Contract for services to be provided by Altram to Member Naiscoileanna Taking part in the Department of Education Pre-school Programme

1. Introduction

This contract sets out arrangements for naiscoileanna taking part in the Department of Education Pre-school Education Programme to avail of the relevant specialist services provided by Altram Early Years' Specialists (EYS).

The contract provides for a partnership between Altram and the management and staff of the naíscoil. Within that partnership framework, the EYS, on behalf of Altram, will provide the naíscoil with support services to help it deliver an early years' education programme which

- facilitates the continuous development of quality, early childhood care and education through the medium of Irish and
- is in line with
  - Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education (Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) 2006)
  - Childminding and Day Care for Children under Age 12 - Minimum Standards (DHSSPS July 2012)

The contract:

- outlines the detailed roles and responsibilities of the Altram EYS and the management and staff of the Naíscoil, which must be fulfilled if the objectives of the contract are to be achieved;
- requires commitment equally from all parties.

2. Details of the Parties to the Contract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Altram</th>
<th>Naíscoil</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GH3 Howard Building</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twin Spires</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>155 Northumberland Street</td>
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<td>Bóthar na bhFál</td>
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<td>Béal Feirste</td>
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<td>BT13 2JF</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nominated Management contact:  
Position: ____________________________  
Tel. ____________________________  
Mob: ____________________________  
Email: ____________________________

Nominated Staff contact:  
Position: ____________________________  
Tel. ____________________________  
Mob: ____________________________  
Email: ____________________________
Terms and Conditions of Contract

3. Duration of the contract

Academic year: 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018 inclusive

4. Interpretation of the contract

- “Parties” means the Board of Altram and the committee and staff of the náiscoil respectively, at any point in the specified duration of the contract
- “Management” means the Committee of the náiscoil
- “Staff” means full-time and part-time employees of the náiscoil and volunteers vetted and qualified to work in the náiscoil.

5. EYS - role, responsibilities and obligations

- Cluster Training Support
  In line with Department of Education (DE) requirements (Appendix 1) for providers in the Pre-School Education Programme the EYS will, within the year, offer four cluster training sessions to náiscoil staff. The content of the sessions will reflect the identified needs of náiscoileanna. Attendance at cluster sessions forms an integral part of this contract and all náiscoil staff are required to attend. Attendees who complete the full day session will be issued at the training with a Certificate of Attendance.

- On-site Support Visits
  In line with Role of the Qualified Teacher or Early Years Specialist (DE 2009) the EYS will provide the náiscoil with a minimum five hours of services per month (including on-site and any cluster training) to support and advise on implementing the curriculum and on developing effective Irish Immersion programmes

  The on-site visits will include:
  - A preliminary visit to assess the needs of the náiscoil
  - Direct observation of preschool sessions
  - Verbal feedback to all staff at the end of the visit, unless otherwise agreed
  - A written report to the staff and a copy to the náiscoil Committee
  - An agreed measure of support in the lead-up to the náiscoil inspection by the Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the Social Services Inspection staff
  - Post-inspection visit to help plan any action which ETI/SSI requires or recommends.
  - Focussed visits, concentrating on aspects of practice which have been earmarked for development

- Extra hours of support
  The náiscoil may negotiate with the EYS provision of extra hours of curriculum or Irish immersion support, including on-site training. Such hours would be additional to the contractual onsite visits.

Note: Should the EYS be unavoidably absent for any significant period of time e.g. long-term sickness, it may be necessary for Altram to offer a reduced service pro tem.
6. NaíSCOIL - roles, responsibilities & obligations

- **Staff**
  
  All staff working directly with children funded through the Pre-school Education Programme will comply with all legislative requirements in relation to the operation of a registered pre-school facility. They will, in addition:

  - Put in place arrangements to monitor, record and share information on how the requirements are met
  - Take an active part in planning and delivering an effective Irish immersion programme which meets the needs of all children and follows the DE Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education (CCEA 2006) and Altram Guidelines for Second Language Immersion Pre-schools – Two Windows on the World. (Altram 2016)
  - Ensure appropriate informal and planned observation of the children takes place and that the findings are adequately recorded, analysed and incorporated into planning
  - Regularly monitor, evaluate and record how the curriculum and language are being delivered.
  - Be proactive in developing and improving quality provision and resources in the naíSCOIL.
  - In conjunction with the Committee and the EYS:
    - develop and deliver naíSCOIL policies and procedures which meet legislative, policy and contractual requirements
    - help develop information leaflets and parent handbooks
    - develop appropriate opportunities for involving and sharing information with parents
    - access services and support from external educational, health and community agencies.
  - Ensure that all resources supplied on loan by Altram are kept safe and returned as and when requested.
  - Attend the four annual Cluster Training Support sessions.
  - Facilitate the contractual support visits by the EYS to the naíSCOIL.

Only in exceptional circumstances should a contractual support visit be cancelled e.g. if premises must close for health and safety reasons. When possible, 24 hours notice and a clear explanation should be given for cancelling a scheduled contractual support visit.

- **Committee**
  
  The Committee will comply with all legislative requirements in relation to the management of a registered pre-school facility, with particular regard to Childminding and Day Care for Children under Age 12 - Minimum Standards (DHSSPS July 2012). It will provide effective leadership and management in order to raise achievement and to support learners. It will also, where relevant, through the Manager:

  - Ensure that staff have appropriate levels of Irish to deliver a language immersion programme
  - Provide terms and conditions for staff that allow for regular periods of sustained planning time to support the delivery of a quality Early Years immersion programme.
  - Ensure all core staff attend cluster training
  - Facilitate the closure of the naíSCOIL to allow staff to attend cluster training
  - Ensure that appropriate resources are available to support the successful delivery of a quality Irish immersion programme
  - Ensure that activities are provided which support effective learning
  - Facilitate on-site visits by EYS
  - Ensure that EYS recommendations are implemented and receive appropriate support
In conjunction with the staff and EYS:
  • develop naiscoil policies and procedures to meet legislative, policy and contractual requirements
  • help develop information leaflets and parent handbooks
  • develop appropriate opportunities for involving and sharing information with parents
  • develop links with outside agencies
  • plan for and prioritise areas for development

Have regular recorded meetings with staff (at least once a month)
Facilitate and oversee support and supervision of staff (including annual appraisals)
Be available for meetings with staff and EYS as appropriate

7. Unsatisfactory Performance

In the event that the staff or Committee of the naiscoil are dissatisfied with the services provided by EYS under this contract Altram will, at the Committee’s request, implement the Altram complaints procedure (Appendix 2).

Should Altram be dissatisfied with the performance of the staff and/or Committee in fulfilling the terms of this contract Altram will inform the staff and Committee of its concerns and ask that these be addressed within a specified time period (normally two months) from the date on which the concerns were notified to the staff and Committee. In the event that the issues of concern are not resolved within the period specified, Altram reserves the right to withdraw the services of the EYS.

8. Declarations on behalf of the naiscoil

To avail of the early years services provided by Altram EYS to members of the Department of Education Pre-school Education Programme a representative of the naiscoil Committee, and a representative of naiscoil Staff must sign their respective declarations on each of the two copies of the contract provided, on behalf of the naiscoil Committee and Staff. The naiscoil must retain one copy and return the other by 30 September 2017 to Altram at the address on page 1. By signing the declarations the naiscoil agrees to accept and abide by the terms and conditions of the contract.

Altram Office Use
Date Contract issued:
Date Declaration received & initialled:
Date Reminder issued:
Date Declaration acknowledged by phone/email/hard copy:
Declaration on behalf of the Committee of Naíscoil

- I have read the terms and conditions detailed in the contract for the provision by Altram, during the academic year from 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018 inclusive, of Early Years Specialist services to the naíscoil as a participant in the Department of Education Pre-school Education Programme.

- I accept / do not accept (delete as appropriate) the terms and conditions of the contract.

Signature:  
Date:  
Name: (block capitals):  
Chair / Member (delete as appropriate) of Naíscoil Committee

Declaration on behalf of the Staff of Naíscoil

- I have read the terms and conditions detailed in the contract for the provision by Altram, during the academic year from 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018 inclusive, of Early Years Specialist services to the naíscoil as a participant in the Department of Education Pre-school Education Programme.

- I accept / do not accept (delete as appropriate) the terms and conditions of the contract.

Signature:  
Date:  
Name (block capitals):  
Member of naíscoil Staff:  
Position:

Please sign both copies of the contract  
Please retain one copy of the contract for the naíscoil records  
Please return this copy of the contract to Altram by 30 September 2017
Appendix 1

Minimum quality standards

1. Any pre-school education centre must meet the minimum quality standards set out in Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 - Minimum Quality Standards (DHSSPS July 2012) if it is to be awarded or continue to receive funding from an Education and Library Board.

The minimum standards are intended:

- to reassure parents and others about the quality of the provision which has been made for their child
- to ensure that the educational experiences are appropriate for children in the year before they begin compulsory schooling and
- to establish a sound foundation on which to build quality pre-school education in Northern Ireland.

2. The term ‘curriculum’ is used to describe the planned educational experiences which are appropriate for children in the year prior to starting compulsory education. All funded pre-school education centres are expected to offer a curriculum which follows the Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education (CCEA 2006).

3. The Curricular Guidance is designed to support and promote good quality pre-school educational provision and outlines the range of learning opportunities which children of this age should have through play and other relevant experiences. It takes account of the requirements of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum which children follow when they begin compulsory education. Centres are expected to plan and implement their programmes in line with the Curricular Guidance document.

4. Copies of the document are available at Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education or by contacting CCEA at: 028 9026 1200.

Group Size and Composition

5. The curriculum for pre-school children must promote their personal, social, physical, intellectual and emotional development, and this can be done most effectively if children learn and play as part of a group of reasonable size. Therefore, in all centres, there must be at least 8 children in their immediate pre-school year in each group (although not all of these children need to be in funded places). A maximum group size of 26 children applies in all centres.

6. The focus of the educational provision in the centre must be wholly on the needs of children below compulsory school age. While children in funded places may play and learn as part of a larger group of younger children, they must not be part of a group which includes children of compulsory school age.
Session Length and Frequency

7. All pre-school education sessions must last at least 2.5 hours and normally be offered on a five session per week basis. All centres must offer at least 38 weeks of sessions during the period September to June in any year.

8. Where only four sessions per week are offered, this must be for at least 48 weeks in the year.

9. Wherever possible, centres should arrange for staff training to take place outside their normal opening hours. However, it is recognised that this will not always be possible. From September 2014, pre-school education settings offering funded places as part of the Pre-school Education Programme will be required to be in operation 190 days, with a maximum of 5 closure days available to enable staff to undertake training and development. Where a setting decides not to use all 5 available days it must be open as normal to provide pre-school education sessions. As much notice as possible must be given to parents of any changes to the centre’s opening hours. Taking into account the 5 days exceptional closure for staff training and development, centres should provide pre-school education sessions on at least 185 days each year.

Staffing Ratios

10. In all centres in receipt of funded places an adult:child ratio of 1:8 must apply.

Qualifications

11. Childminding and Day Care for Children under Age 12 - Minimum Standards (DHSSPS July 2012) contains revisions to qualifications for pre-school sessional care staff. These do not affect all staff. Staff may be affected in different ways depending on whether they were in post before or after publication of the Standards. See details below.

“existing staff who do not hold an appropriate qualification as set out in “Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 Minimum Standards, “… will not have to attain new or additional qualifications whilst they remain employed in the children’s day care sector covered by these standards. All employees are encouraged to become suitably qualified. Any newly appointed staff must be appropriately qualified”

Childminding and Day Care for Children under Age 12 - Minimum Standards

12. For further information and guidance with regard to existing staff or prospective employees you are advised to consult Childminding and Day Care for Children under Age 12 - Minimum Standards, particularly Section 2: Quality of Staffing, Management and Leadership (DHSSPS July 2012).
Support from a Qualified Teacher/Early Years Specialist

13. In line with the government’s emphasis on improving educational outcomes for all pupils throughout all phases of education, pre-school education centres are expected to continue to improve the quality of their educational provision.

Support from a suitably qualified early years specialist is regarded as the most effective way to ensure this emphasis on continuous improvement. Such a specialist will be able to support the centre in: planning curricular activities; assessing children’s progress; assisting in the development of a self improvement programme and action planning and in preparing children for the transition to compulsory education.

It is essential that all pre-school centres secure the services of a qualified teacher or early years’ specialist during the entire period they continue to receive funding from an Education and Library Board. For details on the role of the Early Years Specialist see: The Role of the Qualified Teacher or Early Years Specialist (DE 2009).

Centres must meet the costs of the early years specialist support from within the funding provided to them by Education and Library Boards.

Accommodation

14. All centres must conform to the standards set out in:

- ‘Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 - Minimum Standards’ (DHSSPS July 2012): Section 3 – Quality of the Physical Environment

Furniture and equipment must comply with the relevant health and safety regulations, be appropriate to the age group and be sufficient to support the implementation of the pre-school curriculum.

Information for Parents and Others

15. Information must be made available to parents and others to help them decide if they wish to place their children in the centre.

This must cover:
- the curriculum on offer
- dates and hours of opening
- staffing numbers and qualifications
- admissions policy and
- Special Educational Needs policy and provision.
Information must also be made available to parents of children attending the centre.

This must include:

- health and safety arrangements
- discipline policy
- child protection policy
- complaints procedure
- reports on children’s progress at regular intervals (at least once per term).

**Future Requirements**

16. All pre-school education centres will be expected to comply with any regulations made by the Department of Education in respect of pre-school education and to take account of any guidance which may be issued from time to time which relates to children of pre-school age.
Modh Chun Gearáin a Dhéanamh / Complaints procedure

Tá súil againn nach mbeidh ábhair mhóra gearáin ag daoine. Má bhíonn gearáin ar bith ag ball foirne nó ball choiste, ba chóir an córas seo a leanstan.

We hope that you will have little reason to complain. However, if there is any reason to complain then the following procedure should be followed.

1. Member of Committee or Staff to inform the Early Years’ Specialist that they wish to discuss the problem.

2. Arrangements will then be made for the Early Years’ Specialist to speak to the member at a time that is convenient to them.

3. If the Early Years’ Specialist is unable to resolve the problem then the member should make arrangements to meet with Altram’s manager.

4. If the manager is unable to resolve the problem then a formal complaint can be made in writing by the naiscoil Committee to the Altram Board (on the attached complaint form) who will appoint a designated member to meet with the naiscoil Committee to try and resolve the problem. The decision of the Board will be final.

Tá súil againn go mbeidh Altram ábalta a mbaill a shású agus a chuid fadhbanna a réitigh go gásta.

We hope that Altram will continue to give satisfaction and that any problems that occur can be resolved without delay.
Complaint form

To help us deal with your complaint, please fill in your contact details. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

Naiscoil: ______________________
Address: ________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________
Postcode: ________ Telephone: __________

Chair of Naiscoil Committee

Name (block capitals): ______________________
Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Detail of Complaint

_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________

For Altram use only:

Form received by: __________________ Date: __________
Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education (DE-CCEA 2006)
http://www.deni.gov.uk/pre_school_guidance_pdf

Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 - Minimum Quality Standards
(DHSSPSNI - July 2012)

Guidelines for Second Language Immersion Pre-Schools: Two Windows on the World
(Altram 2016)

Pre-School Education Programme – Information for Providers (DE1/12/155645)
http://www.deni.gov.uk/the_pre-school_education_programme_-_information_for_providers_booklet_pdf_481kb.pdf

The Role of the Qualified Early Years Specialist (DE 2009)
http://www.deni.gov.uk/preschooleducexpanprog.pdf

Together Towards Improvement Pre-School - A Process for Self-Evaluation Pre-School (ETI, 2010)
http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-pre-school.pdf

ISEF- Inspection and Self Evaluation Framework (ETI, 2017)