



# Froebelian Futures

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## Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

# Leadership opportunities & reflections

### Project title

Slow pedagogical approaches through children's documentation

### Subtitle (if applicable)

### Your name and role

Chelsey McClurg  
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 research within this practitioner inquiry course came at the most opportune time for our centre as we were continuing our ongoing improvement work around embedding Froebelian Principled Practice.

This research enabled us to continue to develop our Froebelian culture in a realistic and natural way and gave a real opportunity for inclusion and citizenship. This project enhanced our Froebelian thinking and Froebelian pedagogy. As a large setting, we had 20% of the workforce who were Froebelian certified through the Froebel in childhood practice course. We envisioned through our improvement processes, that we would increase and deepen other practitioner knowledge and understanding of Froebelian principles. This practitioner inquiry enabled the lead practitioner to use the work within the focus groups to build on practitioner understanding and support our child-centred pedagogy. This enabled rich exchanges of dialogue between practitioners which supported the growing recognition of children's rights and their autonomy.

As a centre, there has always been a strong focus on leadership at all levels. However, this inquiry enabled the researcher to be an active learner and participate in project, who was learning alongside myself, their colleagues, and the children. This project enabled autonomy not only for children but practitioners and was underpinned by ideology of children leading their own learning, reflecting on their own learning and being authors of their learning.

The project enabled our whole team and setting to reflect on their time and being in the moment with children and how important that is. It enabled practitioners to see the positive impact of being slow in our documentation processes with children and how valuable it is to children for them to be the leader within that. The researcher was able to upskill the other practitioners within the team and challenge the narrative of "their planning". Through practitioner research and rich dialogue, we acknowledged that planning and documentation of their learning, was in fact theirs. The learning and documentation was about them and they had the right to their autonomy to lead the documentation process and revisit what they had learned.

The findings of this research project have shaped our self-evaluation conversations around our curriculum planning, our learning teaching and assessment processes and securing children's progress. We continue to reflect on our curriculum rational and policy for the centre and challenge what autonomy looks like within our Froebelian setting.

Our early learning and childcare sector within our authority continue to engage in Froebelian courses and literature to enact transformational change for children. We have a strong network of Froebelian trained practitioners and I would like our local authority to continue to showcase and celebrate Froebelian practitioners work around projects that have led. There is opportunity within our sector to continue to enrich and grow our current Froebelian family. My immediate plan moving forward would be to continue to build on childrens autonomy but also to empower other practitioners to engage in future Childhood practice courses and inquiry courses.

**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.)**

I believe that the most successful settings are the ones who choose to invest in practitioner and professional inquiry. This enables a service to be a reflective one, who focuses on the value and capacity of its practitioners, who continue to strive for improvement to support best outcomes for children.

Being a leader on this project has enabled me to see the value and impact that the practitioner has placed on children's rights and the impact the project has already had within the setting. The practitioner demonstrated her unwavering belief of Froebelian principles, and it refocused the settings thinking in terms of living and embodying the principles within practice.

Moving forward, I believe more inquiry can be undertaken in relation to children's autonomy within documentation to continue to enhance the service we provide for children. As a service I would continue to support more practitioners to undertake this practitioner inquiry course in the coming sessions. I would also welcome our authority Froebelian network to showcase locally the projects that were undertaken to share others successes and learning.

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

Being the supportive leader on this Practitioner Inquiry course, I have learned how impactful it is to embody and lead with relational pedagogy and relational leadership. I have learned that as a fellow Froebelian we are continually learning, continually connecting our research and views, and continually connecting with one another to enact transformational ideas and projects.

This programme has enabled me to enrich the experiences of children within the ELC Centre by supporting the practitioner in her chosen project to challenge the thinking and conversation about children's autonomy and their right to not only lead their own learning, but being an author of their learning and leading the documentation process. I have learned how to support and guide the practitioner within her methodology and research. In reflection I have identified I should have been more time sensitive and built in more scheduled and protected time with the practitioner

Through this Practitioner Inquiry I have learned that sustainability is key and time cannot be placed on the projects "end". Our research and reflection on curriculum development and documentation with children will continue beyond this course, which will enable continued reflective research around children's rights and their continued autonomy.

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