

Support Material for CCEA Preschool Curricular Guidance (2018)

Irish-Medium Early Years Immersion Education

Áine Andrews



Copyright © 2018 Áine Andrews

Design and layout Fionntán Ó Mealláin

Krujen
CRÚIDÍN

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Introduction		2
Section 1	Some comparisons between home language and immersion contexts	3
Section 2	Processes in immersion language acquisition	5
Section 3	The principles underpinning planning for immersion language learning	6
Section 4	Stages in the immersion language acquisition process	8
Section 5	Planning: From theory to practice	10
Section 6	Progress in learning	12

It is recommended that practitioners refer to 'Two Windows on the World' by Áine Andrews for more comprehensive and detailed information and guidance on the development of good practice in Irish-medium immersion education.

Introduction

Purpose of the Material

This material has been developed to be used in association with CCEA Preschool Curricular Guidance (2018). The purpose of the material is to provide additional curricular guidance to practitioners working with children in Irish-medium immersion preschool settings, for whom Irish is not the language of the home.

Irish-medium immersion preschool settings have many commonalities with English-medium home language settings. The principles which underpin and support the development of good practice and quality provision are equally important in a language immersion context, whether:

- in relation to care physical or emotional or;
- how to most effectively support the development of the whole child across a broad range of developmental areas or;
- the critical importance of play-based active learning or;
- understanding the factors which support children's successful and continuing learning or;
- the promotion of parental engagement in children's learning.

Practitioners within an Irish-medium immersion context need to read and become familiar with the content of the CCEA Preschool Curricular Guidance document.

However practitioners in Irish-medium immersion settings need an additional knowledge and skills base to support the development of good practice and quality provision within those particular settings.

The Support Material focuses largely on the very singular linguistic context in which Irish-medium immersion functions and how it impacts on practice, pedagogy, planning, pupil progress and parental participation.

This Support Material will:

- help practitioners read and interpret and implement the Preschool Curricular Guidance publication from an informed Irish-medium immersion perspective;
- provide information which helps Irish-medium practitioners understand the additional skills and knowledge base required by them and supports them in evaluating and improving their practice;
- support practitioners in planning appropriately and systematically for Irish language development and integrating planning for language with other learning areas and vice versa;
- support practitioners in making useful observations about children's developing Irish language competence;
- provide insights to and offer suggestions about promoting parental engagement in supporting children's emerging Irish language skills.

Sections Included in the Material

The document content is presented in 6 sections.

Section 1 makes some comparisons between home language and immersion language contexts including:

- the differing levels of language with which children present at entry point to home language settings and entry point to immersion settings;
- the differences between the environment in which children typically learn a home or first language and the environment in which they learn Irish in a preschool immersion context;
- the implications of these differences for practice.

Section 2 explores the processes in immersion language acquisition including:

- how children learn a new language in an immersion setting;
- the basic new language needs of the 3/4 year old.

Section 3 explores the principles underpinning planning for language learning in an immersion context including:

- areas of minimal planning;
- areas of focused planning.

Section 4 explores the stages in the immersion language acquisition process including:

- the two main stages of competence;
- the initial stage;
- children's emerging production skills;
- the silent period;
- making observations about progress in language learning.

Section 5 explores planning from theory to practice and the knowledge and skills base needed by staff including:

- the role of staff in long-term planning;
- the role of staff in short-term planning;
- the knowledge and skills base needed by staff in implementing planned language activities;
- Irish language competence of staff.

Section 6 provides a description of the language characteristics and skills of children who have experienced appropriate preschool immersion education.

Section 1

Some comparisons between home language and immersion contexts

Language immersion education is a system of education where children are educated through a language which is not the language of the home. Irish-medium immersion preschools therefore involve a number of additional challenges. In order to understand the challenges more fully, it is useful to make two important comparisons.

- Firstly,
- entry levels of English language competence of children in an English-medium home language setting and entry levels of Irish language competence of children in an Irish-medium immersion setting.
- Secondly,
- the learning environment in which children learn their home language and the learning environment in which children learn Irish in an Irish-medium setting.

Differing levels of language with which children present at entry point to home language settings and entry point to immersion settings

Home Language Setting	Immersion Language Setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">language ability and skill is at a high levellevel of comprehension is highlanguage is used for a variety of purposesa wide range of vocabulary is useddiverse, grammatical and syntactical structures are used	<ul style="list-style-type: none">language ability and skill is non-existent or at a very low levelability to understand depends considerably on extra-linguistic clues such as tone of voice, intonation, gestures, visual aids and contextlittle or no ability to speak the language

It is accepted that children in the English home-language setting may present with varying degrees of home language competence depending on maturity, ability and language experiences to date. However the comparison is more clearly understood if the optimum norms are delineated.

Differences between the environment in which children typically learn a home or first language and the environment in which they learn Irish in a preschool immersion context

First Language Acquisition (home)	Immersion Language Acquisition (preschool)
<p>Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">prolonged exposurecompetent speakers in a majoritychild is a member of a small groupmany opportunities for one to one communicationvariety of people speak to childmassive back-up in general environment	<p>Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2-3 hours exposure per daycompetent speakers in a minoritychild is a member of a large groupfew opportunities for one to one communicationnarrow range of people speak to childlittle or no back-up in general environment
<p>Infant/Toddler Child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">is highly motivated to communicateis less matureis involved in developing other skillsis less sophisticated intellectually	<p>Three/Four Year Old Child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">can already communicateis more maturehas achieved other skillsis more sophisticated intellectually

Implications For Practice

The differences between the two language contexts have differing implications for the work of practitioners in Irish-medium. The practitioner in the home language setting is building, consolidating, enhancing and honing the home language skills of young children, which have already been developed to some degree. The practitioner in the immersion setting is introducing, practising and consolidating simple basic language skills in a new language. Where the work of the practitioner in the home language setting can be supported by the vast actual or potential language resources within the family and overall macro-environment, children in an Irish-medium immersion rely more or less entirely on the language exposure provided within the setting.

These factors draw into play different approaches in relation to:

- how practitioners in an immersion setting communicate with children;
 - the characteristics of their language usage including the language register,
 - the grammatical complexity of the language of register as well as its vocabulary,
 - the importance of communication being about the 'here and now',
 - the balance of adult-led activities and child-led activities.
- how children understand the language they hear;
 - the role of non-language, body language clues and facial expression on the part of the practitioner,
 - the importance of contextual clues,
 - the importance of childrens learning experience in practical terms through being able to see, hear, touch, feel or smell the matter under discussion.
- how children become familiar with and remember the language that they hear and understand;
 - the quality and quantity of language exposure,
 - the importance of repetition and repeated focus on key aspects of language.
- how practitioners plan for language development;
 - the potential for naturally occurring exposure frequency in daily social and organisation routines,
 - generalised language exposure,
 - specific focused language exposure,
 - the identification of a priority vocabulary.
- the relationship between planning for language and planning for other areas of learning;
 - an integrated approach or separate independent parallel processes,
 - commonalities with the home language planning approach or significant differences,
 - the degree to which language planning predominates - does it lead the planning or is it an add-on, accommodated within a broader more diffuse approach.

It is important that staff use Irish at all times with children.



Where staff have less than optimum Irish they should not use English with one another within earshot of the children.

Section 2

Processes in immersion language acquisition

There is a commonality in the processes involved in first and second language acquisition. Some of the skills developed in first language learning are transferable to any language which is subsequently learnt. In learning a second language, the child does not have to re-cover or re-travel all the stages covered in first language learning. The language stages in learning a language subsequent to the first language are basically the same. However, practice in making sounds, practice in using the physical apparatus for making sounds, awareness of the concept of meaning are all things established in the first language. This ground does not need to be re-travelled except for sounds which are not part of the existing language repertoire – e.g. The 'r' in French 'r', double 'l' in Welsh, the 'ch' in Irish.

This section provides more detailed information on how children learn a new language.

The predominating factor in learning a new language is the degree of exposure to the new language which is experienced by the learner.

How children learn Irish in an immersion setting

Children in an early year's immersion setting learn Irish by, not only hearing it spoken, but by hearing substantial amounts spoken. This means that Irish is always used by all staff, with children and with one another and involves frequent verbal interaction on an individual, small or large group or whole class context. However, hearing Irish spoken and hearing substantial amounts is not enough if the learner does not understand it. The learner also needs to have the additional clues of context, voice, gesture, facial, expression and visual referents which support understanding.

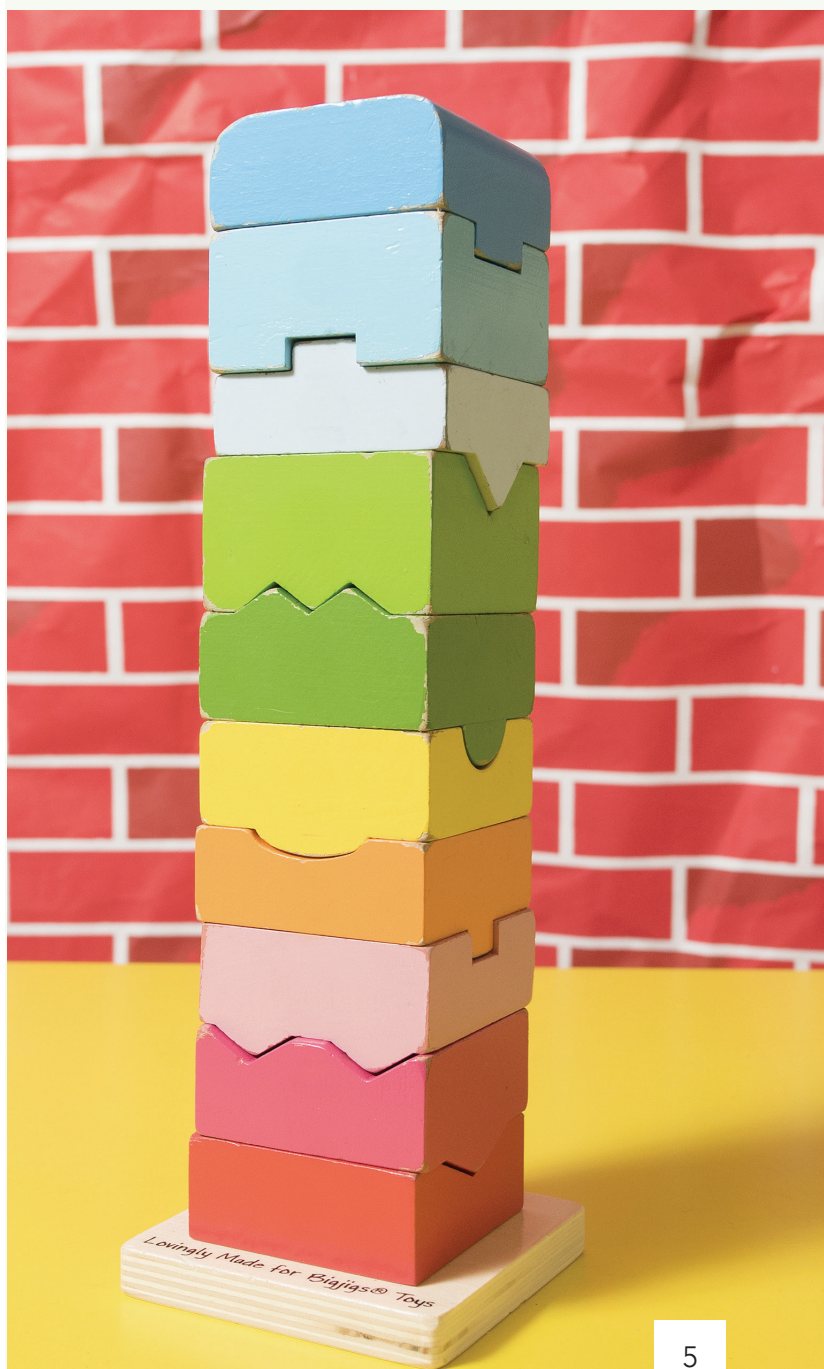
Being able to understand what is being said does not necessarily mean understanding every word. It means understanding the message or getting the gist of the message. Successful language learning in its very early stages involves a consistent process of good guessing. However, children cannot depend indefinitely on non-language clues as the basis for good guessing. It is important that children hear critical aspects of language frequently enough that they become familiar with them and remember them. This familiarity with and remembering of specific language items, along with the non-language clues, promotes understanding of increasingly complex communication. This familiarity with and remembering of language also provides the basis for children's ability to use language in productive speech at the appropriate time.

The ability to become familiar with and remember language is a very gradual process. In the context of the early stages of immersion, the familiarization with and remembering of language is focused on basic language.

Basic immersion language needs of the 3/4-year-old in an immersion context:

The basic immersion language needs of the 3/4-year-old in an immersion context:

- is likely to be less than their current competence in their home language;
- is likely to remain behind the pace of their increasing competence in their home language;
- should be reflective of children's cognitive development and age;
- should promote children's ability to talk about things that are familiar to them;
- should promote children's ability to talk about their experiences to date;
- should promote children's ability to talk about new experiences.



Section 3

The principles underpinning planning for immersion language learning

There are some aspects of the language learning experience of children in an immersion context for which minimal planning is required. There are other aspects for which systematic focused planning is needed.

This section takes a closer look at some of the components of language and how they might be accommodated within a language planning process. It looks in particular at:

- language associated with routine social and organisational events and activities;
- fixed phrases;
- sentence patterns and grammatical rules;
- vocabulary.

Areas of minimal planning

Social and organisational language

There are a number of social and organisational activities which occur on a daily basis in all early years settings and frequently more than once a day. They include, greeting and farewell; comforting a distressed child; toileting and washing; dressing or undressing; organising children's movement in the setting; serving food and drink; organising children's participation in transition for one activity to another; organising children's participation in tidying-up; praising children, and where appropriate addressing behaviour issues;

The regularity of these practical situations means that over the course of a year, children have frequent exposure to the language patterns, sentences, phrases and vocabulary associated with these activities. Inevitably children unconsciously develop an understanding of and familiarity with a broad range of extended language elements.

Fixed Phrases

Fixed phrases can be described as units of words which do not change. They are often phrases which are common to a range of differing contexts or are used in the same context on a regular basis, *maidin mhaith; gasúr/cailín maith; bí cúramach; déan deifir; coimhead; slán*. Fixed phrases occur regularly in social or organisational situations. The frequency of these situations ensures that there are many opportunities for regular repetition of this sort of language. The regular repetition facilitates children in remembering them, and also using them when they participate in the routines and activities where these phrases occur, or during role-play or in social interaction.

Sentence Patterns and Grammatical Rules

Language is made up of words put together in sentences. How sentences are formed depends on the grammar of the language. While there are thousands upon thousands of words in a language, there is a limited range in the types of sentences that can be made.

The core sentence patterns that children hear in an early years' immersion setting are simple, involving one idea at a time. These simple sentence patterns and the grammatical rules which underpin them are the foundations on which more complex language is built. In an immersion setting, there is a high level of exposure to a range of simple sentences and simple grammatical rules which are used consistently and frequently throughout the course of the day.

- They include sentences relating to:
 - having, liking, wanting, needing, being able to do things;
 - position and place;
 - instructions.
- There is a high proportion of sentences:
 - in the present tense;
 - with 'is' or 'are'.
- There is regular use of:
 - positive, negative and question forms.

A high volume of language using simple sentences which reflect children's ages, interests, experiences and activities ensures that children are exposed to a wide range of basic sentence patterns and the associated underpinning grammar. No explicit planning is needed for sentence pattern exposure or grammar, providing that the general language environment ensures a high volume of language.

In conclusion, minimal planning, if any, is required in those language areas where the scope of the language range is limited and where substantial exposure is virtually guaranteed. This includes the core phrases and simple sentences which constitute much of the social interaction between staff and children, organisational routines and fixed phrases as well as the sentence patterns and grammatical structures which feature most predominantly in the early years' language immersion setting.

Supporting families

It is important that practitioners provide support to families about common fixed phrases. The fact that each phrase is a complete intelligible utterance, used in a specific situation or applicable in several situations, means that even families who have little or no immersion language skills can support their children's language learning in a practical way from the very beginning.

Areas of focused planning

Vocabulary

Ensuring high levels of exposure in relation to vocabulary is more of a challenge. The potential vocabulary needs of children in an early years' immersion setting involve hundreds, if not thousands of words. Addressing the issue of effective exposure in the context of vocabulary which children are able to remember and which is important that they remember requires a clear planning structure. A clear planning structure ensures that:

- optimum use is made of the time available;
- children are exposed to key vocabulary in a structured fashion;
- existing levels of vocabulary can be built on systematically;
- the efforts of all adults are concentrated more efficiently in maximising language exposure, reinforcement and consolidation;
- elements of progress can be assessed.

Identification of vocabulary needs

The first step in developing a clear planning structure is to identify the vocabulary which is most important or useful to children's needs. Relevant vocabulary will include words relating to:

- high frequency words within home language experience and usage;
- high frequency words which are not within home language experience and usage, but which should be;
- high frequency words which relate to children's physical, emotional, personal and social needs;
- high frequency words which relate to children's learning needs;
- high frequency words that reflect the core experiences within the setting;
- words that can be used within a practical context and whose meaning can be demonstrated by sight, hearing, touch, smell or feeling;
- words that are relevant to the children's cognitive levels and experiences;
- words that encompass an appropriate range of nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs.

Planned vocabulary exposure in an immersion setting should provide opportunities to address four levels of language exposure:

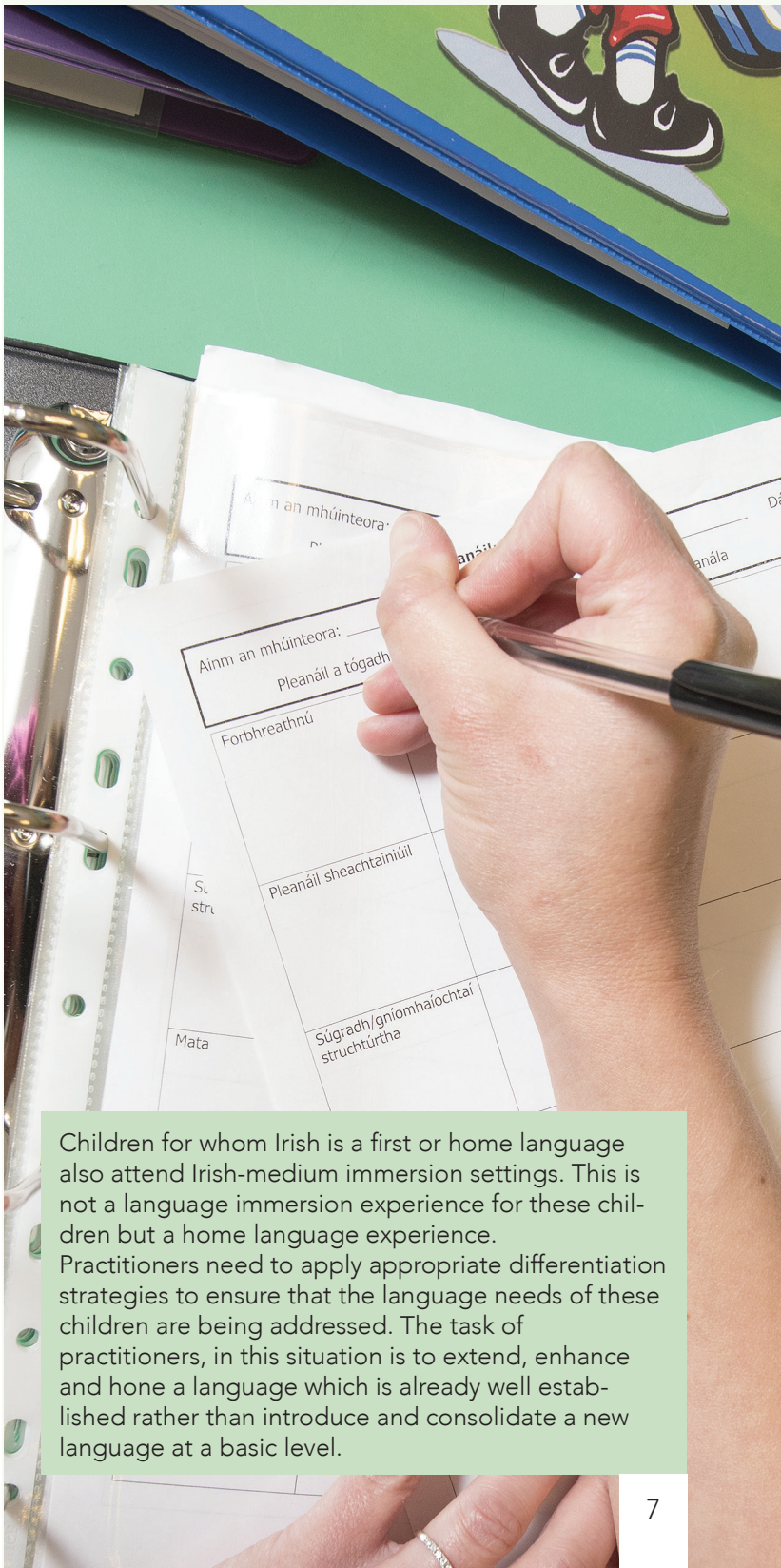
- introduce children to new vocabulary;
- practise, reinforce and consolidate language of past planning;
- maintain established language;
- develop an initial familiarity with the vocabulary of future planning.

The most effective way of planning for exposure to vocabulary is through language topics in which careful consideration has been given to the issue of priority vocabulary. Possible language topics might include, animals, body, people, clothes, house, garden, playing with friends, food and drink, travel, toys.

The sequencing of topics is largely a matter of choice. However, it is useful to consider any natural links that may exist between topics and to organise and sequence language topics in a way which promotes reinforcement, consolidation, progression and continuity in children's language learning.

One-off celebration events such as Christmas, Halloween and Easter provide opportunities to consolidate significant language of past planning and to provide an initial familiarity with significant language of anticipated planning.

Colours, counting, size, weather, the 5 senses, shapes, emotions, safety, health, are frequent thematic strands through most language topics and play activities.



Children for whom Irish is a first or home language also attend Irish-medium immersion settings. This is not a language immersion experience for these children but a home language experience. Practitioners need to apply appropriate differentiation strategies to ensure that the language needs of these children are being addressed. The task of practitioners, in this situation is to extend, enhance and hone a language which is already well established rather than introduce and consolidate a new language at a basic level.

Section 4

Stages in the immersion language acquisition process

The development and promotion of a quality learning environment for children in an Irish-medium early years immersion setting, whether in general broad-based terms or in relation to the individual child requires a clear understanding of the stages in the language acquisition process.

This section provides more detailed information on the different stages in the language acquisition process.

Two Main Stages

The acquisition of language - first or additional - involves two main stages. These two stages are called the receptive and production stages.

The receptive stage refers to that period when learners receive language but do not use it. They listen to the new language, become familiar with the sounds, rhythms and words of the language and develop understanding. During this period also, learners begin to develop a foundation of vocabulary and grammatical structures which they may remember and which they eventually use in the productive stage.

The receptive and productive stages of language acquisition are not separate, mutually exclusive stages. There may be considerable overlap between them, at certain points. It is possible for learners to be at the productive stage in terms of simple language and simple situations and still be at the receptive stage in other more complex situations.

As language competence improves, the learner will function increasingly at a productive level. Receptive language competence is normally greater than productive language competence. The more competent the language user, the less of a gap between the two. However, even fluent speakers of a first or additional language may, in certain spheres of language function better at a receptive level.

It is to be expected that in an early years immersion setting that the children's home language will predominate as the language of communication of the children in their interactions with staff and other children.

Initial Stage

The early work of the language immersion preschool is not focused on getting the children to speak the language. It is concerned with the development of:

- comprehension of basic or simple language,
- familiarisation with basic or simple key words and phrases,
- the ability to remember basic or simple key words and phrases.

During this initial stage, it is important that children are provided with a significant level of non-language and contextual clues. Practitioners need to maintain a process of continuous monitoring of children's understanding during verbal interactions. Non-language clues and contextual clues should be adjusted to facilitate understanding where appropriate. Children indicate understanding in the very early stages through their actions or their own verbal responses, which are usually in English.

Practitioners should note that children's ability to comprehend is more easily supported within the individual or small group context, where the language can be more effectively tailored to individual need. Within the larger group or whole class context a child's failure to understand sufficiently well is more likely to go unnoticed, leading to disengagement on the child's part.

Children's Emerging Production Skills

Children's ability to use an immersion language emerges gradually. Sometimes their use of the immersion language involves mimicry, or a chorused response or repetition without understanding, rather than an appropriate spontaneous use of language in the right context. This latter type of language can range from the use of single words or phrases in the immersion language within a home language utterance, to increasing substitution of the immersion language for the home language. Eventually, as the child progresses and over an extended period of time, the immersion language may be used frequently and consistently in a variety of activities and contexts.

Language production is frequently perceived as the prime indicator of language development. Within an immersion early years setting, staff should not be tempted to force production of the new language at the expense of more broadly based comprehension skills. This can result in the insistence of parrot-like repetition, without a relevant context or real meaning for the children.

In the early stages of language learning, a high level of comprehension skills in the immersion language is more beneficial than a reduced level of comprehension along with meaningless production skills of this type.



A number of factors influence how soon children begin to use the new language spontaneously including age, ability, personality and the degree to which families use the new language at home.

Central to the factors which support children's use of Irish is the quality of the learning experiences and the quality of their exposure to Irish. The ability to verbalise in the language is enhanced through a number of strategies designed specifically to facilitate confidence in verbalisation. These include:

- participation in rhymes and songs;
- participation in stories which involve a chorus or repetition;
- participation in games which involve a simple verbal response;
- participation in activities which involve drama or puppets;
- being asked questions which require a simple, one-word response or where two possible answers are offered;
- participation in activities which provide an opportunity to join with an adult in making a response.

Staff should respond positively to children's attempts at language production. Inaccurate language production should be addressed by appropriate language remodelling

The Silent Period

All learners go through what is called the "silent period". This is an extended initial receptive period in the early stage of learning a new language, where the new language is not produced, even when it might seem reasonable that it should. This silent incubation period has been identified by many researchers and is regarded a normal part of the language-learning process. Its length is undoubtedly influenced by the quality, intensity or degree of language exposure, and also seems to be affected by age.

The silent period within an immersion setting may also be influenced by the fact that because children are able to communicate and be understood in their first language their motivation to communicate in a second language does not predominate. Additionally, young children do not have the conscious desire to speak a new language, a factor which motivates older learners.

Making observations about progress in language learning

In making formal or informal observations about children's Irish language development practitioners need to be mindful of the differing stages. Early observations about children's progress are more appropriately directed at comprehension. Observations about children's immersion language usage need to differentiate between the different types of language usage.



Section 5

Planning From theory to practice

Planning for the learning experiences of children in an early years immersion setting is a complex process. It involves planning for Irish language learning, as well as planning for learning across a broad base of other desirable areas of learning, while also being mindful of the needs of the individual child.

This section provides information on some of the basic principles which underpin staff planning and delivery for Irish language learning.

The role of staff in long-term planning for language learning activities

In order to participate and contribute usefully to planning for Irish language learning staff should:

- be familiar with the key characteristics of a quality language environment;
- be familiar with the long-term elements of the language planning;
- understand which areas of language learning can be addressed with minimal focused planning and as an inevitable bi-product of an effective language learning environment;
- understand which areas of language require purposeful focus;
- be familiar with the long-term language topics and how they roll-out;
- be familiar with the priority language items within each topic;
- be familiar with the priority vocabulary of other areas of learning.

Planning for immersion language learning should be carried out in the context of children's overall developmental needs. This involves integrating language planning with other areas of learning. Sometimes planning for language takes the lead role. Sometimes planning for other areas of learning takes the lead. The balance can change depending on need in broad terms or in response to individual or group need.

The most productive planning for a language topic identifies a range of activities which ensures frequent exposure to identified priority items of vocabulary and also provides opportunities to develop in other areas of learning. In planning for other areas of learning it is important that staff identify how immersion language, generalised and focused, is supported and complemented through the planned activities.

An immersion setting involves a more structured, directive approach than the home language setting. Opportunities for choice should be built into the structure of the day's planning in a way which does not undermine the useful balance of adult interaction. Children learn best when they are happy, affirmed and having fun. For this reason, provision needs to be made for the planning of an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and child-led activities.

The role of staff in short-term planning for language learning activities

Effective planning in the short-term requires an approach from staff which focuses on detail. Planning at this level requires staff to:

- use a planning format which supports the delineation of a specific language focus;
- plan the activities of any day, or number of days, with the specific language focus in mind;
- plan strategies and activities which will allow the focus language to be used naturally and frequently;
- plan activities across the whole range of developmental areas;
- plan for a high level of practical hands-on activities that stimulate children's interest, motivation and enjoyment;
- ensure daily or regular activities which maximise focused language exposure e.g. storytelling, songs, rhymes, games, puppets and the making of visual referents which correspond to key items in the current language focus;
- ensure that activities and strategies support and complement one another in practising and reinforcing the same language focus;
- support the on-going language activities through relevant classroom displays;
- build up the children's confidence and competence systematically, layer upon layer, using existing competence as the basis for the acquisition of new language.



The role of staff in delivering planned language activities

The quality of children's learning experiences is central to their ability to learn language successfully. Quality learning experiences depend on effective planning. Critically they also depend on the role the staff takes in interacting with the children.

Successful immersion language learning involves a greater adult presence. This presence is demonstrated by the degree to which adults initiate and guide activities, actively participate with children in activities, the extent of their language input and how the day is organised to maximise the involvement of children in activities which facilitate exposure to key language or priority language items.

In participating with children in planned activities it is important that staff:

- use Irish at all times;
- keep the level of verbal interaction high;
- maintain a sustained flow of language by,
 - describing, discussing and keeping-up an on-going commentary on what is happening,
 - making observations and comments,
 - offering suggestions,
 - asking questions.

There should be frequent reiteration of key language within the focus of the current planning cycle. Opportunities should be sought to consolidate and practice language of previous planning cycles. Language should be simple with the appropriate range of contextual and visual clues in place to support understanding, including body language, facial expression and tone of voice, non-verbal clues.

It is also important that staff:

- interact with one another through staged dialogue in order to,
 - increase frequency of exposure to key language areas or items,
 - make meaning clear,
 - model physical actions,
 - model verbal responses.

It is important that children are motivated to take part in adult-led language activities and to come to expect these activities and their own participation in them as a normal part of the day. It is important that staff motivate children's enthusiasm and interest through their own obvious enjoyment, their body language and tone of voice. If staff enjoy these activities, the children will enjoy them.

Irish language competence of staff

A crucial factor in staff's ability to deliver effective Irish language learning experiences to children is their own competence in Irish. It is vital that staff are fluent, confident and accurate within the language domains that dominate the verbal interaction with young children. To ensure optimum outcomes for children it is important that all staff can provide this level of competence in Irish.



Less than optimum staff Irish language competence??

Where a staff member has less than the appropriate level of Irish, it is important that this is addressed.

With the proactive support, of the Supervisor in particular, deployment of staff can be organised in ways which ensures a systematic in-setting approach to that staff member gaining confidence in the diverse areas of relevant language competence. The limited scope of social and organisational language, fixed phrases, predominating sentence patterns along with the frequency of their use makes these particular domains of language a fairly manageable learning task for the language-learner practitioner. The issue of a confident flow in the usage of sentence patterns, questions and grammatical structures, which also incorporates variety and flexibility as well as an appropriate breadth in vocabulary usage, is more of a challenge.

The following is a description of the Irish language characteristics and skills, that most children, who have experienced appropriate pre-school immersion education, will typically display.

Comprehension

1. Comprehension of instructional/organisational/social language, e.g.

- Gaibhte,
- Seas suas, suigh síos,
- Cuir sin síos ar an tábla/cathaoir,
- Taispeáin domh an...

2. Comprehension of some important high-frequency questions, e.g.

- Cá bhfuil an...?
- Cé leis an...?
- An dtig leat...?
- An maith leat...?
- Cé rinne...?
- An raibh...?

3. Comprehension of a broad base of high-frequency key words such as nouns, relating to family, toys, animals, transport, weather, clothes, food, parts of the body, etc. common adjectives, adverbs, adverbial nouns.

4. Comprehension of high-frequency key words associated with other areas of learning.

5. Comprehension at a level where the importance of non-language clues – pictures, facial expression, tone of voice, gestures is becoming of less importance.

6. Comprehension in:

- one to one situations,
- small group situations,
- large group situations.

7. A minimum level of comprehension throughout the class to allow effective communication with the class as a whole.

8. Sufficient broad-based comprehension among all children to ensure there is little or no obstacle to accessing the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Production

1. Mimicking of adult verbalisation in an appropriate context.

2. Verbal participation in songs, rhymes and stories.

3. Use of basic routine social language spontaneously and appropriately.

4. Use of single word, prompted answers spontaneously and appropriately.

5. Use of single word or single phrase answers spontaneously and appropriately.

6. Insertion of single words or phrases in Irish in English communication spontaneously and appropriately.



The support material in this document has been created to support the development of good practice and quality provision within an Irish-medium preschool immersion context. However the information and guidance within the document is also of value to the practitioner in the Foundation Stage of Irish-medium primary school immersion education.