FAQs for Practices on Reopening of Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare settings
Practice FAQs

1. **How can we help parents to help their children prepare for the return?**
   
   Communication with parents through this period is essential and a service provider should choose the means of communication which best suits their parents and carers.
   
   Information can be provided through the website, email, on-line platforms, phone calls, video and text messaging systems.
   
   It is important to think about the frequency of communication, e.g. what needs to be communicated before children start, what needs to be communicated daily, and what can be communicated weekly.

2. **Before they return, how can we help to prepare children?**
   
   In preparation for their return, it is important to consider what changes you have made to your setting and what the potential challenges might be, e.g. if children may be returning to a different group or room. It is a good idea to inform parents of these changes well in advance so they have time to discuss them with their children. There will be a range of resources available shortly to support children’s well-being during this transitional period.

3. **Can we adopt a phased, part-time approach to their return?**
   
   Each setting is different. Your approach to reopening should be tailored to suit your own setting, while following the public health guidance.

4. **What is the best approach to re-establishing routines?**
   
   Children are likely to feel reassured if their ‘play-pod’ is in a room where they feel familiar and includes a group of children and practitioners whom they know and with whom they feel they belong, if this is practical and possible. It will be important to focus on re-establishing relationships, rebuilding, and forming friendships. This will help children in regaining a sense of belonging and wellbeing.
   
   Positive approaches to induction will be important, using similar strategies to those you use when children first join your setting.
   
   There are a range of resources available to help with transitions. (available from 9 June 2020)

5. **What do we need to consider for children on their return?**
   
   The key priority is to settle children following the period of isolation. It is important to understand and acknowledge the traumas and challenges children have been through. Observations initially should focus on children’s resilience and emotional wellbeing, and the core principles of Aistear. In keeping with good practice, include parents by seeking their opinions and suggestions and, sharing information with them.

6. **What will the curriculum look like during this transitional period?**
   
   The Aistear curriculum framework and your own curriculum matter just as much now as they always do. A curriculum of care and recovery is a priority to reshape what the child needs; security and high levels of wellbeing. Knowing the children and their needs is paramount to enable them to thrive in this new situation. Plan a pedagogy based around Playing and Exploring;
Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically. A balance of play and adult directed activities will help support children to be strong, confident learners. Establish and maintain continuous provision, as far as possible, with the same adults on hand in the play-pod, to ensure consistency in play experiences for children, enabling them to engage in sustained shared thinking and communication.

7. How do we support children who haven’t returned yet?
   It is important to ensure that you keep in regular touch with children and families who have not yet returned to your setting and provide learning ideas and suggestions as appropriate.