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A summary of your child's learning in **junior and senior infants** in the 6 curriculum areas is provided below, along with some suggestions on how you can support your child's learning at home.

LANGUAGE

Through language, your child learns to communicate in English and in Irish. Your child learns to listen, to speak, to read and to write in both languages. These language skills provide a basis for learning other languages and are important for learning in all other areas of the curriculum.

The Language Curriculum emphasises **developing listening and speaking skills in preparation for beginning reading and writing**. Through listening and speaking activities, children learn new words, to think and to talk about their thoughts and feelings. They also learn to listen to each other.

Children become more aware of letters and words when they see writing all around them, for example, on the classroom walls and in the class library. Children listen to and create stories from big books (large books with big pictures and text) with the teacher and other children. This gives them the chance to talk about the story and to ask and answer questions. From these early activities, **your child learns important messages about reading and writing**; he/she learns that words run from left to right on a page and have meaning, and that pictures help to tell a story. Children also learn that different letters have different sounds by playing rhyming games with words and by using their listening skills to hear different sounds in words. **Making marks,** ,scribbling, drawing and painting with paint, crayons, pencils, pens and chalk, **also helps your child to begin reading and writing.**
Your child will start reading graded books chosen with the teacher, and will learn to form letters correctly and be encouraged to write short pieces, when he/she is ready to do so.

Waiting until your child is ready, helps your child to experience greater success in reading and writing right from the beginning. On the other hand, if your child begins before he/she is ready to do so, he/she may not experience that same success.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- singing songs, nursery and counting rhymes in both languages with your child and encouraging your child to teach you songs and rhymes that he/she has been learning in school. Children love action rhymes so help your child to make up actions to go with the words or ask your child to show you actions he/she has learned
- bringing your child to the library and sharing books with your child, for example, ask your child to predict what the story will be about from looking at the picture on the front cover
- listening to and talking with your child and encouraging him/her to tell you more about different things that interest him/her, for example, what his/her favourite toys are and why.

Information for parents

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MATHEMATICS

Your child learns to understand and solve problems with the Mathematics Curriculum. Your child is busy with early mathemathical activities such as sorting, matching, comparing and ordering different objects. For example, you might see your child arranging toys in lines on the floor or organising toys in groups according to different types, colours or sizes. These activities give your child a strong foundation for learning in:

- Number (including counting, comparing and ordering)
- Algebra (including copying and adding to patterns of colour, shape, size and number using beads or blocks, or by drawing and colouring, for example, 2 blue, 1 red)
- Measurement (including working with length, weight, capacity, time and money)
- Shape and space (including working with 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes)
- Data (including sorting objects and understanding and making charts and graphs).

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- asking your child to help you with sorting and matching activities at home, for example, tidying toys into the right boxes, sorting the washing into bundles such as putting all the towels together or all the white clothes, matching socks when you're putting clothes away or helping to put the shopping away in the right presses. Talk to your child while you are doing these activities together and ask your child how he/she knows something matches or should go in a particular place

- teaching your child counting rhymes and songs and making up actions together to go with the words. Your child can also learn old counting favourites from grandparents and other family members. Children love counting rhymes such as *One, two, buckle my shoe, This old man* or *A haon, a dó, a trí, lucha beaga buí.*

SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION (SESE)

In SESE (history, geography and science) the emphasis is on **connecting learning with the child's immediate environment**. In history, children's curiosity about the past is awakened by **exploring their personal and family history**, for example, by listening to stories about when their grandparents were young. In geography and science, the local and wider environment provides many opportunities for children's **investigations which help them to understand and care for the world** around them. In SESE, **your child uses investigative skills** such as *observing, questioning, investigating and experimenting, estimating and measuring, classifying recording and communicating* and so **works like a Scientist, Historian and Geographer from a young age.**

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- talking to your child about important events in his/her own life, such as, the day that he/she was born, when he/she came home from the hospital, his/her first steps, first tooth and so on

- helping your child to notice and discuss how changes in the seasons affect the weather, plant and animal life, for example, the clothes we wear in the Winter/Summer, buds appearing in Spring andleaves on the trees in Summer

- discussing what happens through heating and cooling and discovering things that melt and/or freeze, for example, ice-cream, butter, chocolate, water and ice.

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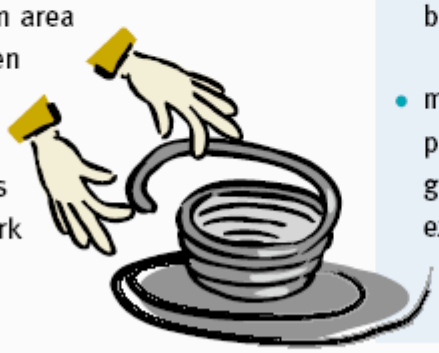
ARTS EDUCATION

The three subjects visual arts, music and drama give children opportunities to **develop artistic and creative skills** by participating in different kinds of activities, for example, drawing, painting, constructing, dramatic play, singing, clapping or exploring the sounds made by different musical instruments. The **focus is not so much on the work your child produces (the product) but on what your child learns by engaging in creative activity (the process)**. This curriculum area encourages your child to listen to, look at and respond to the music, artwork and dramatic expression of others in the class, as well as the work of older children and adults.



You can help your child to learn at home by:

- singing and clapping the rhythms of favourite songs with your child and encouraging him/her to share new songs with you that have been learned in school
- keeping a collection of clothes and hats that can be used for dress up play
- making a collection of empty cartons, boxes, paper, crayons, paints, playdough, pens, pencils, glue, old fabrics and so on, to allow your child to express him/herself artistically.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Children love all kinds of physical activity. Physical education in the infant classes helps your child to learn about and develop more control over his/her movements, to learn how to co-operate with others and to develop important social skills such as sharing, relying on others and teamwork. Your child also learns directions in a fun way which helps with reading and writing, and in finding his/her way around the school! Your child participates in different physical activities such as:

- Athletics (including running, jumping and throwing)
- Dance (including exploring, creating and performing dance)
- Gymnastics (including balancing, moving in different directions and moving using apparatus such as hoops and mats)
- Games (including ball handling, kicking, carrying and striking and playing simple playground games)
- Outdoor and adventure activities (including walking, following directions and following simple trails).[1]

These activities help your child **to understand and appreciate physical activity**. Physical education starts your child on an active way of life.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- encouraging your child to play with toys that will help him/her to develop physically, for example, construction toys or playdough
- encouraging your child to be active, for example, walking, running, and jumping and playing games. Encourage your child to attend or take part in local sport activities which will help him/her to feel a sense of belonging to the community.

[1] In aquatics children learn about safety in the water and how to move in the water through play and using their arms and legs. To suit individual school circumstances, the curriculum advocates that children should have opportunities to develop water based movement skills at some point in their primary schooling.

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SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)

Social, Personal and Health Education, or SPHE, deals with **your child's personal development, health and wellbeing.** It helps children **to understand how to care for themselves, how to respect and relate to others, and how to deal with different feelings.** It helps your child to **learn and develop a sense of responsibity for his/her actions.** SPHE includes **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** – an important part of all children's development. **Each school has an RSE policy** which outlines what will be taught in RSE and when certain content will be introduced.

The SPHE Curriculum helps your child to:

- care for him/herself
- to learn basic hygiene skills, such as, washing hands before eating
- to develop growing independence, such as, putting on own coat and shoes
- to deal with the newness of school life by, for example, taking turns and sharing.

SPHE helps your child to explore and respect diversity and to appreciate differences in people by learning how to relate to and respect others. Your child also learns to develop a sense of place in the school and local community, to care for the local and wider environment and to become familiar with different types of information media.

You can help your child to learn at home by:

- talking to your child about feelings and helping your child to name and recognise feelings and realise that it is okay to have different feelings about different things
- encouraging your child to recognise and care for him/herself and his/her own things at home and at school, for example, washing hands before eating, hanging up own coat, putting away own lunchbox, tidying toys away
- developing healthy eating habits through providing a healthy lunch for school and at other mealtimes. Breakfast is a particularly important meal as it starts your child on a healthy day.

Ask your child's teacher about other ways you can help your child to learn at home in the infant classes. Ask other parents what works well for them.

Information for parents