



From Junk Art to Mudcakes Aistear @ Knocknacarra N.S.

Presenter: Jackie Curley





Workshop Overview

- What is Aistear?
- Introduction of junk art
- The play session
- Playfulness throughout the day
- Learning outside
- The Aistear impact

What is Aistear?

- Curriculum framework from birth to 6 years
- To help children develop as **competent and confident learners** within loving relationships with others.





Licence to Play

".....play, particularly suited to the learning needs of young children."

(Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum P. 30)

"Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to"
(Primary Language Curriculum)

Play in an educational setting must have learning consequences"

Janet Moyles

Why?/ Why not?

- ▶ Play is complex
- ▶ Uncomfortable
- ▶ Loud/ messy
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Ongoing process
- ▶ Develop social, problem solving and communication skills
- ▶ Collaborative and cooperative skills
- ▶ Nurtures creativity
- ▶ Fun! "We'd be bored if we didn't"



We learn from our
play

Long term investment and may not yield the short term results teachers regularly seek.

Junk Art

- Cheap
- Resources readily available
- No limitations to creativity
- Key skills e.g. cutting, writing
- Writing/ creative area



Junk art is my favourite, because we can make whatever we want.

I get to set my imagination free!



They are very creative and still love junk art and creating their own pieces of art without needing guidance.
M. Elaine. 2nd Class

Tell me about
what you made?



I wonder how?



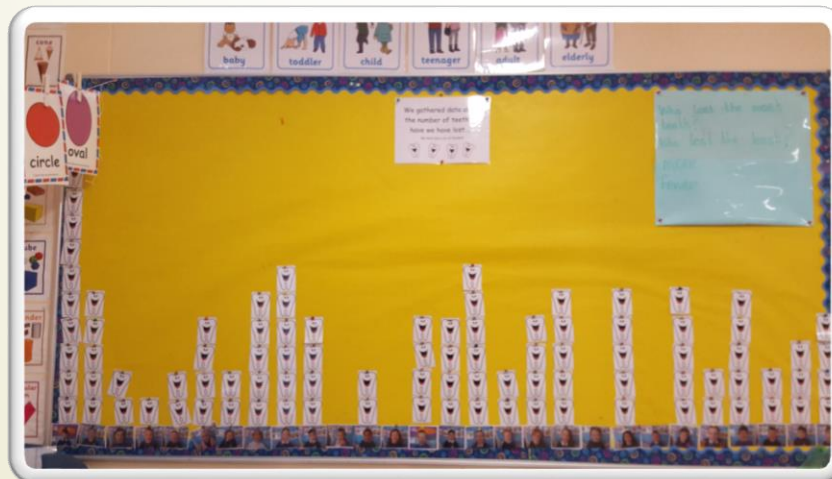
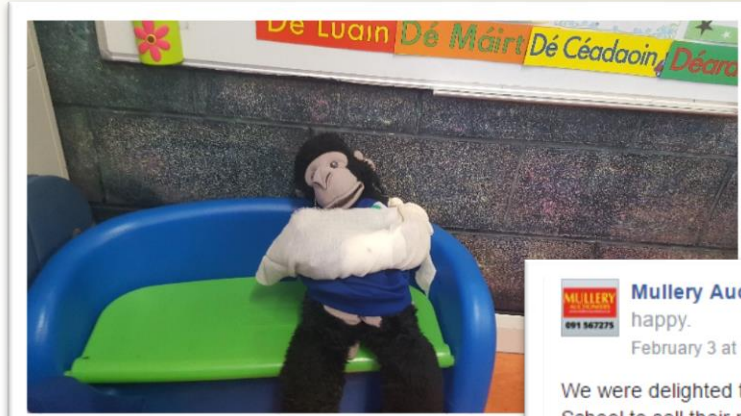
Introduction of the child led play session

- Open-ended durable resources
- 4/ 5 play areas
 - Small world
 - Role-play
 - Construction (Large and small)
 - Sand/ Water play
 - Creative play (junk art/ play doh)
- Play sequence
- Working towards an hour of child-led play daily
- Plan, play, tidy up, review



Playfulness throughout the day

- Topic-based approach
 - Story
 - Visitors
 - Highlight key vocabulary
 - Role-play
 - Games with rules



Planning with the children

- Brainstorm new topics
- AFL
- Involve the children in making resources for the play areas.
- Play becomes more relevant and meaningful.





Role of the Teacher

- ▶ Flexible
- ▶ Patient
- ▶ Co-player
- ▶ Facilitator
- ▶ Reflective practitioner
- ▶ Engage in meaningful interactions

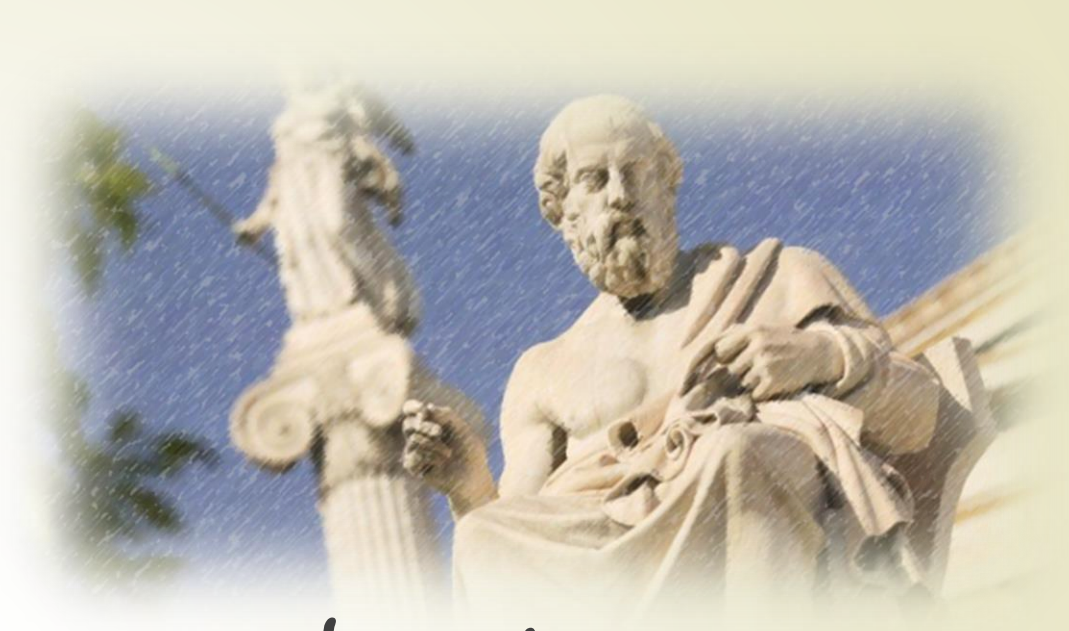
*"We don't stop **playing** because we grow old;
we grow old because we stop **playing**."*

George Bernard Shaw



Types of learning

- **Dispositions** (curiosity, resilience, perseverance and concentration).
- **Skills** (walking, cutting, writing and problem-solving).
- **Attitudes and values**
- **Knowledge and understanding**



*You can learn more about a
person in an hour of play than in
a year of conversation.*

Plato

Outside we go!

"Learning outside provides more opportunities for risk taking, problem solving, moving the whole body, using the imagination, overcoming fears, engaging in teamwork, and tolerating and integrating new sensory experiences."

(Hanscom, A 2016 p. 166)





The Outdoor Classroom & Risk Management

- ▶ A risk assessment is carried out before the children go outside.
 - ▶ Don't put anything in your mouth.
 - ▶ Stay within the boundaries (set appropriate boundaries using cones or markings)
 - ▶ Don't touch or step in poo.
 - ▶ Come to the teacher when you hear the whistle or a call e.g. duck quak.
- ▶ Encourage children to manage their own risk by posing a problem
 - ▶ You are holding a stick, what do you need to think about?
 - ▶ The grass is wet, what do you need to think about?

The Outdoor Classroom



The Outdoor classroom





The Aistear Impact

As a parent of 4 children, 2 who are older and didn't experience Aistear and 2 children who did. I have observed some differences in terms of their independent learning skills. They problem solve and use their initiative much more.

Mandy Post (Parent, K.N.S.)

"The quality of the learning experiences provided through Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the Outdoor Classroom is very high"

WSE Nov 2017

Aistear and the school community

- ▶ *"The Aistear initiative has affected so many aspects of school life here at KNS.....I saw it as a foundation for children's learning. From a leadership point of view, the greatest asset has been a willing and committed team of teachers who are always ready to try something a little bit differently each time. The children have had enriching learning experiences inside and outside the classroom."*

(Noreen Healy, Principal Knocknacarra N.S.)

The children have excellent group work skills which are used daily in maths, english and SESE

Their sense of curiosity is amazing

They are great at problem solving

Websites & Youtube clips

- www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/
- www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/Play/Open-ended-materials.pdf
- www.ncca.ie/media/3193/dispositions-3-6.pdf
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEjeJRHr4Nk> (fostering essential dispositions)



Tips

- Focus on the things you have.
- Introduce one play area at a time.
- Use older classes to help support initially.
- Work with the class you have in front of you.
- Use discrete time to focus on developing skills e.g. cutting
- Model, model, model.....
- Step outside your comfort zone.
- Give it time.
- Roll up your sleeves and get stuck in.

Thank you



Any questions?