



# Froebelian Futures

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## Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

# Leadership opportunities & reflections

### Project title

Grow Through Life

### Subtitle (if applicable)

### Your name, role and setting

Tammy Henderson: Head of Establishment at Ballerup Nursery 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).

### The Team/ whole setting

Throughout this inquiry project we have had mixed reactions from staff members; most have been open to the concept of the research and to gaining new knowledge and skills through this however a small number of staff members have shown reluctance to adopt the knowledge and skills being shared by the Practitioner during her inquiry. Time has been taken by the practitioner to consult with these staff members on the reasons for this research and the importance of the type of learning taking place in regard to the learning and development of the children participating.

As the research was exploring life cycles of plants one child raised the subject of death but in relation to plants and was very open in his discussion. This led to a parent of another child from the group feeling uneasy about this subject being discussed with children so young. The practitioner consulted with this parent to explain how this conversation started and was very skilled in explaining the Froebelian approach in relation to helping children understand life's processes and not shying away from this subject. After this conversation the parent felt more comfortable with their child being part of this discussion and understood the importance of children having a good understanding of this issue.

### Pedagogy

Although this project was ongoing with this one key group the practitioner was skilled in ensuring that all areas of the curriculum were still promoted throughout to give the children the best opportunities to promote their development and learning.

### Resourcing

Within this project there were financial implications; for the project to be successful the practitioner had to source/purchase a variety of resources eg: seeds, planting tools etc. To ease the pressure of this the practitioner applied for the climate emergency fund from South Lanarkshire council; this assisted her in purchasing plentiful resources for the children to use throughout the project and beyond. This also meant that we can further extend this type of learning now the project has ended.

### Policy

As the practitioner had planned to use real tools within this project, we ensured that health and safety policies were adhered to and risk assessments were updated in relation to this.

The practitioner also consulted with parents of the key group children to ensure they were aware of the tools the children would use and the policies, risk assessments and safety measures in place.

### Sector

Sharing good practice is very effective for the continuous improvement of early years' settings; The practitioner is very keen to share this research and to support other settings who also have a passion for taking this type of learning and development forward. However, in relation to this there are implications for other settings in the sector; Other settings may not have the outdoor space required to create opportunities for this type of learning and it is possible that other settings may also not have Froebelian trained staff who would have the knowledge, skills and practice to support this type of pedagogy.

**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? (100 word approx.)**

Practitioner research is extremely valuable for positive improvement of an early years' setting; I believe that "bottom up initiative, top down support" (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2005) is the best approach to this for effective and sustainable outcomes. To give practitioners who work daily within the playrooms the responsibility for research implementation with support and guidance from management means they will be more invested in the project and more likely to independently extend this further throughout the setting.

From analysing the in-depth research done by this practitioner and being able to see the positive outcomes from it I feel that more practitioner research within our setting would be extremely beneficial for children, families, staff and the whole setting improvement agenda.

For this to be successful more practitioners within the setting would need to partake in the Froebel in childhood practice course.

It would also be very beneficial for practitioners from different establishments to link with each other as mentors to share good knowledge and practice and be an impartial critical friend.

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

As a leader I have learned that giving the practitioner the autonomy to plan and implement this project with my guidance has been more beneficial for the setting than it would have been if I had led the research.

As a leader I use a mix of different leadership styles and can adapt these to suit the situation or person/people I am working with however from observing the practitioner's style of 'Authoritative leadership' (Goleman 2002) I was able to identify that this style of leadership was very effective when leading a project as a clear vision was set along with achievable targets at different points in the project. I have learned that when taking forward a project of this calibre that an authoritative approach would result in the best outcomes.

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