



Froebelian Futures

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Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

Leadership opportunities & reflections

Project title

Developing Froebelian Principles within the staff team

Subtitle (if applicable)

How successfully have Froebelian trained staff embedded Froebelian Principles within our setting?

Your name and role

Karen Sweeney – Principal Early Learning and Childcare officer

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).

I am one of the staff members who has completed Froebelian in Childhood practice award, along with 3 others of my Senior Leadership Team and 1 of my Practitioners, at the start of this project I thought that although several staff have completed formal Froebelian training that the impact would be minimal, this is due to varying staff changes, environmental changes and Covid, as many of them completed the course in 2020, however I began this project with an open mind and no preconceived outcomes.

The implications of this research project for the staff team has been positive, staff were initially reluctant to participate with the research questions, however with clear communication, conversations began, firstly within a large group detailing the project, resulting in smaller group conversations and 9 staff participated in the project, This has reminded me of the importance of open, clear and concise communication. One principle that is evident in our practice is that 'Relationships matter' and as a team we all agreed on this, this is apparent in all that we do.

Through observations, I began to hear some staff reflect on their own pedagogy and how much they are influenced by the Principles, or if they had no knowledge they began reflecting on how the Principles could benefit their practice and the general ethos of the setting. This is becoming more evident in the professional dialogue between practitioners during collegiate meetings, especial planning and self-evaluation meetings.

Some of the team are more knowledgeable when planning resources for areas, taking account of the principles and how they can offer the best learning experiences for the children, especially when it comes to risky play, some staff are risk adverse and always think of 'what could go wrong' instead of seeing risk as a learning opportunity. Some staff are more confident at discussing the principles and how they influence their day to day practice. This was evident within the block play area, some of the team reflected on how the block play area is used, how accessible the resources were and how the children used the area, this led to many changes, consulting children along the way. Observations show the improved use of the area and learning opportunities.

My observations from this project, reflecting on the principles I am aware that some staff, due to their own personal preferences, deter the opportunities of children as 'Autonomous learners', 'Creativity' and 'valuing childhood in its own right'. As a result of this I plan to review our Play policy and outdoor Policy, including the benefits of risky play. I hope to give staff the opportunity to visit other establishments within our authority to observe/discuss how other centres embed Froebelian principles.

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.)

Being part of this project has shown me the importance of practitioner enquiry and the benefits for staff to further their own knowledge and skills. This type of research supports staff development, encouraging staff to be critical thinkers, deepen their thinking, support team working and continuously reflecting on the service we provide, improving the ethos of the centre, developing leadership skills and sharing a pedagogical understanding of the importance of the early years.

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

Through this research project I have learnt that communication and time is key to implementing any change. Staff need the time to discuss the changes, time to process the change and opportunity to reflect why change is necessary, especially within early years.

For me personally, I have learnt that I need to manage my time better and ensure that I have protected time when carrying out any training, as trying to complete a work place project whilst leading a busy centre and team has its challenges. I have also learnt that Froebelian principles influence my practice more than I thought.

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.