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## INTO Conference 2023

# Play and Playful Pedagogies in the Redeveloped Primary Curriculum

Donna Carolan

Dr Jacqueline Fallon

# Overview

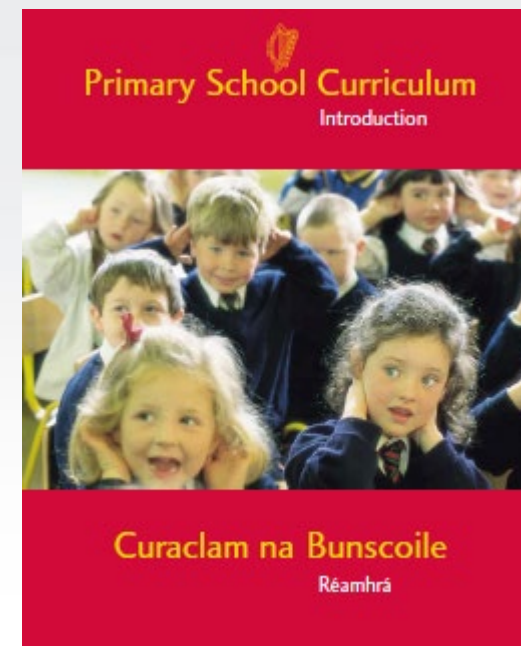
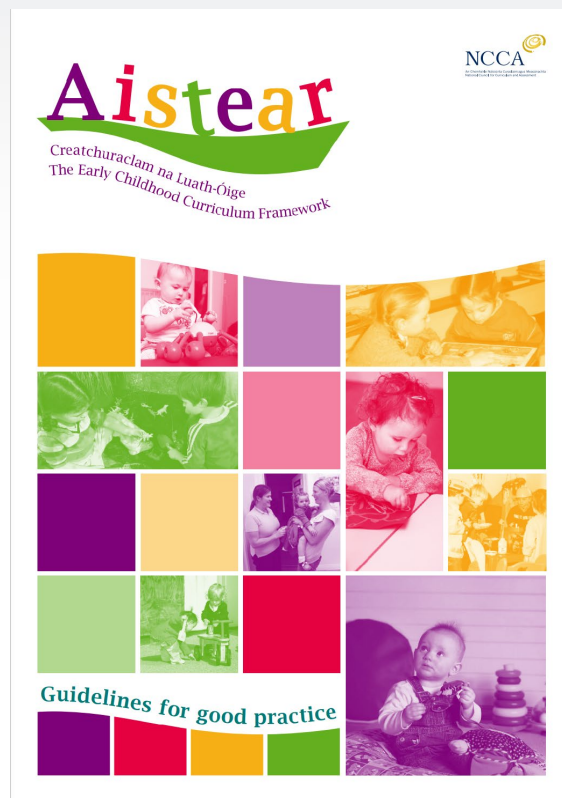
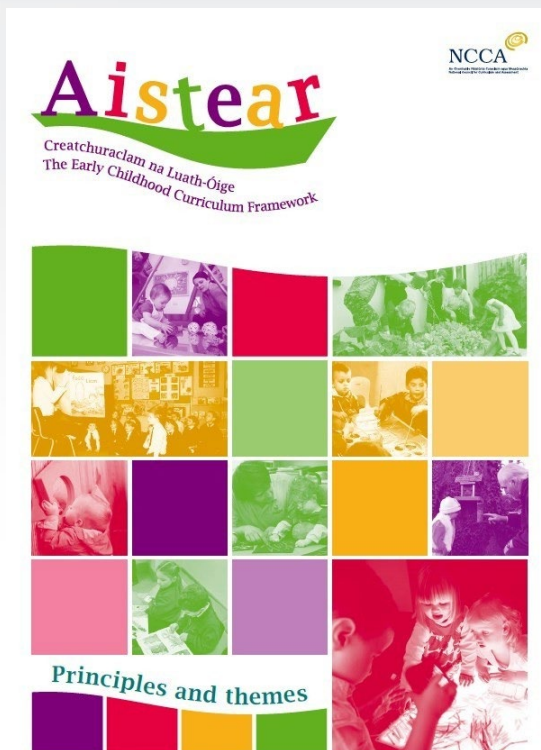
- Early childhood and primary education
- Play in the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum
- Play in primary school – what is happening?
- Children's School Lives Report 5 – what children said about play.
- Moving forward – playful learning in Stages 3 and 4



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# Early childhood and primary education



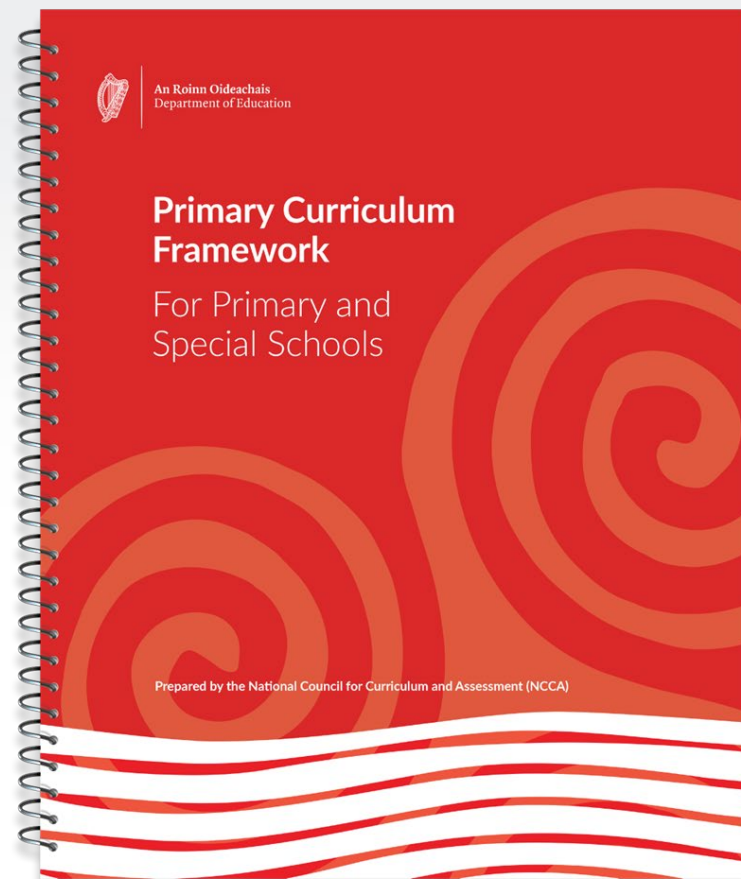
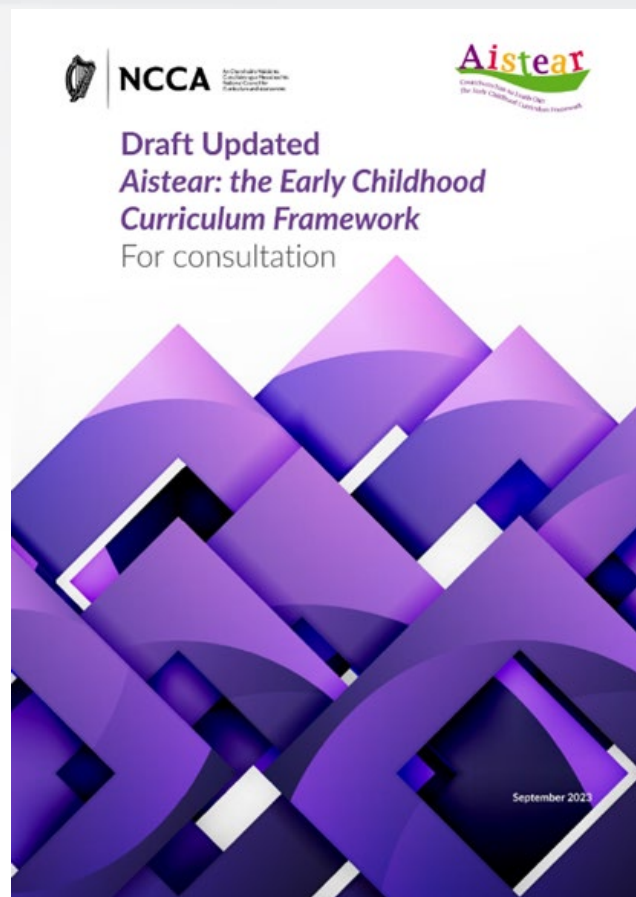
Learning and developing  
through play



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# Current developments – supporting continuity



## Key Skills of Junior Cycle



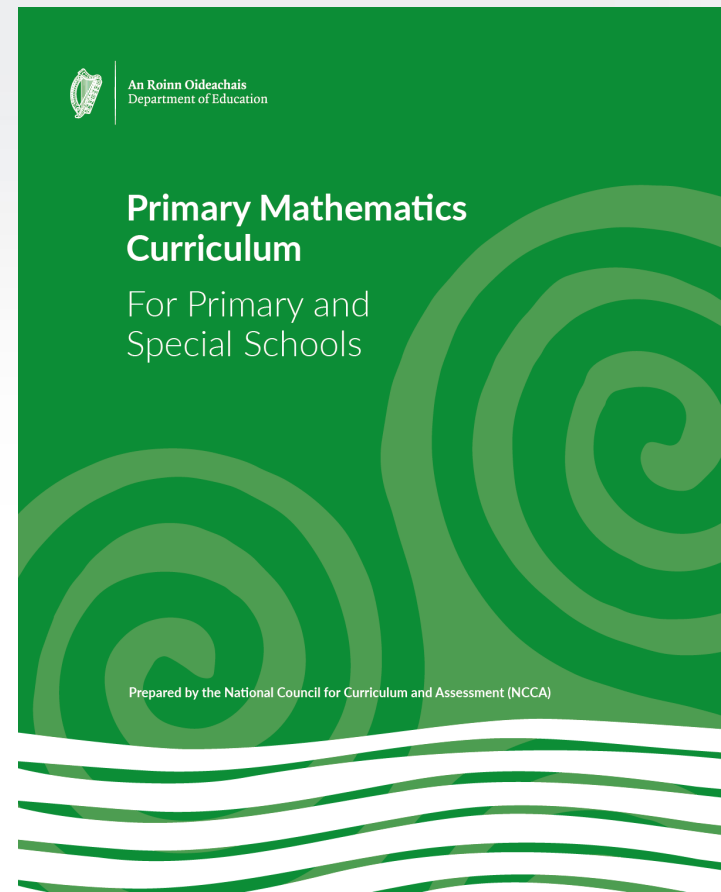
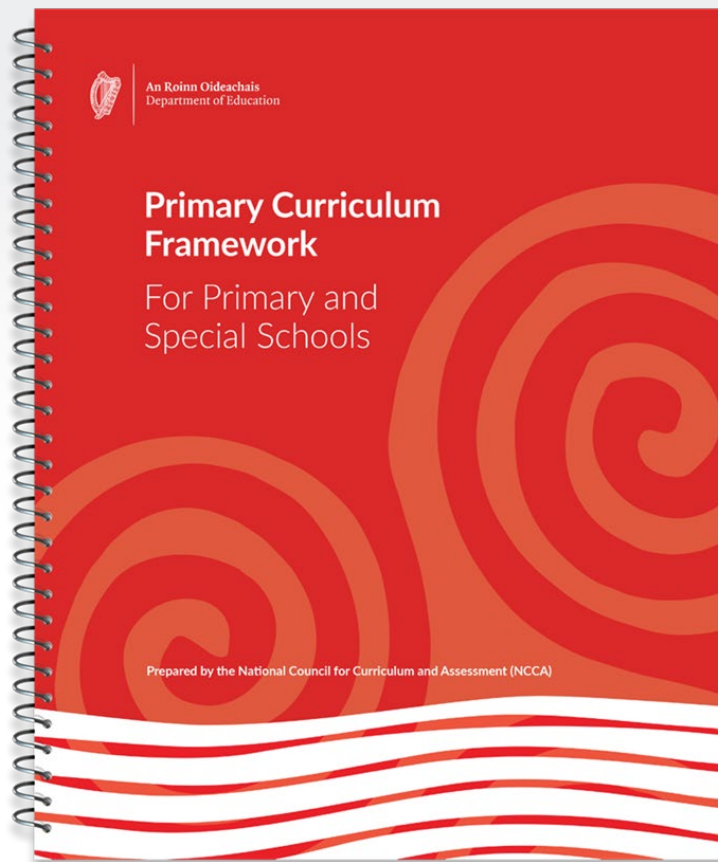
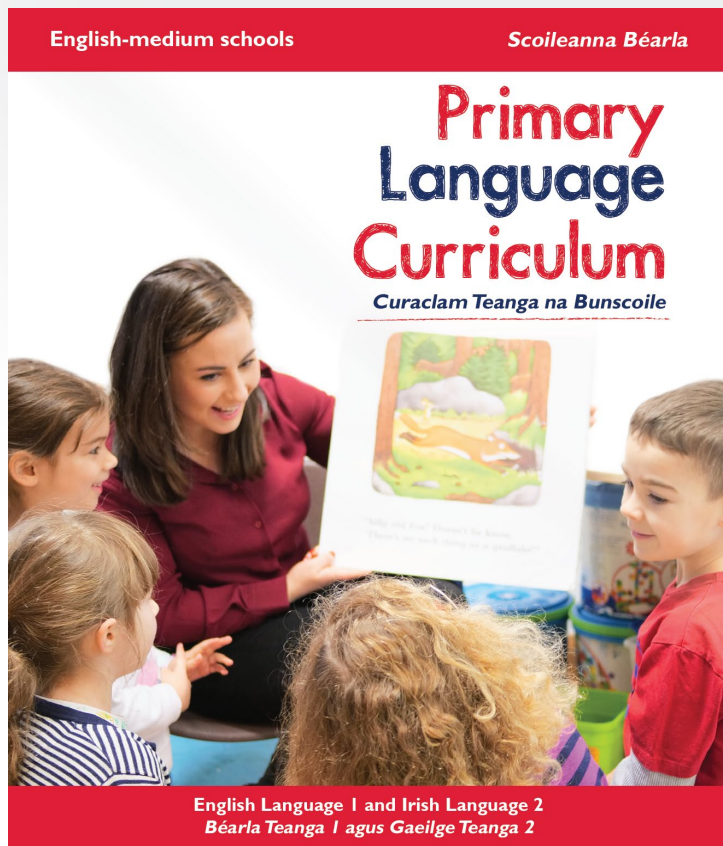




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# Play in the redeveloped primary curriculum



# Play in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

- Play that is completely led by children
- Playful activities that are planned for and led by the teacher
- Times when the teacher and the children share play activity



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# What does '*Aistear* Time' look like in your school?

**Describe what  
you see in the  
classroom.**

**What are the  
children  
playing with?**

**What is the  
teacher doing?**

**Who are the  
children  
playing with?**

**Where are the  
children  
playing?**



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# ***‘Aistear Time’***



# feedback



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# A day in a Senior Infant classroom

	Play & Playful Approaches
English	Story – The Gruffalo
Maths	Measures – A Tall Tower
Gaeilge	Bran Amuigh ag Siúl: Dráma Puipéad
Sos	
Child-led play ( <i>'Aistear'</i> )	Open ended play resources
Music	Song singing – Action songs
Lón	
English	Report writing – Animals
Science	Magnets
PE	Gymnastics – Movement

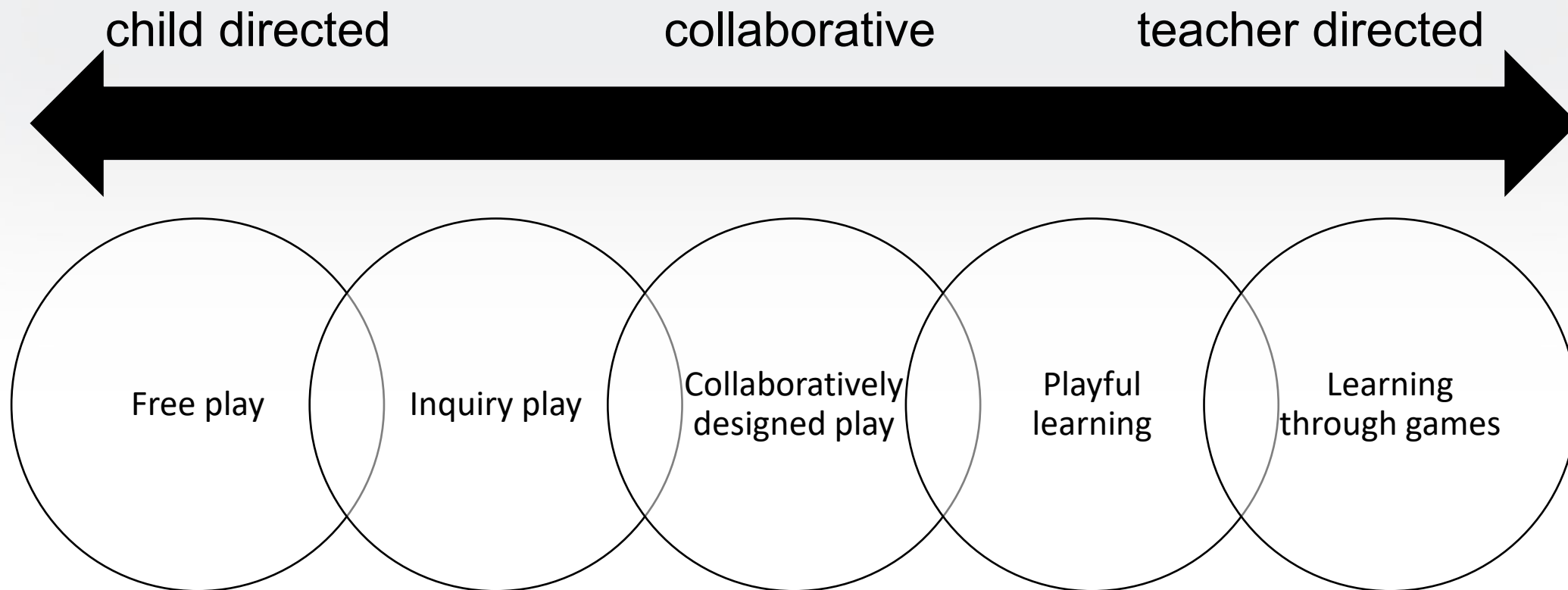


# Reflect and discuss

What currently happens in your infant classroom – do you see any differences and/or similarities?



# A continuum of play-based learning





# Children's School Lives

[www.cslstudy.ie](http://www.cslstudy.ie)



**Primary Pedagogies : Children and teachers' experiences of pedagogical practices in primary schools in Ireland 2019 - 2022**

Children's School Lives

Report Number 5

Funded by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

# Key findings on play

- Teachers of Junior and Senior Infants were most likely to refer to **play as central** to achieving pedagogical goals and an underpinning philosophy of their pedagogy.
- From first class through to 5th class **play** was viewed more in terms of a **diversion or added extra** to maintain children's interest.
- Children referred to the increasing efforts, practice and concentration that was required as they transitioned through to senior classes, with **less play** and **more homework** especially commented upon.



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## What children said...

School is for education. The person that made school is for education, where we learn things. We're not here for playing games or things like that...it's here for education.

...more playtime and art and going outside and doing things.

Play...because it is my favourite thing to do.

I would rather the kids make the rules because then we could do anything, guess what I would pick? I would say, let's play.'



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**What might 'playful' look  
like in Stages 3 & 4 (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>)**



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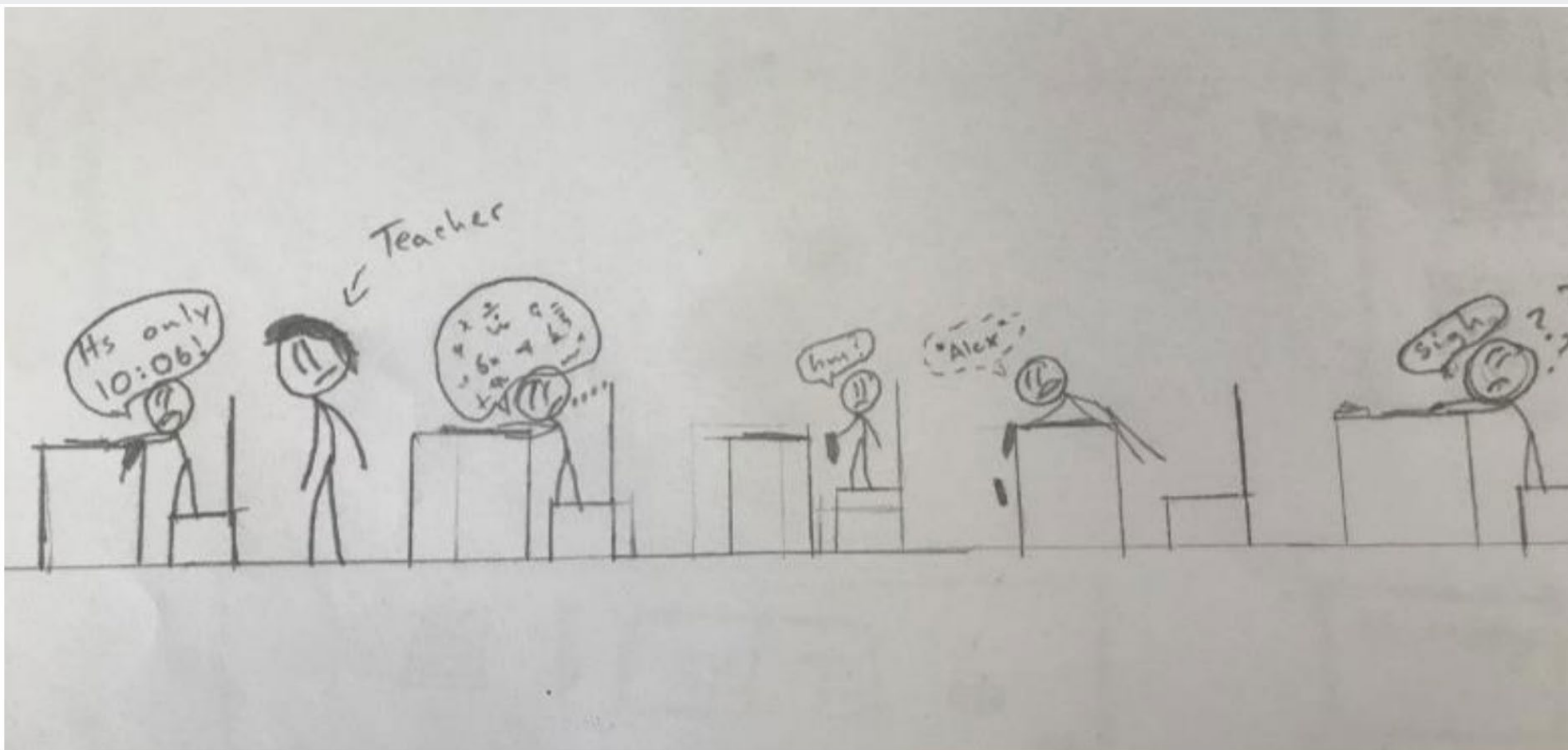
- What does it look like now?





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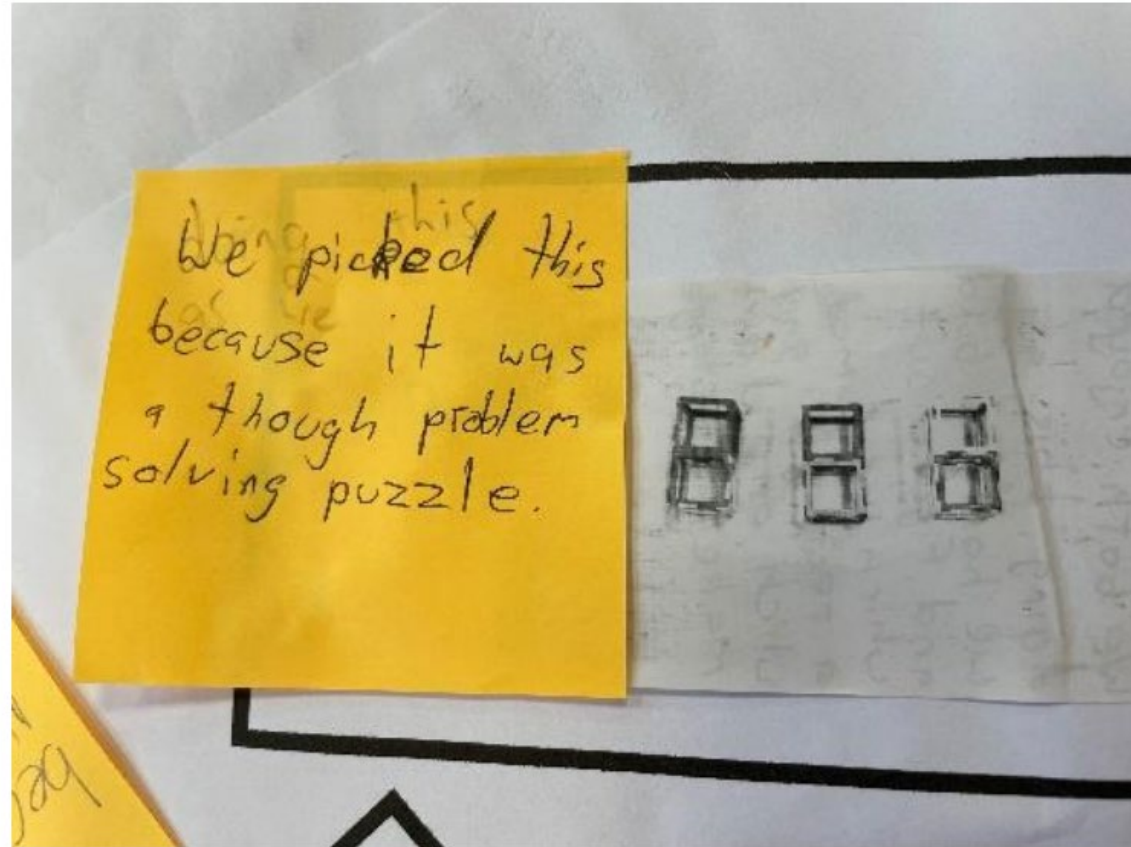
- Probably won't look the same as in Junior classes but "*... the activity is understood to be play by the player themselves*" and that understanding is influenced by "*...location ..., adult presence, and choice*" (Howard & McInnes, 2012, p. 738)



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# Well, what do the children say?



- They enjoy "... cognitively challenging problem solving and problem posing activities, ... more interactive learning opportunities, ... real-world contexts, hands-on experiences and playful mathematical experiences such as maths games, ... more variety of engaging learning approaches to promote their interest in and enjoyment of mathematics. (Leavy et al., 2023)



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# And...

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Anything you like in particular about primary school?

120 respondents (43%) answered **friends** for this question.

art and science art and English new friends friends lunch  
ART sports friends and art art maths PE and art  
Art and friends school **friendsart** maths and art  
playing with my friends art pe seeing my friends  
art history friends and also maths lots of friends

Kiely *et al.*, 2022, p. 73



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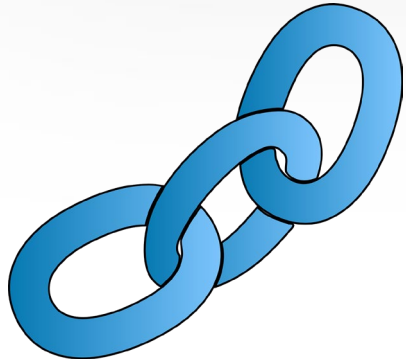
# Seymour Paperts' 8 big ideas

- Learning by doing
- Technology as building material
- **Hard fun.**
- Learning to learn
- Taking time – the proper time for the job.
- You can't get it right without getting it wrong.
- Do unto ourselves what we do unto our students.
- **Digital world** BUT the most important purpose is using them NOW to learn about everything else.





# Processes that link play and learning

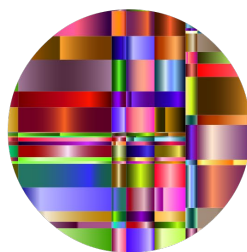


- **Cognitive processes and skills** (e.g. investigating, concentrating, integrating knowledge and experience, decision making, making novel connections, mastery, testing hypotheses, ...)
- **Attitudes and dispositions** (e.g. curiosity, willingness to take risks, interdependence, originality, perseverance, resilience, self-efficacy...)
- **Influences on learning** (e.g. mood and feeling states, self-systems, health/wellbeing, orientations to education...) (Wood & Attfield, 2005, p. 121)



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# An umbrella term!





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# Concluding comments





# Go raibh maith agaibh!



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