

Welcome to our autumn newsletter!

We have had another busy few months at the Froebel Trust, and in this edition we would like to share some of the work that we have been doing. We have updates from Australia and India as well as news from the work we are doing closer to home.

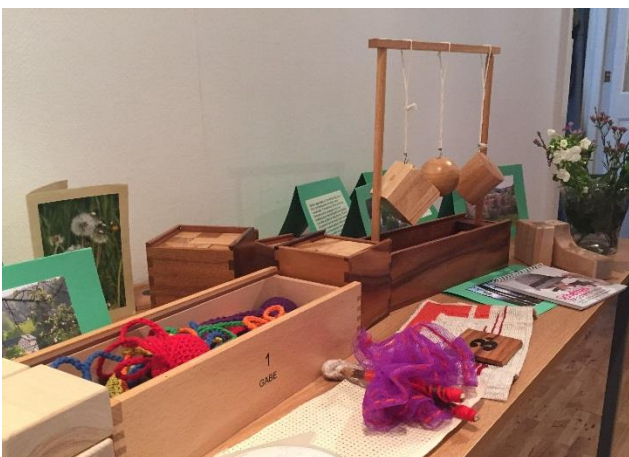
Froebel Short Courses

Our work involves looking for new ways to promote Froebelian principles, and we are excited about the Froebel Short Courses being delivered via our partners Early Education.

On behalf on the Froebel Trust, Early Education is providing a unique modular Froebel Course that is delivered around England by experienced peripatetic Froebelian trainers. The aim of the course is to increase Froebelian knowledge, heighten commitment to Froebelian ideas and change the way practitioners work with children.

We ran our first course last month, and we are delighted with the response from the attendees,

“Thank you so much for the training session on Saturday. We have received fantastic feedback from all practitioners and managers involved and it was truly inspirational. Your passion and knowledge of the subject matter shone throughout”



If you would like more information on these courses, please visit our website.

On Country Learning

We have recently received a mid-term report from a research project that we fund in Western Australia, 'On Country Learning'. The project sets out to explore the impact of on country learning for Aboriginal children living in a remote region of Australia. The report from Libby Lee-Hammond and Elizabeth Jackson-Barrett from Murdoch University, gives a real sense of the valuable work that we are supporting.

The researchers are working with a 'Traditional Owner' who has knowledge of sites of cultural significance in the area, and he has chosen sites for the children to visit.

His first stop with the children was 'the scar tree' where the first Aboriginal man in this area cut a shield from the external bark. The children touched the tree and listened carefully.



Aboriginal scar tree from removal of bark for a shield

At the next place on the ground lay a vast array of geometrically shaped rocks, 'the children began to spontaneously search for interesting shapes and began building structures with flat rocks of formations of largest to smallest towers. All the children were totally focussed and engaged. We counted the stacked towers of rocks, we talked about the shapes and sizes and what the patterns in the rocks reminded us of. I was struck with the relationship between what was

unfolding here and Froebel's gifts. The children were creating forms of knowledge, forms of life and forms of beauty before our eyes using the landscape for their representations. These were gifts of country'.



The traditional owner talked about particular children in the group and their specific connection to this place. He explained how one child has responsibility for this country. How two of the boys have a long line of ancestors from this place and this means they will carry responsibility for this knowledge he is sharing. He encouraged the children to choose rocks they could paint and take home. Emphasising the connection to country, this reminder of where they felt connected and engaged and had a sense of deep belonging to take home.

A summary of all the grants that we are currently funding can be found on our website.

Research Grants 2017

We are pleased to have awarded 4 research grants from a number of excellent applications which we received earlier this year. The successful applicants were announced in October.

Grants have been awarded to the following projects:

- A community of minds: pedagogies of care for infants and toddlers based in ECEC settings in four cultures (USA, New Zealand, PRC Hong Kong and England)
Dr Sacha Powell – Canterbury Christ Church University
- Telling Life Stories: developing a Froebelian approach to documenting children's experiences
Dr Lynn McNair – Cowgate Under 5's Centre

- The voices and experiences of children with autism, and their families, in their transitions from nursery to primary school.
Professor Sarah Parsons – University of Southampton
- Understanding practitioners curriculum decision-making to support complexity in children's play in a multi-diverse pre-school setting
Dr Liz Chesworth – University of Sheffield

Congratulations to all the successful applicants and thank you to everyone who applied.

PhD Grants 2017

The closing date for PhD grants was 15th September and the standard of applicants was exceptionally high. Six applications have been sent to scrutiny which will be followed by an interview panel on 14th November. The final decision will be posted on our website in December.

Family Lives

We are pleased to announce a new innovation grant that we have awarded to Family Lives, a charity which supports parents and families.

The project will fund the development of short, accessible videos to support 'mother songs' which will help parents learn and understand the benefits of music and songs to help bond with their children.

The project draws on the Froebelian principle of focussing on development in the early years and the benefits of parents singing with their child to improve relationships within families.

The project will start in the New Year, and we will post a link to the videos once they have been developed.

Edinburgh Conference 7th October 2017

The annual Edinburgh Conference organised by the Edinburgh Froebel Network, with funding from The Froebel Trust, took place on 7th October with over 300 delegates attending!

'Interesting, uplifting, inspired and a great learning opportunity' were just a few of the comments from delegates who attended.



Thank you to all the speakers and organisers for a fantastic conference. We will post a full summary from the conference on our website early next year.

Kolkata Project India

As well as funding international research, we also fund projects overseas. In 2012 a team of Froebel Travelling Tutors led by Sara Holroyd and funded by the Froebel Trust began working with the Parivar charity in Kolkata.

Parivar offers a daily 3 hour session to street children aged 2-16 years in 8 centres sited within police compounds throughout the city. These children live in very poor circumstances and are unable to attend regular school.

From 2012-2016 the team visited twice a year, supporting the largely untrained teachers by demonstrating Froebel's gifts. The Travelling Tutor team successfully promoted a day to day Froebelian approach to play and active learning which is having a positive impact on both children and staff.

In 2016 the Froebel Trust began to move towards finding a way of supporting the Parivar teachers from within Kolkata by training local teachers. To this end, in January 2017 a new team of Froebel Travelling Tutors led by Felicity Thomas, with Thelma Miller and Asim Dutta visited Kolkata to work with a local school who understand the importance of Froebelian principles to undertake this role.

On their latest visit in September 2017, the team heard from the Parivar teachers about the impact of the project:

"Froebel has brought a new concept into teaching about using the all the senses. The children are taking more interest in learning as their senses are engaged."

"The children are now keen to learn and show their own interests. They come to school planning what they are going to do."

"Initially only a few children from the street came to this setting. Sara's training and the Froebel resources has made the school change. Community started talking about it and numbers have increased. Older children go to school. They have learnt their shapes but by playing with the blocks they retain and deepen their understanding".

A 7 year old boy who was socially excluded and not talking, "watched the other children and wanted to eventually join in. He is engaging well and accepted and is excelling, doing better than the others. He was not made to join in, he was allowed to take his own time."

Thank you to all the trainers and volunteers who have made a real difference to both the children and staff involved in the project.

Pamphlet project

We are nearly ready to launch our pamphlet project, which will be a series of online pamphlets focussing on various themes closely associated with Froebelian practice today. The pamphlets can be used as an online resource for practitioners and anyone working with young children and will be available to download from our website within the next few weeks.

If you would like more information about any of the above projects or about the work that we do, please visit our website: www.froebeltrust.org.uk.

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