

Early Education

The British Association for Early Childhood Education

in partnership with:



Alfreton Nursery School
Teaching School Alliance
'Growing together'



Early Years Teaching Newsletter November 2018

The days are drawing in, so find some cheer in this month's news, celebrating all things wonderful in early years pedagogy. I have been encouraged this month by meeting so many committed passionate early childhood educators and leaders who want to grow, learn and share. So, let us keep talking, sharing and celebrating all the good that is out there in what we do.

Autumn Conference

On Saturday 10th November, Early Education held its AGM and autumn conference. This month's issue focuses on the keynote from Rod Parker-Rees.

Knowing a child, as opposed to knowing about children

Rod Parker-Rees shared about [Playing in about life experiences](#) (his presentation is on this link). He made a distinction for us about the difference between KNOWING ABOUT children and KNOWING a child. He affirmed us as practitioners who know so much about what is important about each and every child we work with. Rod spoke about a "WITHNESS" that we get from spending time with a child and being with a child for a year in teaching.

This concept of withness is written about by John Shotter, a professor in psychology and communication. Here is an article he wrote [On being dialogical: an ethics of attunement](#)

I think it is fascinating to read from a psychological perspective about that which we know and do but perhaps without using such terms. Yet dialogue, attunement and

the concept of witness and otherness is key to our key person relationships and as practitioners and teachers with young children with whom we work.

Play helps us bring the wider world into our settings for young children.

Rod Parker-Rees talked about how there is a tendency for us to think we need to KNOW everything when teaching 5-year olds. We should feel reassured that we do not need to know everything - what we do need to know is **what 5-year-old children NEED: they need play!** Rod explained how when we value and promote play, it can tell us so much that we need to know. Play is the vital tool which is so valuable for learning so much.

A good list of the types of play Rod referred to, and further reading can be found on [Reflective teaching's website page: types of play](#) and Play Scotland have pages dedicated to [play types](#) and a [Play types toolkit](#) which I would recommend you look up.

Playing well

[The Play well report](#) from Lego is an enjoyable, powerful and readable report which affirms what we believe about play and learning.

[PEDAL, the Centre for research on play in education, development and learning](#), (also featured in last month's news) recommended this Australian website on Twitter: [Raising children](#) has sections about play and learning for babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and school age children.

Supporting children and positive behaviour

There is great debate about methods used to support positive behaviour, and the place of rewards and sanctions. [Tear down your behaviour chart](#) by Lee Ann Jung and Dominique Smith provides an interesting perspective on this area.

Other perspectives in blogs and articles include [Death to the behaviour chart! 3 reasons to resist the lure of punishments and rewards](#) and [Goodbye clip charts, marble jars and stickers for behaviour](#). It is worth reflecting on the content of these articles and thinking about how you support behaviour in your setting, in the light of reflecting about rewards, sanctions, shame and self-esteem in young children.

Peter Elfer, one of our Early Education Vice-Presidents, recommends these helpful leaflets on twitter, from [Understanding childhood](#) about a range of early childhood situations that could be useful to parents and practitioners alike.

We think everywhere

This is an innovative and exciting project by UK and Swedish settings and Debi Keyte-Hartland (an Early Education associate) about digital languages and creative pedagogies.

[We think everywhere](#) is a great resource to enhance and develop your pedagogy. There is a wealth of free information, with links to research and posts on many aspects of early years pedagogy using technology including for example, photography and light boxes.

As Debi says, "It's all about thinking creatively with digital media to express children's ideas about the world of nature." You can watch their videos on their [Project materials](#) page.

Teaching news feedback

A great idea that came from the AGM was about using this newsletter to share pedagogical pointers that you could use with your teams. (Thank you, Julie Cigman and other associate colleagues, for your feedback).

Pedagogical pointers for reflection and dialogue

You could use the following in a staff meeting, self-evaluation exercise or in team meetings. Ideally, use it as an opportunity for evaluation and reflection. Start with an understanding about how you will treat each other respectfully in the dialogue, share ideas and viewpoints, and take time to explore and find out about dilemmas that might arise. Do let us know how you get on.

PP 1: How do you listen to children and respond to what they say?

Possible questions to reflect upon

- In what ways do you actively LISTEN to children and really show interest in what they have to say?
- Reflect on the amount of time you give to each child to speak and share their opinions, and how long you wait (and pause) to listen to a child's thoughts or reply.
- How do you demonstrate that you value what children think and have to say?
- In what ways do you consult with them about their day and seek their thoughts and opinions?
- Think about the value and priority during the day / week / term you place on hearing children's thoughts and opinions.
- How do we listen to children who might not use speech, or might not be confident to speak? What other ways can we hear their views?

Useful links to support your dialogue

- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) give clarity on what we are committed to. Articles 3, 5, 12, 13, 23, 29, 39 focus on this aspect and particularly articles 12 and 13

article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

article 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions

- [Children and young people's commissioner Scotland UN CRC in other languages](#)
- [CYPSC simplified list for children](#)
- [UNICEF child friendly resources](#)
- [Talking point](#) (I CAN) website
- Research paper for deeper thinking: Clark, A., McQuail, S. and Moss, P., (2003) *Exploring the field of listening to and consulting with young children*. Department for Education and Skills Research report no. 445.

If you found this section useful and came up with some great practice examples, why not share them with us? You can email me at cathy@early-education.org.uk and we can share with our readership.

Leadership perspectives: work-life integration

[The imperfect balance between work and life](#) article by Rosabeth Moss Kanter offers a great perspective on the work-life balance debate, calling it "work-life integration" and suggesting that we can have this as long as

we do not strive for it to be perfect. She concludes

“A cultural shift to get out of the perfection trap can also free up time to work on the bigger changes needed to bring work and life into better alignment.”

More on loose parts

Following on from last month, if you are developing your loose parts collections, or you are inspired to start, this article will support your work: [One man's trash: how using everyday items for play benefits kids](#) in The Conversation is about the value of loose parts in play and learning.

Celebrating success

I like to hear about your successes and news that we can share with others.

It is good news to hear that Kingswood Nursery School in Watford has been featured in their [local press about their partnership project](#) with a local elderly persons' activity group.

I wish you all a good month ahead.

All the best, Cathy Gunning

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Follow Cathy on Twitter [@earlyed_cathy](#)

This newsletter is designed to be read on screen so you can click through to the links (underlined in the text).

Don't forget we also upload lots of it into our member's pedagogic pages so that you can look it up there at a later date if you don't have time to read it all now.

We welcome your feedback on the content and design of this newsletter. Please email cathy@early-education.org.uk

This newsletter was produced by Early Education, in association with the following Early Years Teaching Schools:

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