



# Froebelian Futures

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## Practitioner Inquiry Project report template

### For current students

Use this template to write up your project report, before copying/pasting your responses into the matching fields on the New Project Form. You will find this by clicking the "Add New Project" button, visible on your profile page once you have logged in to the website here: <https://www.froebel.ed.ac.uk/login/> Publication here is required before you can be certificated for your participation in the programme.

### Project title

8 words maximum

### Subtitle (if applicable)

### Project summary (for website search results) (30 words maximum)

Briefly describe the topic or key issue(s) your project was looking at

Example: An observational study of whether 3 and 4 year olds of different genders favour similar or different schemas in their block play.

## **Introduction** (100 words approx)

Summarise the key focus of your project and the main issues you cover. Why do they matter? Please do NOT repeat detailed information here which should come later (e.g. your findings or methodology)

Example: This project looks at ABC... It takes into account XYZ factors / principle literature or policies. This enquiry matters because... My purpose in undertaking this work was to learn...

This project was aimed at all children and families that use the setting with the aim to seek the views on the opportunities provided within the nursery to support singing in early years. With Froebel placing such emphasis on the importance of singing to develop literacy skills and strengthen relationships between children and adults I wanted to find out what musical opportunities the children experienced at nursery, home and within the wider community. I looked at what impact our role as practitioners has and how I can add depth to our provision, whilst supporting our Froebelian values of unity and connectedness and by placing children and families at the centre of all we do.

## Context

What was the situation of your setting, practice or research subject when you **started** this project, in relation to the question you were exploring? This might point towards demographics, pedagogy, policy, a case study, day-to-day experiences or other key contexts. Please also reflect briefly on your own “positionality” (positive or other biases) in relation to your research subject. (200 words max)

As a setting we provide musical experiences daily with all staff singing with the children throughout the session to support and enhance their learning. The setting provided access to musical experiences through outside professionals such as Gaelic tutors and YMI, however this is done sporadically throughout the year in the 3-5 room and not available to all age groups or to families. As part of my role and the ethos of our settings inclusive approach I was keen to develop the experiences we provide, making singing accessible to all and part of our continuous provision.

As a Froebelian setting I felt it was extremely important that families are part of our journey and as family engagement is part of our improvement plan. We needed to provide opportunities to work with our families and share our knowledge and skills in a creative way that does not provide barriers to learning whilst providing children with access to knowledgeable, nurturing educators. This also gave me the opportunity to investigate what musical experiences children shared with their families at home and in the wider community.

## Methodology

What unique things did you have to consider, and what choices did you make, about **the methods** you would use to carry out your project (150 words approx)

As I embarked on this project, I was aware that this needed to reflect the views of all that used the service, with this in mind I felt that using questionnaires provided children, parents and staff a medium to express their views in an unobtrusive way with the option of non-participation if expressed.

To support participants, I engaged in conversations to explain my reasons for seeking this information and to answer any questions they may have and to explain alternate approaches to completing the questionnaire such as support to fill it in or translation if necessary.

With regards to gaining the views of the children I felt that using a mind map in small group situations allowed the children to engage in conversations with both adults and peers creating a more natural, relaxed approach to express their views before transferring this to a questionnaire format that I could later seek the appropriate permissions for.

## Ethics (150 words approx)

Briefly describe any ethical issues you had to consider before or during your research, in terms of protecting children or adult participants. What were the different sides of the issues (if applicable) and how you adapted your project to take account of them. Did these ethical considerations influence your work or practice in any positive ways?

As my project was based on a questionnaire format, I felt that I could easily gain consent from all participants by attaching the appropriate permissions. In the case of children, I explained to the child that they were helping me to learn more about what they liked and then any information given was then transferred to a questionnaire and shown to the parent or guardian for overall consent.

I did not feel that I would encounter any issues as I explained to every participant that this was a voluntary exercise, and they could withdraw consent at any time or choose not to complete the questionnaire and that the information that they provided would only be used to support the development of this project.

In the case of child protection issues all parents, carers and staff are aware of the protocol that we follow as part of Falkirk Council's Child Protection Procedures.

## Findings (400 words approx)

What did you learn? What did you observe first-hand (if applicable)? What did this reveal, or what new questions does it raise?

Throughout the course of this project, I have had the opportunity to reflect critically on my own practice as well as the experiences that we provide as a service.

The information I have gained has not been surprising to me as I knew that the vast majority of parents were aware of what experiences we provided through their observation at collection times or with the information their children shared with them about their day. However as expected many parents would love to be involved in any music or singing experiences although with the constraints of working hours this is not always feasible, leading me to the conclusion that a more creative style of delivering these opportunities would be best suited to our families.

“Practitioners should continually reflect on their practice and be aware of the importance of music, song and rhyme and how these are offered to each baby and child in their setting.”  
(Bruce, Early Childhood Practice p93)

Through discussions with the children, it became apparent to them that the singing offered to them was impactful on their learning as the children could tell me what their favourite songs were and they could also explain when they would sing them at home, showing me that they could use memory recall and transfer their knowledge.

“I sing Uncle John in the bath”

As most parents told me that they would be happy to see more singing at nursery the question of if they accessed any musical experiences out with the setting was that almost no children did. A small amount had previously attended local events, however this had stopped due to children now attending nursery, in turn reiterating my initial thought that are we providing inclusive opportunities for children and families to experience singing together?

My findings regarding staff were also as expected, with most staff feeling that we provide sufficient experiences. However, they would like this to happen more often, both indoors and out being mindful not to interrupt children’s play. Supporting Froebel’s principle of the importance of play, they also felt that the introduction of more visuals would be beneficial for all children and would be particularly supportive for non-verbal children or where English is a second language.

## Conclusion/coda (100-150 words approx)

In a nutshell, what was the overall lesson? What might you do next?

This project allowed me to look subjectively at our setting's provision and the impact that our musical experiences have on the nursery as a whole.

This project supported my initial feeling that we could provide a more inclusive approach to singing with our children and families. The evidence provided me with the data to justify my vision to further develop our skills and to extend this to make it accessible to all children and families within the setting and beyond. We aim to engage with local community groups and develop relationships where we could visit these venues with our children and families and share our skills and knowledge, thus helping to support any transitions between these clients and the nursery.

It also provided me with the knowledge that the majority of children, families and staff are keen to see a more flexible approach to singing and that they all share my passion for singing with young children and the impact it has on their learning.

**Add one standout quote** that captures the essence of your experience/project (optional, 50 words max). This could be from relevant literature or an anonymised participant.

"Today the most urgent need in education is that the school should be united with the life of home and family" (Froebel in Lilley 1967:156)

We would like to include an image with your report when you come to publish it. Please attach this to the online form when you submit. You should secure permission from anyone featured in the image, and any images of children should be obscured/taken from behind, so that they are not identifiable. Alternatively you may choose to photograph objects, or choose a free image from [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

## - CONSENT OF PARTICIPANTS -

Have you secured all necessary consents, and anonymised all data, relating to participants and settings in your responses above, including for any photograph submitted with this report?

Yes

Your name	Caroline Burke
Setting / location	Inchlair ELCC
Your local authority	Falkirk Council
Date submitted / revised	22/2/24