

## **“I CAN Book” Guidance Notes**

### **Purpose**

- The purpose of the “I CAN Book” is to capture and document the skills the child has gained by the final term of pre-school.
- Young children are growing and learning all the time and the “I CAN Book” is intended to provide a brief snapshot of the child’s skills at a particular moment in time.
- The “I CAN Book” is intended to be used as a means of sharing the child’s achievements with the parent(s) and suggesting ways that the skills can be furthered enhanced by the parent and child together at home.
- With the consent of the parent, the “I CAN Book” can be shared with the school in which the child is enrolled for Junior Infants. The school may use the “I CAN Book” to help build a picture of the child in preparation for starting school in September and as required throughout the year.
- The “I CAN Book” documents the observable skills that the child has learned in pre-school (“what the child has learned”). It is not intended to capture & document “how the skills were learned”.
- The “I CAN Book” is child –focused. It is not intended to be an “entrance exam” for school, a diagnostic tool or a quality measure for a pre-school service.

### **Introducing the “I CAN Book” to staff**

- The “I CAN Book” and Guidance Notes may be introduced to staff members by the Manager of the service at a team meeting or by organising a specific information session for staff.
- It is very important that all staff members have a shared understanding of the purpose and process of completing the “I CAN Book” to ensure a consistent approach to how it is used in the service.

### **Introducing the “I CAN Book” to parents**

- The “I CAN Book” may be introduced as part of the information session for parents of incoming pre-schoolers, that usually takes place in the August before the children start pre-school. Alternatively, a specific information session on the “I CAN Book” can be organised for parents.
- The introduction to the “I CAN Book” gives parents an overview of the skills that their child will be gaining over the course of the year at pre-school. Parents become aware that they will receive a completed copy of the booklet at year end and that with their consent this will be shared with the school to positively support the child’s transition to Junior Infants.

### **Completing the “I CAN Book”**

#### **Who?**

- The “I CAN Book” is completed by a relevant member of staff of the pre-school, who has knowledge and experience of the child. It is recommended that the Manager views each completed “I CAN Book” before it is shared with the parent(s).

#### **When?**

- The “I CAN Book” is completed in June.

#### **How?**

- The “I CAN Book” is handwritten. It is important that the person completing the booklet ensures that it is clearly readable.
- The “I CAN Book” documents the observable skills that the child demonstrates at preschool. Pre-school services may use a variety of means to identify these skills e.g. via learning stories and other observation approaches.

#### **ID Code:**

- The person completing the “I CAN Book” for a child assigns an ID Code for the child. This is usually the child’s initials followed by a number. The purpose of the ID Code is to ensure that should the

pages of a completed “I CAN Book” become separated e.g. when photocopying or scanning for transfer to school, they can be easily reassembled.

- With this in mind, please ensure that the ID code is inserted on each page where indicated throughout the “I CAN Book”.

### Introduction Page

- This page is intended as a brief introduction to the child – name, date of birth, language, personal attributes and likes.

### Dear Parents Section

- This gives parents a brief summary of the purpose of the “I CAN Book” and introduces the *Aistear* curriculum framework.

### Skills Sections

- The skills are grouped under the four *Aistear* themes, with a subheading describing the most relevant area of development. There is a box under each skills list which identifies other *Aistear* themes that are relevant to the particular skills.
- The person completing the “I CAN Book” selects the category that best describes where the child is at with each specific item on the skills list by circling the relevant star:



=I can do this most of the time



=I’m nearly there



= I am still working on this

### Overall Comment

- The *Overall Comment* section of the “I CAN Book” is intended to be a brief narrative summary based on the picture of the child that emerges when each of the 7 individual areas of development outlined in the “I CAN Book” are viewed together as a whole. This is an opportunity to highlight the positive areas of achievement for the child and suggest areas where there is still room for learning (presenting this as positively as possible). 2 lines under each of the 7 areas of development are recommended as a guide for completing this section.

### Fun Ideas for Home

- The *Fun Ideas for Home* section is intended to provide parents with ideas for simple, fun and affordable activities to do with their child to support further development of skills, especially targeting skills where it has been identified that there is room for further learning.
- Ideas can be linked to the *Aistear* tip sheets. Links to activities available on appropriate websites can also be included here.

### Comment from Parent/Guardian

- When the pre-school service has gone through the completed “I CAN Book” with the parent, the parent is invited to add a comment. This is optional. The idea is to give parents the opportunity to input into the “I CAN Book”. A parent may want to add an insight about their child from the home or parent perspective – this may reinforce the pre-school service view or differ from it. They may want to comment on the experience of receiving the “I CAN Book”.

### Consent Section

- It is explained to the parent that the “I CAN Book” is a useful resource for the school in preparing for the child to start Junior Infants and throughout the first year.

- It is explained that *all* parents of *all* children in the pre-school service who are starting Junior Infants are being asked to share the “I CAN Book” with their school.
- If parents are happy for the “I CAN Book” to be shared with the school, the consent section of the book is completed.
- If the parent wishes to add a comment in the *Comment from Parent/Guardian* section, this is done before consent is signed.

#### **Final Page**

- The member of staff from the preschool who completed the “I CAN Book” completes the final section, which includes details of name, job title, signature and date the “I CAN Book” was completed.
- Contact details for the pre-school and primary school are also included.

#### **Sharing the Completed “I CAN Book” with Parents**

- It is intended that the preschool will go through each child’s “I CAN Book” with the parent at a face-to-face meeting, where possible.
- After the completed “I CAN Book” has been gone through with the parent and the Parent Comment section completed (if the parent wishes to do so) then the “I CAN Book” is photocopied/scanned for the school & pre-school (see below).
- When the photocopying or scanning has been done, the original colour copy of the “I CAN Book” is given to the parent to keep.

#### **Sharing the Completed “I CAN Book” with Schools**

There are two options for sharing the “I CAN Book” with the school:

- OPTION 1: Schools receive black & white photocopies of the “I CAN Book” *where written consent has been given* by parents to share them with the school. These will be forwarded to the school in June by post or hand delivery. In some cases the schools may be agreeable for the photocopying to take place in the school.
- OPTION 2: The completed *and signed* “I CAN Books” are scanned and emailed to the school ( as a password-protected document) or saved on a memory stick (USB) that is given to the school.

#### **Keeping the “I CAN Book” on file in the preschool**

- The preschool will keep a copy of all “I CAN Books” on file in the preschool. This means they will be available for reference purposes at a later date should the need arise – from parent, preschool, school or other.
- As above, the pre-school can keep black & white paper copies of the “I CAN Books” on file or keep scanned copies on a computer.
- The “I CAN Book” can only be shared with an external agency with parental consent (except in the case of child protection where Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children always applies).
- In the event that there is a request to share the information with an external agency at a later date e.g. the school, and consent had not originally been given, the parent can be asked again if they wish to give consent at this time.

**If you have any questions or queries in relation to the above, please contact:**

Emma Berney, Kildare Children & Young People’s Services Committee  
Email: [emma.berney@tusla.ie](mailto:emma.berney@tusla.ie) Tel: 086-4178220