is cóir do gach soláthróir cúraim leanaí a ghnáthaimh agus a threoir áitiúil féin a fhorbairt chun plé le cosaint leanaí, agus is cóir go gcuirfí na gnáthaimh seo in iúl do gach ball foirne agus go mbeadh siad feasacht orthu.
- Is cóir go mbeadh leorchumhdach árchais ag gach áis chúraim leanaí chun plé le gach teagmhas. Is cóir go mbeadh an bhainistíocht agus an fhoireann araon feasach faoi théarmaí árchais na háise agus ní foláir dóibh gach gníomhaíocht nach dtagann faoi théarmaí an árachais sin a sheachaint.

Treoirlíne faoin gcoibhneas idir Aosaigh agus Leanaí ó thaobh Cúraim Leanaí d'Aois Scoile

In áis chúraim leanaí d'aois scoile atá ionadhbhunaithe is cóir go mbeadh coibhneas aosaigh amháin in aghaidh ochtair leanaí ann.

Treoirlínte maidir le Comhpháirtíochtaí a Chothú laistigh de Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile

- Is cóir spiorad an chomhoibrithe a chothú idir tuismitheoirí agus bainisteoirí seirbhíse agus cleachtóirí cúraim leanaí.
- Is cóir spiorad an chomhoibrithe agus an chomhairliúcháin a chothú idir bainistíocht, cleachtóirí agus leanaí.
- Is cóir malartú rialta faisnéise le tuismitheoirí a chothú.
- Is cóir go mbeidh rochtain ag tuismitheoirí ar an áis chúraim leanaí d'aois scoile agus ar na cleachtóirí ag gach am cuí.

Treoirlínte faoi Oiliúint do Chúram Leanaí d'Aois Scoile

Is cóir go mbeadh oiliúint chuí ag gach cleachtóir a oibríonn i suíomh cúraim leanaí d'aois scoile.