



Section Three – Community Service Learning Experiences

Community service learning experiences provide various opportunities to prepare and / or engage children and young people in the positive activities of their community. Such experiences teach children valuable skills, helping them to realise their potential to meet community needs and to foster a sense of civic responsibility or active citizenship.

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Activity: Adopting 1 – adopt a garden, wasteland, street, stream, etc.

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	Older age group
Space Required:	Varied
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>Have a look around your local area. Are there unused wastelands or elderly people who are not able to look after their gardens? Is there rubbish littering your street or does a local stream need cleaning up? Ask children and parents for ideas and together draw up a plan of how you could help to tackle these issues. Safety must be a serious consideration when selecting and planning activities.</p>

Activity: Adopting 2 – adopt a grandparent

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Geography, Science, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	Older age group
Space Required:	Varied
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>Again consider your local area. Are there elderly people who maybe need a little help with some jobs? Are there any elderly people who don't have visitors? Ask children and parents for ideas and together draw up a plan of how you could help. Safety must be a serious consideration when selecting and planning activities.</p>

Activity: Adopting 3 – adopt an Irish speaker

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	Older age group
Space Required:	Varied
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	Do you have people in the area who are fluent Irish speakers? They may be willing to come into the service to talk to the children and carry out various activities through Irish.

Activity: Animal care at farms, animal homes, zoos

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Geography, Science, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	Adaptable, but probably more suitable to the older age range
Space Required:	Varied
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	Begin by organising a visit to an open farm, petting farm, local pet shop or zoo, whatever is in your area. Make contact with local farmers, animal welfare personnel or the zoo education department to arrange visits by them to your service. Encourage the children to research particular animals. Make wall freezes, write stories, discuss animal welfare and care, endangered species, etc. Make charts on the type of animals that the children's families own.

Activity: Art exhibitions

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Visual Arts,

Age Range Suitability:

Adaptable

Space Required:

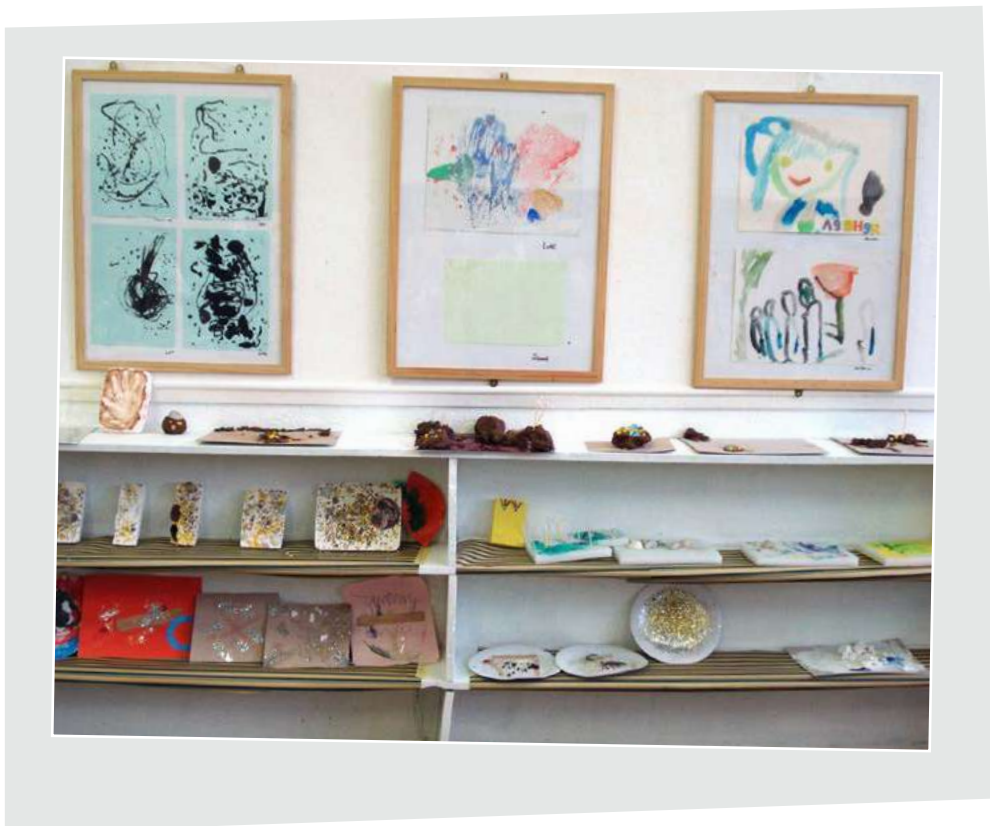
Varied

Equipment and Materials:

Various

Course of Action:

Collect various pieces of the children's art and craft work. Have the children compose a letter explaining that they would like to hold an art exhibition and send to various suitable venues in your area. Consider venues such as a local shop, community centre, day centre, doctor's waiting room, shopping centre or library. Set up the display with the children, ensuring that pictures are neatly mounted and titled.



Activity: Berry picking

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: Science, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	Adaptable
Space Required:	Outdoor – community
Equipment and Materials:	Containers
Course of Action:	Fruit picking has almost died away, as we can see from unpicked fruit rotting in the hedgerows. Check permissions with farmers or land owners and arrange to take groups of children to pick the fruit. Either bring the fruit back to your service to use or seek out members of the Country Women's Associations, ICA, farmer's markets, country markets or other places that could use the fruit, such as a day care centre for the elderly or local restaurants.



Activity: Bicycle repair, maintenance, riding, safety, trips, obstacle course

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, History, Geography, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Space Required:	Outdoor
Equipment and Materials:	Bikes suitable to size of children (if possible, their own) helmets, cones, chalk, maintenance equipment.
Course of Action:	Arrange some 'All about Bikes' sessions. This could include researching the history of bikes, drawings of how bikes have evolved, what bikes were used for in the past and Olympic bicycle events. Discuss repair and maintenance and, if possible, ask an expert to come in to give demonstrations. Contact the local Garda community relations unit to discuss safety with the children.



Activity: Community interviews

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	Older age range
Course of Action:	What events or issues are happening in your community? Arrange for children to interview the relevant people. Plan the questions to be asked. Plan what you are going to do with the information gained, for example, to include in your journal or monthly magazine / newsletter.

Activity: Community projects (exhibits, ethnic celebrations, street fairs, sport events)

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	All
Course of Action:	Keep in touch with all upcoming events in your community and contribute where possible.



Activity: Community visitors representing a variety of careers, talents, hobbies, ages, cultures

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Course of Action:	<p>Arrange for visitors to come in to the service to speak or give demonstrations to the children. Most people will do this free of charge because they enjoy sharing. After each visit, have the children write a letter of thanks to send along with information or pictures that show any follow-up work that has arisen from the person's visit.</p>

Activity: Concert-giving

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Space Required:	Large hall space or outdoor space
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>Concerts can be hard work to organise but are great fun. What talents do your children have? Most children enjoy performing and it can give them a huge confidence boost. Tap into the talents that parents have for their help with costumes, stage sound or any other skills they may have.</p>

Activity: Cross-generation partnerships with an adult friend – cook, bus driver, maintenance person, school principal, shopkeeper, artist, neighbour, etc.

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Course of Action:

Organise a 'cross-generation partnership' week. Put together the aim and objectives of the exercise, discuss and agree this with children, staff and parents. Draft up a letter to send to various people who you think would like to be involved. Invite them into the service to meet with the children. Encourage the children to observe and enquire about that person's job. Children can then share their experiences with each other.

All sessions must be supervised by a member of staff from the after school service.



Activity: Fairs – choose your own theme (animal, art, hobby, music, dance, food etc)

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Space Required:	Large space – indoor or outdoor
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>This can be as large or small as you feel comfortable with. Summer evenings are best for this event. Brainstorm the kind of activities you would like to have at the fair and let the children choose which they want to be involved with. The older children can help to organise, while the younger ones can take part. Advertise well and have parents well informed so that they can attend. Invite the local community.</p>

Activity: Family games, parties, picnics, suppers

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>This can be fun to organise and is a great way of involving parents in your service and helping families to get to know each other. Always let the children be involved in the organisation by using their ideas and giving them a role to encourage responsibility.</p>

Activity: Food tasting parties

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaelige, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Music, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Space Required:

Varied

Equipment and Materials:

Food, recipes, maps and art materials

Course of Action:

Food tasting parties can be fun to organise and fun to carry out. Enthuse the children first of all by discussing the different types of food that they have already tasted from around the world. Use a map to help with understanding. Make posters of food and places. Invite parents to get involved. You may have families from various cultures, which will add to the variation. If not, ask children to discuss food and recipes with grandparents or neighbours and bring ideas in for an 'Irish food taste'.



Activity: Foreign culture and ethnic experiences (celebrations, cookery, discussions, dress, games)

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>Learning about other cultures and traditions is always interesting. Choose three or four different cultures and let the children decide which culture they want to join. Help them to find out as much as they can about their chosen culture. Let them each share what they have learnt with each other.</p>

Activity: Fundraising – community or special person or cause

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Space Required:	Varied
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	<p>If you have a cause to fundraise for, form a committee consisting of staff, parents and children of various ages. Carefully plan what you are going to do and try to involve as many as possible.</p>

Activity: Gift-making for family, friends, hospital or nursing home patients, homeless shelters, paediatric waiting rooms

G

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	All
Space Required:	Varied
Equipment and Materials:	Various
Course of Action:	There are many gift ideas for children to make that don't cost too much (see website below for ideas). There is a really fun idea below.

<http://familycrafts.about.com/od/giftstomake/a/Homemade-Gift-Ideas.htm>



Growing Grass Head Children

You will need: nylon stocking or tights, a handful of grass seed, potting soil, small jar, wiggle eyes, paper or fabric to make the body, markers or crayons, glue

- To make:**
1. Put a small handful of grass seed into the toe of the stocking. This is where the top of the head will be.
 2. Add soil to the stocking, enough to make a nice round head. You need your head to be bigger than the mouth of the jar so it doesn't fall in. For a really funny head, make it quite a bit bigger than the jar body.
 3. Tie a knot in the stocking to keep the seeds and soil secure. Cut away most of the extra nylon, but leave a little bit hanging to help soak up water from the jar.
 4. Fill the jar about half way with water and place the head on the jar, make sure the hanging part of the stocking is in the water.
 5. Glue on the wiggle eyes and draw the rest of the face onto the stocking.
 6. Decorate the jar with clothes for the body.
 7. Wait for the grass to grow!

Activity: History – school, community

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Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Visual Arts, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Space Required:

Table top, display

Course of Action:

Have children discover facts about their community, school, local shops, etc. such as when it opened, when it was built, what was there before it was built. Encourage them to speak to older members of their family, friends and members of the community. Were there any interesting traditions or events that don't happen any more? Make a collection of photographs or short stories for display.

Activity: Interviewing members of the community

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

Older age range

Course of Action:

The aim of this activity is to build up a profile of your community. Brainstorm a list of categories such as residents (old and new), shopkeepers, service persons, school personnel, business personnel, friends, families, young children, seniors. Choose one person from each of the categories and arrange for the children to conduct an interview. Decide on three or four questions to ask about their job, hobbies, what they like about living here, what would they like to change? Using photographs, collate and display the information.



Activity: Journalism

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaeilge, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Space Required:

Table top

Equipment and Materials: Art materials, computer

Course of Action:

Encourage the children to record events that they are involved with to be included in your newsletter or newspaper for the after school service or community news. Cover a variety of events, conduct interviews, print, distribute and submit news items to other community media.



Activity: Leadership training skills

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, History, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Course of Action:

One of the main attributes of a good leader is communication. Team building activities also promote the development of leadership abilities.

Activities that involve group work, games that require participation as a team and tasks such as puzzle completion in groups will all help to foster budding leadership skills. Discuss with the children what they think makes a good leader. Brainstorm leaders in the community, world leaders and in history. Ask children to draw a picture of what they think leadership looks like, to make a collage about leadership, to come up with a short play about leadership, or to write a short story or poem that focuses on themes of leadership.

www.buzzle.com/articles/leadership-games-for-kids.html



Activity: Litter clean up

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual and emotional development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Equipment and Materials:

Gloves, rubbish bags

Course of Action:

Ask children what areas look unsightly because of litter. Let them choose an area to improve.

Activity: Nature trail creation

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Mathematics, Geography, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Space Required:

Community area

Equipment and Materials: Pens and paper

Course of Action:

Take nature walks to a different level. Bring a group of children out on a nature walk, pointing things out to them, in the hedge rows, under stones, etc. Discuss what they can see, smell and hear. Help them to make notes and clues for directions for other groups to follow their trail.



Activity: Prevention programmes

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	All
Course of Action:	Get professionals in to give age-appropriate talks on topics such as crime, drug and alcohol awareness, depression, eating disorders, pregnancy and truancy. Staff can follow these up by having discussions with the children, organising activities like developing slogans / strap lines and making awareness posters. Collect information leaflets / booklets and put together an information montage display.

Activity: Pen-pals

Suitable to Support:	Areas of development: Social, intellectual, emotional and language development Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Gaeilge, Social, Personal and Health Education
Age Range Suitability:	All
Equipment and Materials:	Art materials, envelopes
Course of Action:	Compile a list of people who would like to be a willing pen-pal. Ask people in the community, particularly the elderly, families, friends, etc. Encourage children to write or do artwork for them to correspond with.

Activity: Scarecrow trail

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaelge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Course of Action:

This could be a true community event. Scarecrow trails are becoming popular events and you could be the first to organise one in your area.

www.penshawcommunityassociation.org.uk/ScarecrowTrailEvent.html



What is a scarecrow trail?

A scarecrow trail is a great community event for all to enjoy. Everyone can get involved either as a scarecrow maker or in following the trail.

In a scarecrow trail, members of the public, community groups and local businesses make scarecrows and display them during the week of the trail. The organisers provide a label or notice showing the scarecrow's name and a clue which is displayed next to the scarecrow.

During the week of the trail, the organisers sell 'trail sheets' with a map showing where all the scarecrows are and details of a puzzle or riddle which can only be solved using the clues on the labels displayed next to the scarecrows. These trail sheets are returned with the answer and a vote for the scarecrow they liked best to the organisers. The organisers then count up votes for the best scarecrow and put the trail sheet into a draw for a prize.

Activity: Special days

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Physical, social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Course of Action:

During the year, when there are no special themes to celebrate, make one up. Think of ways to involve the community or have an open day, some ideas include foreign country day, local celebrity day, backward day, TV star day, visiting day, grandparent or parent day, sisters or brothers day, ourselves day, staff day.



Activity: Trail making

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Physical, social, intellectual and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Geography, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	All
Course of Action:	Plan out a route that takes in points of interest in the community or along a field or wooded area.

Activity: Toy lending library

Suitable to Support:	<p>Areas of development: Social, intellectual, emotional and language development</p> <p>Subjects in the primary school curriculum: English, Mathematics, Social, Personal and Health Education</p>
Age Range Suitability:	Older children
Space Required:	Store cupboard
Equipment and Materials:	Record book
Course of Action:	Begin by advertising for used toys in good condition. Make a record of each item. Open your library once a month to the community to borrow toys. Have the older children log the toys in and out. Also have a group of children to ensure that the toys are clean before they are loaned out.

Activity: Twinning with another after school service in the community, in another town or in another country

Suitable to Support:

Areas of development:

Social, intellectual, emotional and language development

Subjects in the primary school curriculum:

English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Social, Personal and Health Education

Age Range Suitability:

All

Course of Action:

Establish partnerships with other after school services. Exchange ideas, keep each other informed on activities and encourage the children to correspond with one another.

