



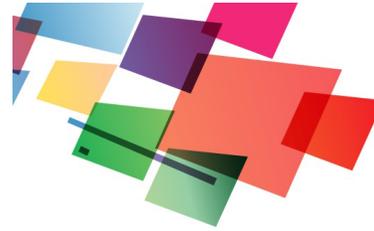
Early Educational Alignment: Reflecting on Context, Curriculum and Pedagogy

Multiple Transitions in Early Childhood Education

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Multiple Transitions

A paper prepared for the symposium:

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Context, Curriculum and Pedagogy**

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Importance of Transitions



- Focus on the major educational transitions for a young child in terms of early educational alignment.
- At times of transition children must interpret and negotiate both the old and the new arena as they **construct their new identity** in the new setting.
- The demands placed on children during these early educational transitions present both **challenges and opportunities**, and the degree of success experienced can impact on children in many ways.
- Dominant themes: funds of knowledge that children bring to transitions; transitions as a shared responsibility; curriculum and pedagogy: the role of play; and the impact of external environments.



Funds of Knowledge / Shared Responsibility:



- As well as considering supporting the child with the **skill sets** to negotiate transitions, it is also important to consider the **contexts** in which transitions take place.
- Educational settings must connect with the knowledge that children bring to the transition.
- The value placed on individual skill sets can vary depending on the context that the child enters during transition.
- In parental terms, links to ‘transitions capital’.
- **The question to be asked is not ‘what does the child know’ but instead, is the child supported in applying their knowledge in the new educational setting.**
- The central role of relationships in supporting positive educational transitions for young children must be recognised. (Home – Preschool – Primary).



Curriculum and Pedagogy: The Role of Play



- Dominance of **preschool to primary transition** in international transitions research reflects the importance of this transition.
- Internationally, the research argues that an academic focus at primary level should shift towards a more **play based approach**.
- It has been questioned whether the pedagogy of the infant classroom in Irish primary schools is appropriate to the most effective learning opportunities for children at this level.
- Although primary school teachers have expressed a clear value in play based learning, they reported that introducing play as a teaching methodology is '**professionally risky**' and have noted a pressure from parents to engage in a more academic focus at the primary school level.
- A stronger research focus examining pedagogy in the infant classes would be of value, particularly linked to the use of **Aistear** would be useful.

The Impact of External Environments



- *Siolta* and *Aistear* should increase connections in quality experiences and learning throughout early childhood.
- The application of *Aistear* in infant classrooms could support Irish primary schools in becoming ‘**ready schools**’. [*Aistear* tutors]
- In this way, children making this transition would have the opportunity to further **advance the capabilities developed in ECCE settings** through play based activities which would extend current skill sets.
- **Joint educational experiences** for professionals from the two educational settings would enable greater alignment in teaching strategies.



Questions for Discussion



- **Three Interlinked Questions:**
- **Funds of Knowledge / Shared Responsibility:**
- How can we better shift our focus from ‘ready children’ to ‘ready children and ready educational settings’, thereby supporting children in applying their knowledge in the new setting.
- **Early Educational Alignment:** How can we develop stronger relationships between the home, ECCE setting, and primary school contexts in order to offer greater coherence and alignment at points of transition?
- **Curriculum and Pedagogy / External Environments:** It is clear that *Aistear* has a role to play in smoothing the transition from preschool to primary school. How can engagement with *Aistear* be better supported within the preschool and primary school sectors?