



Froebelian Futures

Delivered by



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



Cowgate
Under 5's
Centre UK

froebel.ed.ac.uk



Funded by
**Froebel
Trust**

Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

Leadership opportunities & reflections

Project title

The Benefits of Clay

Subtitle (if applicable)

What do we see when we observe children using the clay?

Your name and role

Vicki Paterson- Head of Centre

1. What are the implications of this research for:

- The team/setting as a whole
- Pedagogy
- Resourcing
- Policy
- The sector / your networks / management beyond your immediate setting.

(Please aim to write between 250 minimum and 500 words maximum, using the box below. Please do not disclose the identity of any individuals in your comments, as this form will be part of your colleague's public record of their project).

This practitioner enquiry has come at a time when there have been many changes to our setting we have expanded our staff team and over this past year we have continued to explore Froebelian principles which are at the heart of the Balgreen Nursery School values and our practice.

This has been a welcome opportunity for both myself and the practitioner to reflect and further explore principles that underpin our everyday practice.

This project helped to support further understanding of key Froebelian principles within the nursery environment, specifically through the lens of a specific occupation, Clay.

As a resource, clay was under used. Prior to this Practitioner Enquiry clay was not part of the daily provision and was not valued as an open- ended resource often being used for a fixed purpose.

We hoped that by having the opportunity to further research our Froebelian Principles and reflect on our Clay provision we could begin to discuss the benefits of this very valuable resource with the practitioner ensuring daily access to highlight this in a very real way.

The practitioner, along with the rest of the nursery team was able to establish a space within the workshop area where the clay was set up on a daily basis. Over time the resource has become part of the daily provision and it has become valued by the staff, which can be seen through the observations made in this area.

Using careful observations, we aimed to highlight the value of Clay as an open-ended resource, and we hoped that as children explore clay with the company of a knowledgeable practitioner, they will be able to express their own ideas and make connections with the world around them through their own symbolic representations. Commenting on what children were doing modelled language and used vocabulary in relevant contexts.

Staff value Clay as an open-ended resource and they now observe children regularly using clay for a variety of purposes and their observations highlight the holistic nature of clay.

We valued the opportunity to come together with practitioners and leaders throughout Edinburgh and further afield. The discussions throughout the training sessions were rich and of value with regards to supporting each other, reflecting on our values and principles and sharing practice.

2. What value do you place on practitioner-research – and what more can be done in your setting/locality to enable it to continue as part of routine practice going forward?

Research is imbedded into our everyday practice. We are always investigating how our provision is meeting the needs of the children.

We are co researchers on many levels with our children, planning, learning and observing together on a daily basis.

This Research has supported myself and the practitioner to re visit our initial training and really explore how we have put this into practice across the setting.

We have been encouraged to build elements of this practitioner enquiry into our Professional Development and Review process to ensure that at all levels we are encouraged to research important aspects of our values and practice.

3. What have you learned as a leader through supporting this research / programme? (100 words)

Supporting this practitioner enquiry has given me the space and time to further research Froebelian principles. I have valued the opportunity and time to read texts/books I had not read before and reflect on how I can encourage others to do the same.

Following this opportunity that I have had, I hope to imbed reading and enquiry into the PRD process for all staff. Supporting staff to ensure we are upholding the Froebelian principle of knowledgeable, nurturing educators who engage in their own learning and reflective practice.

Please save this document as a PDF and share it as feedback with your researching practitioner/colleague **and** with us at froebelianfutures@ed.ac.uk. Please ask them to upload it to their project report page (Edit > Question 12) as a condition of completing their certificate. If you have any questions about this process please contact us at the email address above.