



Froebel Trust Podcast Transcript : Episode 9 February 2024

00:00:04:03 - 00:00:28:18

Colin

Welcome to the Froebel Trust Podcast. In this episode, the last in the current series, my guests and I will explore whether a Froebelian approach can work in any school, in any community and with any team of educators. Today we have so many kinds of settings, centres and schools offering early childhood education and supporting young children and their families. Settings are working with diverse funding and governance systems.

00:00:28:20 - 00:00:50:11

Colin

And in the UK, each of the four nations has its own curriculum and non-statutory guidance for the early years too. So can. Froebelian approach really work no matter the kind of school or education system they're working in. As ever, I'm joined on the podcast by a first class panel of Froebelian guests ready to talk about their work and share their experiences.

00:00:50:13 - 00:01:19:03

Colin

In a moment, you'll hear from Paula Phillips - Froebel Trust traveling tutor. Annamaria Bevan, head at Ely & Caerau Integrated Children's Centre in Wales. We have Craig Taylor, registered childminder based in Newport, who's recently completed the online Froebel Trust Short Course and Jessica Holme, a qualified teacher who's worked in education for over 13 years and most recently she was the reception and early years teacher at Newlands Spring Nursery and Primary School in Essex.

00:01:19:05 - 00:01:41:02

Colin

There's more information about all today's guests in the podcast description and remember to subscribe or follow this podcast and you'll receive new episodes as soon as they're released. Well, let's get into the discussion and meet our guests. Jessica, maybe you could go first and tell me a bit about your background and how you first encountered Froebel.

00:01:41:04 - 00:02:07:20

Jessica

So my Froebel journey started off actually, I was a reception teacher and I started off at a school doing reception and I was like, do you know, I want a bit more to this. And then I came across the Froebel certificate, the level six at Roehampton University. So I spoke to my

head teacher at the time and just said, You know, I'm really interested in doing this, sounds like this could improve practice, etc..

00:02:07:22 - 00:02:32:16

Jessica

And so signed up and then every Wednesday afternoon I'd make my way up from Essex to Roehampton, and then we started embedding that into the reception classroom. And then I think it was about two or three years later, the school that I was in decided that they wanted to open up a nursery class and they said, you know, with all your new ideas, etc., would you go in and set it up?

00:02:32:16 - 00:02:55:15

Jessica

So we actually designed and created and built it as a Froebelian nursery, just one class. But we had like obviously free flow, it was for working parents as well. And so, yes, I got to create that curriculum from scratch, which was really exciting and based around the Froebelian principles. And but I started the other way. I started with the older children and then went down to nursery.

00:02:55:20 - 00:02:59:23

Colin

Fantastic. Jessica, thank you very much for that. Just the same idea for you Annamaria.

00:02:59:23 - 00:03:27:07

Annamaria

So I'm the head of an integrated children's centre in Cardiff, on the edge of one of Europe's largest council estates. We've got a baby room for babies from eight weeks and a toddler room for daycare, which is open eight till six. And then we've got two nursery school classes on site, which are a bit like a standalone nursery school, but part of the centre with three and four year olds.

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Annamaria

I qualified as a teacher over 20 years ago and I've spent the majority of my career in early years, so I was head of a standalone maintained nursery school for a while. I did a little stint in primary as a head and now I'm at the children's centre, so that's me.

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Colin

Excellent and same for you, Paula, please.

00:03:47:00 - 00:04:21:02

Paula

I've been in senior leadership in early years for over 20 years, the same. But back in 2016, thinking about my Froebel journey, I was group manager for a group of high quality nurseries in Hampshire., Yellow Dot and the director at the time, Jane Dyke, had a set of circumstances happen which ended up with the senior leadership team of the nurseries and

the 12 nursery managers, all being the pilot groups for Tina Bruce and Stella Louis and their colleagues.

00:04:21:03 - 00:04:46:08

Paula

And so I was in that and found, as lots of people do, that I was actually Froebelian by nature, but I just hadn't come across that terminology and hadn't sort of just realized how much I fitted, how much I belonged in the Froebelian pedagogy and principles. And we went on that journey. And I'm really proud that we helped form those Short Courses.

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Paula

And I was inspired then to do my master's at Roehampton University with the Froebel links there and became a traveling tutor myself and never looked back. So I'm still in practice but very much active as a as a Froebelian tutor.

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Colin

Excellent. Paula. Thank you. And Craig.

00:05:06:14 - 00:05:34:01

Craig

Hi. I'm probably the very different one here. I'm a childminder and my wife and I are a childminding couple, so we obviously work from our home. But we're slightly different in respects that we've bought a 3 storey house and converted the entire basement into a nursery. So the children have huge great tall patio doors that lead straight out into their own garden.

00:05:34:03 - 00:05:59:02

Craig

That is their area to play in. It is completely enclosed, has a separate entrance down the side of the house as well, so it is completely separated. So it means that this space is there own. It's not a case of having to share with the rest of the family. My wife has been childminding for about 12 years full time. I've been doing it for about eight years full time, absolutely love it.

00:05:59:04 - 00:06:27:16

Craig

I came across Froebel actually through Family Information Services, and they said to us, there are these courses going. So we looked into it a bit, realized that it was something we would both be interested in, and that's when we signed up for the course. So we've been on three of the courses now and integrated the areas that we wanted to into our setting and so far, loving it.

00:06:27:18 - 00:06:43:02

Colin

That's great to hear. Okay, excellent. Well, thank you. It's lovely to meet you all. Paula. I just want to pick up on something you said. You used this phrase. You said you hadn't realized

you were Froebelian by nature. Can you just tell me a little bit about what you meant by that?

00:06:43:04 - 00:07:11:14

Paula

Well, being Froebelian is really having an underpinning set of principles. We think of it perhaps as early years children, learning through play and having these underpinning principles throughout their environment, throughout everything they do, throughout how the adults behave with them, throughout how we interact with the families and the community. And I just gelled with these principles. They're not just principles for early years children

00:07:11:14 - 00:07:37:12

Paula

they're principles for life. And there's a strong sense of belonging I think, when you feel that you fit. And it was that, everything that I had been doing in my career up till then was just me doing it because I thought that was the right thing to do. And then I found that actually it was this set of principles which I could have if I could have articulated it, which I certainly couldn't have done at the time.

00:07:37:14 - 00:07:46:02

Paula

But it gives you the words to to articulate why it is you do what you do. And that's why I felt that I fitted in, I belonged.

00:07:46:04 - 00:07:56:03

Colin

Are there any of you here who would say hand on heart, you know what, I don't think I am Froebelian by nature. Or do you think you all are?

00:07:56:05 - 00:08:29:14

Jessica

I think most early years practitioners, to be honest, I'd actually go as far as saying most teachers, thinking back to my training days all those years ago, and even those teachers that I've had the privilege to train, I think any educator that goes into teaching and specifically the early years practitioners, I think it's innate. I mean the Froebelian principles are the original reasons why people go into teaching and then due to the political climate, due to all the other stuff that comes with teaching, that gets forgotten.

00:08:29:14 - 00:08:52:20

Jessica

And actually even on my course, we made a really lovely group and we're still in touch, which is really a lovely part of the Froebelian courses, is that you do make those network of friends that you keep for life. And I won't say her by name because I don't want to embarrass her, but she got a little bit tearful at the end and she's like 'this course has reminded me why I'm doing my job.'

00:08:52:22 - 00:09:13:17

Jessica

I think that's something, particularly with all the schemes of work, with all the expectations on teachers, with the workload, you forget the reason, you forget your 'why'. You forget why you've come into education. You forget why you're here, and even just when you read the books or when I got to create the nursery or speak to other, you're like, Yeah, this is why I'm doing it.

00:09:13:17 - 00:09:28:15

Jessica

This is the purpose is for the children to, in a holistic way, discover who they are and to discover who they want to be. Being Froebelian it's almost just synonymous with being an educator.

00:09:28:17 - 00:09:37:14

Colin

And Annamaria, if I bring you in, it sounds like Froebel and the Froebelian approach is sort of at the core of, I guess, who you are. Is it same for you?

00:09:37:19 - 00:10:16:24

Annamaria

Absolutely. And I've spent so much of my career trying to fly the flag for early years and sort of to fight against some of the more formal things, the powers that be try to bring into early years education. I did the Froebel elements, the Short Courses, the elements 1 to 6, and when I did the first element it was just so exciting to hear the Froebelian principles and the ones that, you know, Tina Bruce has reworded and the ones that are used at the Froebel Trust. It almost made me excited, really, really excited to hear about like, this is this is, this is what it's all about.

00:10:16:24 - 00:10:41:24

Annamaria

Finally, there are other people who are out there that we can connect with who feel the same way as us in the Children's Centre and my colleagues in the standalone nursery schools. The central importance of play and respecting childhood. And these were already in our values as a children's centre, engaging with and in nature.

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Annamaria

But like Paula said, it wasn't always easy to articulate that. And it's like we intrinsically knew that it was right and there was no way we were going to go against what we knew were right for children. And this just opened up a new language for us and a deeper understanding.

00:11:00:14 - 00:11:14:11

Colin

And Craig, you shared with us, you know, that you first encountered Froebel through, I think you said the Family Information Service. When you started looking into it, what was it that connected with you and that made you think, this is the route we should go down?

00:11:14:13 - 00:11:50:01

Craig

We had already started looking into the idea of natural resources, trying to find alternative toys, alternative ways that the children could interact without having to be an electronic toy or the kind of stereotypical boy/girl toys. And it was something that everyone could just sit down and play with and interact because we have such different age ranges at any point during the day, we can range from nine months old to 12.

00:11:50:03 - 00:12:23:08

Craig

We wanted to be able to let the children go off and do what they wanted to, but not have to confine themselves with just what that one toy can do. And that's what I loved about this idea of having something that is so natural that these children can just use their imaginations. We've had some fantastic times where we've done something as simple as take the offcuts of wood from where I was making the fence so the kids are watching me make the fence in the garden, which is brilliant.

00:12:23:10 - 00:12:50:06

Craig

I take the offcuts sand it down and we turned it into all different size Giant Jenga. But that was my idea, not what the kids decided to do. The kids went off and make dance floors. They made it so they could just sit on it. We've got old go kart tires, so they put the wood up on the floor, tyres on each corner and suddenly they had their own car and they were off on an adventure.

00:12:50:08 - 00:12:59:14

Craig

It's these sort of things that we love about having the introduction into Froebel and being able to look at things in such different ways.

00:12:59:16 - 00:13:20:22

Colin

Now, Jessica, you told us you had asked to set up a nursery class from scratch. So when the Froebelian approach comes in, tell me a bit about the sort of changes people will notice. I mean, is it a case of all the plastic toys get put in a box and never seen again? Is it more subtle changes? What are the differences that we might notice?

00:13:20:24 - 00:13:41:01

Jessica

We had an allotment, so we used the design. It was an amazing space. It was very free flow so the children could go in and out whenever they wanted. And then around the side we had an allotment where we'd have a class allotment and then they had like individual areas and the children can go in there obviously with an adult there to supervise.

00:13:41:03 - 00:14:06:06

Jessica

But there was a woodwork area, the allotment, the amount of space we had was amazing. So yeah, it was a lot of natural resources and to the point where when we first opened, the

common thing was where's the toys? Because it was all recyclables, natural. It wasn't no plastic, but it was very, very little plastic. Like we had a couple of small world toys, but even then they were kind of kept to a minimum.

00:14:06:06 - 00:14:41:12

Jessica

So the children had to kind of create their own or use their imaginations. I think the biggest difference you'd see is, yes, it's a lot less stuff, which I think is what a lot of early years are realizing is you don't need all that much stuff because it is too much, it's too overwhelming. But a lot of it is actually learning to trust the kids, which I think, again, when you initially go into teaching or education in general is you know that you can trust the kids, you know, that they've got an idea within them about what's right and what's wrong through the stories and through seeing the world around them as they come.

00:14:41:12 - 00:15:03:12

Speaker 2

They'd never come to us as empty vessels. They've already got how many years, life experiences. They've already got that emotional awareness up to a certain point, and it's just a further evolving that. But I think the biggest bit, particularly when I was doing the training at Roehampton, was you try something and you're kind of sitting there and you're learning not to get too involved to say, maybe do it like this.

00:15:03:12 - 00:15:24:24

Jessica

Like Craig was saying about the Jenga, it's learning to trust the children and knowing that their creativity because they've not had all the years of embarrassment or not trying stuff, they haven't got that fear. So it's trying not to implement yourself onto the child and to trust them and see where they go and then maybe just put that little bit of input and then step back again.

00:15:24:24 - 00:15:34:03

Jessica

So I think that's the biggest challenge as an educator to implement in the classroom. But that's again, that's what the training is there for.

00:15:34:05 - 00:15:57:18

Colin

Paula, I just wanted to ask you, with your work as a Froebel Trust traveling tutor and obviously experience of quite a number of different settings which you'll be in and out of. When a setting adopts a Froebelian approach. Can it be tailored? Does it look different every different place? Can you do it like that or is it like a template that everybody needs to follow?

00:15:57:20 - 00:16:19:23

Paula

You can and you can't. I mean, it's it's not a template that everybody needs to follow. It's not a set of instructions that here we are you get this little pack and off you go. And yes, you're Froebelian. Doesn't happen like that at all. On the other hand, yes, it will look

different according to your children, your community, your environment, your setting, your outdoor area.

00:16:20:00 - 00:16:47:14

Paula

It's all about underpinning what you've got and who you've got. And that's your staff and your parents and your children, everybody together. That whole community with the principles. It's very much a slow cook. You know, we were almost wanting that set of instructions, if we're totally honest. But we soon learned that actually to do this properly, this is it's the principles, it's the understanding.

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Paula

It's absolutely, as Jessica was just saying, it's the stepping back, and equally Craig with the wood, you know yes you can have your adult ideas of actually with my experience I can do this, this, this and this, but actually a Froebelian phrase of being internally active and externally passive. That's our role as a supportive adult. So it looks different everywhere.

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Paula

But if you're drilling down into the why anyone's doing what they're doing there, that should be the same. It's that Froebelian feel the Froebelian thread that runs through that unique community.

00:17:25:20 - 00:17:42:19

Colin

And Annamaria just continuing on from what Paula was saying there, I guess if that's your approach, it must mean that as an educator, you never know it all, you know, unlike some jobs where you might think, yeah, kids come in and this is what we do and this is how they will react and this is what will happen.

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Colin

You're never in that state of mind because it's always being led by them and their individuality.

00:17:49:09 - 00:18:17:15

Annamaria

Absolutely. Always led by them and their individuality. And we are always learning. And one thing that has happened in our setting, the more we educate ourselves using the resources on the Froebel Trust website and through doing the elements, the more we want to learn. And so our library has really, really grown. We're always sharing, you know, the podcast or webinars with each other, we're just thirsty for more.

00:18:17:15 - 00:18:42:02

Annamaria

But one thing that we're doing more as well is really standing back and observing the children. Like Paula said, we've slowed our practice right down so that we can see what the

children are bringing to the rooms, what the children are bringing in terms of their strengths and their ideas. And we're having a lot more reflective discussions as a team as well.

00:18:42:02 - 00:19:12:14

Annamaria

And not just the nursery education room but baby room, 4 year old room, all of us together. And actually that's something that the Froebelian approach has done for us as well is help us to make those connections between all the services that we provide in the Integrated Children's Centre, and it's made us more connected. It's lovely that the approach can start from babies and it can involve the parents and the principles, like Paula said earlier, apply to adults as well.

00:19:12:16 - 00:19:34:17

Annamaria

We've been doing things like, okay, if one of the occupations is clay and we've seen that and working really well with our children in the nursery, what does that look like for our babies? How do we introduce it to babies? Let's just stand back and observe and see what they do first. As Froebelians, we start with where the child is at - we don't push them before they're ready.

00:19:34:19 - 00:19:51:09

Annamaria

We allow children to be children, and we don't have predetermined stages that they have to meet. That allows us the time to support them and help them if they're not yet toilet trained and to give them exciting opportunities and experiences to help develop their speech and language.

00:19:51:15 - 00:20:01:09

Colin

Craig, I can see you want to come in just now. You're obviously in quite a different situation with a much smaller set up. But have you seen similar sorts of changes?

00:20:01:11 - 00:20:31:03

Craig

To be honest with you, we are very small. As childminders, we're only ever to have a maximum of ten children. So it allows us to have the time to be able to give a lot of attention to them. With regards to when we decided to move away from electronic toys and declutter a big decluttering of toys and have less.

00:20:31:05 - 00:21:00:01

Craig

We didn't come across any negativity whatsoever from any of the parents or from those that have joined us. They walk to the setting having walked through the garden and seeing there is this lovely large open space that the children have got houses on stilts and houses on the floor that they can go and play again. Underneath the stilt house there's a large area that they can go underneath and play in.

00:21:00:03 - 00:21:10:22

Craig

So it's this idea that they can just go off and do what they want to and it's a safe space. And this was a big thing, more than anything, I think, for any parent is that it's a safe space.

00:21:10:24 - 00:21:17:20

Colin

Yeah, absolutely. I wondered if I could bring Annamaria back in here. Annamaria, how many staff is it you have at your centre?

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Ananmaria

It's about 40 of us altogether. 40. Okay.

00:21:21:08 - 00:21:52:06

Colin

So I'm going to suggest that among those 40 members of staff, there might be a few that maybe don't love the job as much as you might. And I'm wondering if there are any difficulties that you might have encountered as you, you know, bringing in this Froebelian approach, with some staff, maybe just not that engaged with it. And in a staff of 40, I can't imagine that they all feel the same way you do all the time.

00:21:52:08 - 00:22:15:04

Ananmaria

I've included admin and estate staff in that. But I, I have to be honest with you, I am not making this up. They all absolutely love it. You do not have to be an academic to do this, even to the point where staff have come up to me and said, we were starting to feel a bit like we needed a boost and we were a bit stuck in a rut.

00:22:15:04 - 00:22:32:24

Annamaria

And you know, the centre in Cardiff, has always been seen as an excellent place for early years. There's not a massive turnaround of staff. We're really lucky. People like to stay once they're there, but a lot of people will say, have come to me and said we needed something fresh and different and they love it.

00:22:32:24 - 00:22:51:15

Annamaria

And if I haven't put them on the training yet they're begging to go on, they really want to do it. And I'm saying things like, Well, while you're waiting for your turn, have a listen to this podcast, listen to this, watch this webinar. And they actually are in their own time. It's contagious. It's accessible to everybody.

00:22:51:21 - 00:23:10:10

Annamaria

It's brought us much closer together as a team, and I've made sure that when we've done the elements, we've been fortunate enough to be able to have the six elements face to face, not online because we've joined up with other nursery schools and other nursery settings in the area and they're bouncing ideas off of each other.

00:23:10:15 - 00:23:16:21

Annamaria

They continue to network with each other. So my biggest problem is slowing them down.

00:23:16:23 - 00:23:43:21

Colin

Paula, let's just go back to you. Just know, Paula, the Froebel Trust obviously is covering the whole of the UK, maybe even beyond that as well. And if we look at the four nations in the UK, they all have different levels of devolved government and different funding arrangements and slightly different rules and different curriculums. Is there any nation, I suppose, that you think is best placed for Froebel?

00:23:43:23 - 00:23:47:05

Colin

Wales is getting the thumbs up! What do you think Paula?

00:23:47:23 - 00:24:08:11

Paula

Yeah, I mean you can do this anywhere and you absolutely can because as long as you can articulate the why you're doing anything, it doesn't matter who's inspecting you, it doesn't matter what government's in and it doesn't matter who's telling you what to do. Actually, these Froebelian principles, they work with any curriculum, any people, any people in power.

00:24:08:16 - 00:24:35:21

Paula

You know, as long as you can articulate the why. Having said that, most certainly Wales' curriculum, the new curriculum lends itself very, very well to the Froebelian way. And the reason is that they are joined intentionally through great people informing those in power and policy makers of what really works. We'd love to be doing that in England too, and we're trying but there's a few more people to get through.

00:24:35:23 - 00:24:57:02

Paula

But I think the important thing to take away is that it really doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what your actual educational thoughts are, what your pedagogy actually is, what the what name you've got above the nursery or childminder or, you know, preschool, school or nursery school. Actually, this works anywhere as long as you believe in the principles.

00:24:57:04 - 00:25:18:17

Paula

Can I just pick something up on the resources that Craig talks about? Because I do think that that's huge. When we first went through, a big thing you used the word de-clutter Craig, and that was very much what we did. We had had all this sort of things. We didn't know where they come from, some kind donations from parents and all sorts.

00:25:18:17 - 00:25:37:16

Paula

So when we actually looked what we thought was we've just got too much stuff, what we actually did was looked at the three forms. So the form of life, form of knowledge and the form of beauty. And if our resources met two of those, then we kept it. Two or more, if it was just one, then off it went.

00:25:37:22 - 00:25:52:06

Paula

And that's, that was a really, really useful tool that we learned through our early days of in the Froebelian world of how to assess the open endedness of something and how useful it is to a child's learning.

00:25:52:08 - 00:26:14:23

Colin

Paula, you said you think it could work anywhere or it does work anywhere. And yet at the moment, you know, we're seeing in the sector this explosion in free places. And I think it's fair to say we've covered it in previous episodes...there's a recruitment crisis, there's a massive local authority funding squeeze. So I get that, you know, geographically, maybe it can work anywhere.

00:26:15:00 - 00:26:25:24

Colin

But in terms of the current climate, Annamaria, I can see you've got your hand up. Do you want to come in on this? Is, you know, is this the right time to be doing this, do you think?

00:26:26:01 - 00:26:55:21

Annamaria

I was just thinking the recruitment crisis and funding cuts, it's almost like a completely separate thing to having a Froebelian approach. It wouldn't stop it and it wouldn't obviously, we'd never say no to more, more funding. But you can use this approach without spending lots of money. So, you know, we did invest in in the blocks, but it's about that passion, that heart that mindset, communicating with each other, having a shared dialogue across your settings.

00:26:55:23 - 00:27:20:14

Annamaria

And I really don't think that the recruitment crisis or budget cuts can stand in the way of that. And I think in Wales in particular it's absolutely the right time to start thinking about a Froebelian approach because we're having so much more freedom now in, in our curriculum in Wales and we're not in those separate boxes of having to do an hour of literacy, an hour of numeracy and different subjects every day.

00:27:20:14 - 00:27:44:11

Annamaria

It's all integrated and that is a Froebelian principle in itself that things aren't compartmentalized, that everything's integrated. So I strongly feel that despite the funding cuts and the crisis that we all feel in, particularly in Wales, this is the time to embrace these

principles and go for it and open those doors and let the children out and let them explore nature.

00:27:44:13 - 00:27:50:16

Annamaria

And there are so many free resources on the Froebel Trust website. There's no excuse really.

00:27:50:18 - 00:28:00:13

Colin

As we come towards the end of this episode. Are there other changes you've seen and want to share with our listeners, changes you've noticed after you've brought in a Froebelian approach? How about you Jessica?

00:28:01:15 - 00:28:20:06

Jessica

I was just going to add on something. If there's any teachers listening that might be interested is actually to add on about behavior because one of the big things that I noticed as soon as I implemented it and then was noticed by anybody that came into my classroom or into my nursery classroom, was how calm it was.

00:28:20:08 - 00:28:43:14

Jessica

So, yes, you've got all these different engaged learning opportunities happening, but anybody that would come in when the Froebelian principles were implemented were like, it's really calm. And like everybody, there wasn't those sort of behavioural issues that you would normally have or sometimes have, rather than normal. But I think that was one of the key things anybody that came into the room was that that was the first thing they noticed.

00:28:43:14 - 00:28:49:09

Jessica

They're like, it's really calm and it's quite quiet considering how many kids are in this room or outside, etc..

00:28:49:11 - 00:28:52:22

Colin

And I can see Craig nodding in agreement. Craig, go ahead.

00:28:52:24 - 00:29:16:18

Craig

We've had parents come to visit us when we're at our busiest after school and they walk in and they say to us, how calm it is. Because the children are able to do what they want to and they're not fighting over toys. It's all about interacting with each other and about working together. It's a much calmer atmosphere in that respect.

00:29:16:20 - 00:29:33:18

Colin

Annamaria, if I got a job with you, an entry level position at your children's centre, and I come in the door on my first day, when would Froebel first be mentioned? What would you say? How would I know that I was in a Froebelian setting?

00:29:33:20 - 00:30:01:09

Annamaria

That's a really interesting question because my deputy and I had a discussion about induction today and how when we have new staff and students, we can't just expect them to know and understand our ethos and our principles straight away just by being in the room with us. When they arrive with us and they walk into the centre, we've got large canvas photographs on the wall with the Froebelian principles printed on.

00:30:01:15 - 00:30:20:18

Annamaria

So straight away they would see those principles and they probably first hear us talking about it actually at their interview. So hopefully if they apply for a job with us, they will do their research and they would see from our website that we use Froebelian principles and the Froebelian approach in our practice and from our Twitter account, etc..

00:30:20:20 - 00:30:48:05

Annamaria

I don't know if we have a question directly about Froebelian principles in our interview questions, but we would probably want to find out what they know about holistic learning, about observation and respecting childhood and this sort of thing. And my colleague and I were saying that it would be great if within their first few weeks of being with us, whether they were a student or qualified practitioner, they could have some time

00:30:48:05 - 00:31:20:11

Annamaria

shadowing a member of staff, they could have some time, you know they'd be supernumerary and they'd have some time out of the rooms and we would have things that we want them to read and reflect on. So I was going to spend some time looking at the Froebel website and having to think about what webinars and pamphlets would be good for them to watch and read in their first four weeks with us, but then make sure they've got a mentor as well, somebody who's done all six elements who can meet up with them to reflect on what they've read or what they've watched.

00:31:20:11 - 00:31:41:11

Annamaria

So that's not something we do yet, but that's almost like next steps for us because we've taken a couple of new people on recently. Some are very, very young, really enthusiastic but we recognize that they need something to help them along their journey until they can jump on some Froebel training with us.

00:31:41:13 - 00:32:08:11

Colin

Paula, I've just got a final question for you. You know, it's round about 170 years since Froebel died and society's changed a huge amount since those days. Children have changed,

childhood has changed. You look at the number of single parent families or families where both parents are working. We look at children with diagnosis around additional support needs.

00:32:08:13 - 00:32:14:18

Colin

It can't all still be relevant, can it? 170 years after his death?

00:32:14:20 - 00:32:46:15

Paula

What we actually do as tutors is make it relevant for the people that we're tutoring today and again, if we're taking the principles and we're taking the ethos and everything that Froebel which still amazes me, worked out without the brain development, without the scientific development that we've got now, without all the research and the child development knowledge that we've got now, he found through his own observations, through his own knowledge, through his own work and learning and research himself.

00:32:46:17 - 00:33:32:21

Paula

And so what he found important, we put into what's current today. So yes, we explain everything as it was, but then, right, for today's children, today's community, today's educators, today's parents, today's family, what does that look like? And in actual fact, the actual principles haven't changed. Children still, you know, the respect, the importance of community, the connections, the importance of understanding myself and my relationship with others and the wider universe and that that engaging with nature, children being born inherently good and their real life experiences, then shaping who they are, it's just all of that

00:33:34:00 - 00:33:43:07

Paula

how we are explaining it and articulating it in today, it still works. So, yes and no to you.

00:33:43:08 - 00:33:48:00

Colin

So it's actually the non Froebelian approach that would be out of step?

00:33:48:02 - 00:33:51:11

Paula

Yes, absolutely.

00:33:51:13 - 00:34:19:09

Colin

Well, that's Froebel Trust traveling tutor Paula Phillips with a very good note to end on for this episode of the Froebel Trust podcast. Thanks to Paula, Jessica, Craig and Annamaria for being such excellent guests and speaking so openly. You can find out more about all their work by reading the biographies in the podcast description. Well, thank you for listening and remember also in that podcast description, you'll find links to Froebel Trust resources, which are designed to help you with your own Froebelian journey.

00:34:19:11 - 00:34:45:01

Colin

Well, this is our ninth episode of the podcast, the final episode for Series three. Please explore our archive and catch up with any you've missed and subscribe or follow the podcast and you'll receive new episodes as soon as they're released. If you've enjoyed listening, we'd love it if you told your colleagues about what we're doing. And as we start planning for Series 4 later this year, we'd love to hear of any topics, questions and issues that you'd like us to discuss in future episodes.

00:34:45:03 - 00:34:57:14

Colin

Maybe you would even like to suggest yourself as a guest. You'd be very welcome. Get in touch with us. You can email 'office@froebeltrust.org.uk' That's office@froebeltrust.org.uk

(ENDS)