(1) **Presenters:**

Dr. Mary Daly) and Dr. Sharon Skehill (

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)  
  
 **‘Updating *Aistear*: What mattered then; what still matters; and what else we need to matter now’.**

[A*istear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*](https://curriculumonline.ie/Early-Childhood/) (NCCA, 2009) is for all children from birth to six years in Ireland. The framework is underpinned by 12 Principles and uses four interconnected Themes to describe learning and development. The framework also includes four sets of guidelines on Partnership with parents; Interactions; Play; and Assessment.

NCCA is engaged with a range of stakeholders to inform the updating of *Aistear* across two consultation phases. Phase 1 which concluded in April 2022 revolved around engagement on what is working well with the frameworkand what needs to be changed or updated. In considering the Phase 1 findings (NCCA 2022), this presentation will provide an overview of those elements of the framework which are recognised as foundational in the lives of babies, toddlers and young children, while outlining how they influenced the proposals for consultation in Phase 2.

Phase 1 findings illustrate a continued emphasis on a rights-based and child-led approach to early years education and adhere to Froebel’s messaging about the importance of play, particularly in the outdoors, in supporting holistic development.

The presentation will also consider understandings of ‘Childhood Today’ from the Phase 1 findings and how to ensure that the framework continues to support high-quality learning and development for children from birth to six. Key messages pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion will be outlined, as well as reflections on the changing context of children’s lives. An understanding of Froebel’s approach regarding connectedness within and between the principles and themes is considered as Phase 2 of the consultation continues*.*