



Froebel Trust Podcast Transcript : Episode 15 December 2024

00:00:00:00 - 00:00:36:14

Colin

Welcome to episode 15 of the Froebel Trust podcast. If you're new to this series, Friedrich Froebel was a pioneer of early childhood education in the 1800s. He invented the term kindergarten, and his legacy continues to inspire new generations of early childhood educators. Well, my name is Colin Kelly, and in this episode, my guests and I will be exploring how the principles of a Froebelian education relate to leadership.

00:00:36:16 - 00:01:00:05

Colin

Well, we know there are great leaders working in early years settings, and many end up in managerial positions by accident. They face a number of complex challenges. How can we support today's leaders and encourage staff to step into leadership roles? And in this episode I've got an excellent panel of guests. You'll hear from Simon Bateson, Early Years Officer at Cowgate Under-fives in Edinburgh.

00:01:00:07 - 00:01:27:21

Colin

He was also co-director of Froebelian Futures, a three year research project funded by the Froebel Trust. And they produced a short film about Froebelian leadership. You'll find a link to that in the podcast description. I'm also joined by Kayla Halls, a research fellow at Middlesex University. And Kayla worked alongside Dr Mona Sakr on a Froebel Trust funded research project 'Exploring Froebelian Principles In Early Years Leadership'.

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Colin

And we also have Sam Jones headteacher at Tremorfa Nursery School in Cardiff, Wales. And Sam, I'm going to start with you since you've got a leadership role in your job title. But when we talk about leadership in a Froebelian setting, is it about more than just obviously the most senior person?

00:01:46:17 - 00:02:21:08

Sam

Absolutely. I think, and in early years particularly leadership cannot just be with one person. It can't be assigned to a job title. As you say, leadership has to be throughout everything you do. And that's not just in terms of, for me, within my setting. That's not just in terms of the adults, that's around kind of parents and the community and the children as well, and developing leadership amongst everybody and giving everybody that confidence and skills to be able to lead in their own way, in ways that suits them.

00:02:21:08 - 00:02:36:21

Sam

That's meaningful to them. So although my job title is the Head Teacher, I am ultimately the senior leader of the whole school. Leadership is spread throughout every single person, not just myself or my senior leadership team.

00:02:37:00 - 00:02:55:18

Colin

Do you have to work hard, Sam, to cultivate that culture? Do you have to keep telling them, 'look, it's not just me. I want you to be involved and step up,' Is it about giving other people promoted posts? How do you get them stepping into to leadership, even although it might not be in the job title?

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Sam

I suppose within my setting, everybody is very, very experienced early years leaders within their own right. And I suppose from my perspective, one of the main things that I can do as a leader is give over that ownership to them. So everybody knows that they can take a lead. And it's not... they don't have to come to me to say, 'can I lead on this?'

00:03:19:17 - 00:03:45:10

Sam

Can I do that?' It's about that shared understanding of, you know, if we want children to lead their learning, we need to be modelling that ourselves. We need to be facilitating that within ourselves and each other and supporting and developing that culture of give it a go attitude. Let's all take a lead in this. Let's all work on this collaboratively, and see what we can do, see what we can come up with.

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Colin

And, Kayla, from your research and the people that you've been speaking to throughout the sector, are there certain principles of Froebelian leadership that maybe make it distinct as a style of leadership to other parts of our society?

00:04:02:04 - 00:04:27:02

Kayla

Absolutely. I think one of the biggest principles coming out of this research we did was that Froebelian leadership is all about community. So kind of like Sam was saying just now, it's not just about the person with the title leading. It's about a sense of leadership across everyone the children, the staff, the community itself that you're based in, and bringing everyone along on that leadership journey with you.

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Kayla

And I think as well, when we're saying community, it's also community for the leaders. So I think the Froebelian community is so warm and inviting, and I think that the principles that Froebelian leaders really embody, it really is about gathering people in. Supporting people to grow in their leadership, offering support to each other, offering strength in the midst of a bit of a challenging sector at the moment.

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Colin

So let's bring in Simon Bateson. Simon I know that you've been involved in the Froebelian Futures project. You've been looking at training and research programs. How do we develop good leaders?

00:05:08:01 - 00:05:34:04

Simon

Building on what Kayla is saying, a community is essential. And what kind of spirit of community, what kind of culture of community are we cultivating on a day-to-day basis? Leadership is a lifelong kind of journey of of discovery, I think. And and I think Froebel knew that. It begins as he observed in our earliest days as infants and carries on, right through to the end.

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Simon

I think there are enormous challenges in our sector, to doing that. We are incredibly lucky to work with amazing colleagues, families and children who are birthing community every day that we go into work. But also the realities of kind of economic constraints of time constraints that make wise decision making often really difficult. So space and time, I think, are two of the magic gold dust ingredients that we have to seek out wherever we can in our own leadership, in our own settings.

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Simon

Find, the space and time to, as Froebel showed us over and over again, slow down, listen deeply. Look so closely at what children are showing us through their conversations, through their play, through their bodies, at what colleagues are showing us through their conversations, through their bodies, through how they're showing up at work and, really attune into that and build our organisations around it.

00:06:46:04 - 00:07:00:08

Colin

Yeah. And Kayla, maybe you could tell us a little bit about, I suppose, the positive impact, the difference that good leadership, that good community, what kind of a positive difference can that make?

00:07:00:10 - 00:07:24:03

Kayla

So leadership is the heart of any setting and the heart of any community. And so, you know, some of the research that we've done that really shows that leadership is really important for that day to day process quality, in a setting as well as children's outcomes. And so I guess the the simple way to say it would be leaders set the tone and then that cascades throughout the setting.

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Kayla

I see Sam nodding as well.

00:07:25:19 - 00:07:43:17

Sam

I was just going to add absolutely, leadership sets the tone. I quite often use the analogy of driving the bus. Somebody needs to drive the bus. Everybody needs to be on that bus, and everybody needs to have a role on that bus and have that shared vision and value role heading in the same direction.

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Colin

You know, when someone says leaders or leadership to me, I immediately think about responsibility. So you take on leadership, you're also taking on responsibility. Does that responsibility sometimes get in the way, Sam? Does it maybe compromise, you know, the kind of leader that you thought you would be and the things you thought you'd be doing? And now you've got all this responsibility and policies and paperwork to look at.

00:08:08:04 - 00:08:42:16

Sam

There's certain things that comes with the job in terms of my accountability. There are certain things that takes me away from being with the children and being with the staff and being that role model in terms of leadership that, you know, it has its challenges and particularly around time constraints. A lot of my time is being pulled in those kind of directions, but for me, it's about making sure that I'm managing that in a positive way and making sure that that doesn't take me away from what I believe is the important part of just being present.

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Sam

And for me, having a team around me that are equally as passionate and equally able to lead allows me to have that freedom to be able to go and do those, kind of more accountability, kind of things, such as policies and things you were talking about.

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Colin

And Sam, in terms of managing that and still being able to be, I suppose what we hear a lot is 'true to the values, true to the principles.' So to take on that responsibility, some of that burden, but still do the best that you want to... how important is the right sort of training and support in terms of that?

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Sam

It's vital for me, one of the things I'll always say to anybody who wants to come and visit or wants to have a conversation with me around early years, is your most valuable asset, is always your staff. You can have a lovely environment and you can be providing many lovely experiences. But if you haven't got knowledgeable and passionate members of staff, then you really can come unstuck quite quickly.

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Sam

So for me, that is where all of my time and effort really needs to be set. That's kind of the direction I need to be going in. And it is, you know, has its challenges. Of course it does. You need to maintain in that level of accountability and your staff as well, and making sure that everybody is providing the same quality and knowledge and passion.

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Sam

I think a lot of it comes down to passion. You have to have very, very passionate members of staff within your team.

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Colin

And Simon, just on that, that role of the training and support for our leaders. And Sam's talking about keeping that passion. It's hard to do that when the sector's going through challenges and quite a bit of upheaval. So how do we make sure that our leaders are properly supported?

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Simon

So the leadership training that we ran at the University of Edinburgh was really trying to bring leaders at every level of, of early years organisations and in policy back to those kind of first steps, those first principles of for Froebelian practice, and values looking at Froebel's model and also the challenges that he faced and experienced and what he taught us. The emphasis for us

00:10:52:21 - 00:11:21:11

Simon

And I think we need more and more emphasis on this across the board, has to be around, if those are the values and principles we seek for full, well-rounded learning, growing children. How do we bring them into our organisations as a whole? How do we bring play into our organisations as a whole? How does a leader like Sam enable her staff to take risks and to make mistakes, and to trust that they will learn from those?

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Simon

We're in a sector which places a very high value on protection, understandably, but consequently a too high value, I would argue on risk aversion.

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Colin

I can see Sam nodding along to that Simon. And you know, you said things like risk and making mistakes. And I'm wondering, Sam, how does that change when maybe you're thinking about inspections and reports?

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Sam

I try not to think too much about inspections. And I'm really, really keen on, making sure that nobody's doing anything for inspections or for reports. You know, we need to be doing what we know is right, not for accountability for anybody else. So that's really kind of a fundamental part of what's within me in terms of my leadership.

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Sam

One thing we really passionate about doing with my school, and we've been working really hard, to achieve, is quite often people are coming out into the world of work without the adequate training or the wrong type of training, or qualifications. And lots of the qualifications in Wales at the moment really don't have much around child development and I just think that is absolutely awful.

00:12:34:11 - 00:13:09:02

Sam

How can we have people leave, whether it's a teaching, qualification or a support staff type qualification where they have very little training and knowledge of child development? So one of the things we've been working on is developing some structures and some support to go out into

universities and to colleges and providing that training and support ourselves. Because something we find a lot in nursery is when we have maybe a teaching prac student or maybe an early years student coming in

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Sam

They have very little knowledge, and that's kind of where we start with them. It's vital that they have that knowledge and training. So we spend a lot of time supporting them around developing their understanding of child development. I think there's this misconception that child development is only important when we're talking about under five year olds, and it's not.

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Sam

Child development is equally as important to know and understand for 13, 14 year olds as it is for three and four year olds. It's learning, and there's so few teachers and support staff and educators out there that have a thorough knowledge of child development.

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Colin

That's fascinating that you're being so proactive like that. In your answer there, you talked about, you know, 'we try and make sure that our staff, they don't do anything just to tick a box or just for the inspection.' And Kayla, one of the things that came through in your research report, which was funded by the Froebel Trust, I think it was called 'Exploring Froebelian Principles In Early Years Education'

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Colin

One of the principles I think was 'challenging convention' - that's quite interesting, isn't it? That I suppose you might you might sometimes need to push back against what an inspector might be looking for. Can you tell me a wee bit more about what's meant by that?

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Kayla

Yeah. I think as we were doing this research, we had so much fun both talking to leaders around the world in the present, but also looking at the legacy of Froebel's work and all of the Froebelian leaders who came after him and really brought that forward. And there's this really beautiful and inspiring legacy of pushing back against things that don't align with Froebelian values, of pushing for what you know to be right for children and staying very true to those core values.

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Kayla

And it's difficult, right? Because say, I'm like, you're in the settings every day, you know, you have all of these needs and, and requirements from people who are outside of your setting, things that you need to do in the curriculum. But it's also about kind of finding those, you know, subtle ways to subvert and to say, actually.... I had a really great example from a leader that we spoke with during the Froebelian Leadership Project, where she was saying, 'you know, we have this assessment we have to do.

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Kayla

It's mostly a checklist, but there's also this part we love where it's like really holistic observation. Obviously, we need to get that done, but we start with the holistic observation that really brings in

the voices of children, the families, the other staff. And then we fill in the tick list based on that.' So it's those little ways where Froebelian leaders are so great at kind of pushing back in a way that still gets the job done, but stays really aligned with those values.

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Colin

And, Kayla, if we explore this idea, then of everyone having something to contribute to leadership, how do we get that from maybe quieter members of staff? What can we do to create an environment where they realise that they can step forward and make a contribution here?

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Kayla

I think it's about starting where they are. So if you notice, wow, that person could really like move their way up. Maybe they can be a deputy one day, or maybe they just are great where they are and they just need that confidence to lead more openly. I think you start where they are. You go to them and say, 'I really love the way you did that activity with the babies today.'

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Kayla

You know, 'why don't you take charge of it tomorrow' and kind of hand little bits over to them, build that confidence, chat with them and reflect afterwards. Because that's a really big part of, you know, really bolstering that leadership among people in the rooms or among the educators, you know, chatting with them about how it felt when you did that.

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Kayla

You know, what supports can I give to you to help you feel better about leading, in the future?

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Colin

And Sam, is that something that you find you're able to deliver in practice? Does it work like that?

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Sam

Absolutely. What Kayla was saying there about you don't get maybe less confident members of staff who don't see themselves as leaders of anything. I think starting where they are at is absolutely key. As we do with the children, we start with that and then we build. That's what we do with all of our members of staff, especially our unassuming ones that don't think that they have the ability and the skills to do it.

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Sam

I was just thinking of a particular member of staff, as you were saying that, she's extremely knowledgeable, extremely experienced, but really doesn't feel like she's got any leadership qualities. And she is phenomenal around engaging in nature. She's done the Froebel Short Courses, as have most of my staff, and throughout that, just having that confidence to hear the messages through the courses, and you could really see it developed her confidence because she was kind of realising what she does and how her own pedagogy and practice is so in line with what she was exploring through Froebel courses.

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Sam

It really empowered her. And then for me to come alongside her and say, 'look, that's exactly what you've been doing. You were amazing at this. You could even deliver this element you're so knowledgeable,' really enabled her to kind of take that bit of leadership to lead others as well. That was really powerful for us. Just as staff in team.

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Colin

Now, just before we started recording this podcast, I asked each of you to share with me a single word that you feel sums up the biggest challenge to leadership in early years settings. Kayla, the word that you gave me was 'conditions'. Is that just about not paying people enough or is there more to it?

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Kayla

I think there's so much more to it than that, because when we're talking about working conditions, we're talking about the entire environment that not only leaders but early years educators themselves are in. It's things like ratios, the amount of children that teachers are responsible for. It's about the hours that educators are working. It is also about salary.

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Kayla

It's about access to really good quality professional learning and valuing the knowledge that educators themselves bring. And I think it's really difficult for leaders to kind of, you know, take their settings forward with them when they have all of these different factors, making it so difficult to show educators that they're valued, they're important. You know, they are professionals.

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Kayla

They're not just minding the children.

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Colin

And Sam, you actually used the word... your word was 'undervalued.' Who do you think it is that undervalues you?

00:19:39:17 - 00:20:06:01

Sam

I just think early years, as a whole, is undervalued still. Especially within the schools, the education system that I'm familiar with, I think we're making progress. It is being seen more. It's been valued more, but we still have a long, long way to go. I don't think there's anywhere near the recognition for the amount of learning that's happening and the amount of development that's happened.

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Sam

The absolute key skills, knowledge, passion, you need to be able to be a really effective early years educator. Some of the most amazing leaders I know, I have early years backgrounds and have gone through the leadership skills from early years, and they're now a leader in primary schools that are really effective throughout. And I think a lot of that comes back down to the earliest background and their knowledge.

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Sam

But I still think it's very, very undervalued... a little bit like Kayla was saying, that kind of touches upon undervalued in terms of salary as well. But in my school, I have some of the most phenomenal early years practitioners, and their salary does not reflect at all. They could go and get a job anywhere else and get paid more, but they are there every day doing the very best because it's innate in them.

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Sam

It's a passion. They come in every day because they have a joy for early years.

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Colin

There'll be people listening to this who are maybe taking their very first steps in a leadership role. What advice would you have for them?

00:21:15:18 - 00:21:42:14

Kayla

I think the biggest thing that I would want to get across is that it's not all about formal leadership development programmes. It's also about finding communities of practice that you can be a part of, where you get to really reflect and collaborate with fellow leaders on expanding what you're doing. It's also about finding mentors that you can informally learn from, you know, chatting with the setting down the road and saying, 'hey, like I've heard, you guys are doing some great things.

00:21:42:14 - 00:22:09:17

Kayla

Let's talk about it.' You know, it can be hard to feel confident to share that practice with each other, but it's such a great way to learn. And I think the other thing would be when you seek out those leadership development programmes, make sure you're looking for ones that you know, give space to talk with people that give space to reflect, that aren't necessarily just the 'click and learn' model, although those also have some benefits as well, but something that really gives you space to think about what you're doing.

00:22:09:21 - 00:22:26:14

Colin

And Sam, the same for you. And maybe in the course of your answer, you could share a little about your journey to leadership, how you became a headteacher, and if there's anything along the way that really you felt really worked and helped you, or maybe things that you would do differently if you were doing it again?

00:22:26:16 - 00:22:49:09

Sam

For my journey to headship, I suppose it sort of happened by default. And lots of people I know, that's tended to be the way they came into the role, too. So I've been teaching for, 18 ish years. The vast majority of that has been in early years. That's who I am. That's what's ingrained in me, what I will always do.

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Sam

And I just sort of fell into the role, really. And I've been in my school for almost 15 years now. I am deeply passionate. I am deeply committed to my school and the community. It's located in a socially economically disadvantaged area and that drives me every day making a difference not just for my children, but for the whole community.

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Sam

I think to be an effective leader, you need to know your why, and you need to be really strong in the conviction of your why. And if anybody's thinking about going into leadership in early years, that's where you need to start with. You need to know what your why is. Make sure your why is the right why.

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Sam

And you're not just doing it because you just fancy being the headteacher of a school. It needs to be ingrained and kind of a clear vision, clear values. That's improving the lives of children, making things better for them. So, I would always say start from that and making sure that everybody around you shares in that vision.

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Sam

The most valuable thing you can ever have is your staff, and you need to have the right staff. You need to be investing in them. You need to be making sure that the whole team around you, not just your staff, the children, the community, every single element is equally sharing in that vision. So everybody's why is the same.

00:24:11:16 - 00:24:41:01

Sam

And then from there, a little bit like Kayla said, you need to find your people. And there are lots of people out there who have to share that same shared vision, same shared values. Find them because you need to make a community. You need to share experiences, knowledge, a big part of my role when I first came into headship is I knew who kind of had the same shared vision of values of me, and I spent lots of time with them, observing them coming into their school, meeting with them, using them as mentors.

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Sam

It was really important to me. You need to find your people in that community. And I think that's one of the great things with the Froebel Trust is there's so much on there. You can find so many podcasts or, pamphlets that kind of shares that vision. And you can find your people you can sort of find you people that way.

00:25:00:18 - 00:25:15:23

Colin

Yeah. I mean, that's such good advice. You mentioned there that you fell into it. Was there ever a point, maybe in these early stages of your leadership where you maybe doubted yourself, where you maybe felt like giving up? How did you persevere?

00:25:16:00 - 00:25:34:17

Sam

Absolutely. It wasn't something that I saw myself doing. You know, if if somebody had said to me ten years ago, would you like to be the headteacher? I'd have said, oh, absolutely not, because I come in every day to spend time with the children. And that was the most difficult part for me to sort of overcome. And even now, I'm still split. Whenever I get the opportunity

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Sam

I'm out with the children, people find me just in the home corner having my hair done or something, when I should be doing something a lot more strategic. Because that's where my heart is. That was the most difficult part for me at the beginning. It was having to come out of the classroom and not having that day to day, intimate relationship with the children. It is still a massive part of my of my role now.

00:25:58:08 - 00:26:11:16

Sam

You know, I'm making sure that I am on the gate every single day seeing the children. I know all the children's names. I know the families' names. That's really important. I cannot let that go. Everything else can sort of wait, those other bits of bobs I should be doing.

00:26:11:21 - 00:26:16:03

Colin

Simon, any advice you would give to somebody taking those first steps in leadership?

00:26:16:05 - 00:26:57:18

Simon

I think just hold on to who you are. You know, the beauty of leadership when it's, well realised and liberated, is that it's different. Everyone brings a different kind of gift to the table. If you know, if they're bringing themselves and our leadership is strongest when it comes from our innate kind of, things, we're passionate about the stories of our lives, the things we've experienced, the knowledge we have, that that again, that deeply Froebelian principle of we need knowledgeable, passionate, humane human educators at the heart of, of our practice.

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Simon

So there's so much leadership theory around and Froebelian leadership, there's more and more and that's brilliant. But a lot of it, is asking you to change your whole way of being and seeing the world. And I don't think that's kind of required. I think if people think of leadership and feel, 'that's not for me.'

00:27:16:16 - 00:27:40:23

Simon

Or 'I'm a wallflower' or 'I don't want to step into that new challenge. Because I'll have to, you know, change, who I am.' I really hope that people listening to this will think, 'who I am is brilliant, is valuable, and I'm I want to bring more of it to the party' and have people around you who who recognise that.

00:27:41:00 - 00:27:52:06

Colin

Another interesting value you mentioned is trust. You know, the leadership quality being someone that you really trust. Kayla, I think you were wanting to come in on that as well, weren't you?

00:27:52:08 - 00:28:13:07

Kayla

I think I just wanted to share something that I had a really, really wonderful person share with me in one of the interviews I did, which was, it takes a village to raise a child, but it also takes a village to lead a village. And I think that's such a beautiful way to put it of, you know, it's not necessarily about the title, it's about making sure that everyone's voice is heard.

00:28:13:09 - 00:28:38:21

Kayla

And I think sometimes that kind of can be translated as, you need a title, you need a nameplate that says here, this person so people can listen to you. But actually, if everyone's voice is valued and everyone feels heard and like they don't necessarily need that deputy title to get a really cool resource in the room for the children or to, you know, lead a workshop with parents like Sam does in her nursery, then those titles become a little less relevant.

00:28:38:23 - 00:29:05:11

Colin

Sam, I was reading, I think this might have been in Kayla's research paper, actually. And it was taking us through a hypothetical day in the life of a headteacher, and it was talking about all the different things, the different directions they get pulled in from, you know, staff calling in sick and having to rearrange things to dealing with the parents to, maybe a new starter that's coming in, and policies and procedures to look at as well.

00:29:05:13 - 00:29:14:23

Colin

How do you manage all of that, all these different competing skills and responsibilities almost all at once. And all before lunchtime?

00:29:15:00 - 00:29:38:16

Sam

You know, a typical day throws up any kinds of, of issues and barriers and things. Very rarely do I go in on a day and the unexpected doesn't happen. It always happens. But one of the key things for me is having those other adults around me having really trusted relationships so I can go in

00:29:38:16 - 00:30:09:11

Sam

And sometimes I can think, right, I've got this, this, this, this, this to do. I don't know if I'm coming or going. I've got really skilled staff and really caring staff who can recognise me and they're skilled enough. I've supported them to become skilled enough to take some of that off. It's around distributing leadership. Leadership is about making sure that what I'm doing is the right thing to do, and taking a step back. Quite often, you know, I will forget to just take a breath, take a step back and think, right, what is the most important thing I need to do here?

00:30:09:13 - 00:30:32:04

Sam

And are there things that could be hold off and I can do that later, or delegate to somebody else? And just constantly coming back to what is the best thing for these children? Am I doing the very best thing at this moment for these children in this community? Because I do think we get bogged down sometimes in some things, that we feel like we should be doing when really

00:30:32:04 - 00:30:50:19

Sam

Why? Who are we doing it for? And if we're not doing it for our children and our community, if it's not making a positive impact, then why on earth are we doing it? I think we put too much on our plate sometimes, and sometimes we need time to step back, look at what's on our plate and what can we take off, what's not making an impact, what's not important.

00:30:50:21 - 00:31:08:16

Sam

And you have to be brave. You have to be brave for that. I think that takes a lot of, experience to get to a point where you feel brave enough to say, 'I'm not doing that, I'm not doing it.' And that may be inspectorates. You know, I've had conversations with local authority or inspectors where they're asking of something, and I'm saying I don't do that.

00:31:08:16 - 00:31:39:06

Sam

And you know, I really have to be brave within my convictions. And for me, as well as all of my staff, having had the Froebel Short Coursees really empowered me to articulate my why and stay firm and stay strong in it. It's given me all of that experience and validates everything I do is the right thing, and I really feel empowered by that to be able to push back, and make sure that what I am spending my time and effort is actually the most important thing.

00:31:39:08 - 00:31:51:19

Colin

Yeah. So there's another key word there 'bravery.' So we've got bravery ..trust. a vision... community. Kayla, are those all the values of Froebelian leadership or are there some we've not talked about yet, are we missing any?

00:31:51:21 - 00:32:12:22

Kayla

Those are probably the key ones. And I would say as well, something holding all of that together, is the children and families. That's always what's driving every value that, you know, Frobelians are pushed by. It's that everything we do has to be about children. It has to be about their families. And every decision needs to come from that.

00:32:12:24 - 00:32:17:08

Colin

Yeah, absolutely. And, Sam, I can see you nodding in agreement.

00:32:17:10 - 00:32:38:10

Sam

If you're there because you truly believe in making a difference for these children and their families and, you know, your children and your families, you know, with their background, where they come in from. And that is your starting point. Leadership does follow because you're driven by that passion. You're driven by that. And they need to make a difference.

00:32:38:12 - 00:32:57:22

Sam

And I think that's where natural leadership kind of you see it flourishes. Because when I came into this job, I came into early years because I just felt that so passionate, it was where I needed to be. And it's true that vision and drive has led me now to become the headteacher, because for me, it's about setting the tone.

00:32:57:22 - 00:33:17:08

Sam

And I know that my why is right for the children within my school. So that is my drive to ensuring that everybody is on that bus. Like I was saying, you know, we're all committed to the same thing. We all value the same thing. We all come in every single day for the same reasons.

00:33:17:10 - 00:33:35:16

Kayla

I just really love what you said there, Sam, about how you know your vision is right for your school and your children and your families, and I think that's so important. Being Froebel inspired or being Froebelian is not a method. It's something that you have to take and make meaningful for yourself and for your setting.

00:33:35:18 - 00:33:47:05

Kayla

It's a way of approaching things and making sure that the children in your setting, the family in your settings, the staff in your setting are kind of held and given space to flourish in the way that they need to.

00:33:47:07 - 00:34:16:00

Colin

Well, that's Kayla Hall, Research Fellow at Middlesex University. Kayla worked with Dr. Mona Sakr on a Froebel Trust funded research project 'Exploring Froebelian Principles In Early Years Leadership'. You can find out more about that work by clicking the link in the podcast description. And that wraps up this Froebel Trust podcast episode on leadership. Thanks to Kayla and Sam Jones, Headteacher at Tremorfa Nursery School in Cardiff, and Simon Bateson Early Years Officer at Cowgate Under-fives in Edinburgh.

00:34:16:02 - 00:34:40:02

Colin

Simon was also co-director of the Froebelian Futures project, and part of his work that involves producing a short film about Froebelian leadership. You can see that by clicking the link in the podcast description. So thank you very much for listening. I'll be back in early 2025 with more guests, and the final episode in the series where we'll look at the kind of spaces and environments children need for play and learning.

00:34:40:04 - 00:35:14:21

Colin

I hope you'll join me then. Remember, there's a full transcript for this episode, as well as all the previous episodes of the Froebel Trust Podcast, along with details of training and additional resources, all on the Froebel Trust website that's at froebel.org.uk. Thank you very much for listening. Subscribe or follow this podcast and you'll receive all our episodes as soon as they're published.

ENDS