



Woodwork in early years

"There is something special about woodwork's ability to engage young children. It is learning through doing."

Pete Moorhouse



Learning Through Woodwork

Introducing Creative Woodwork in the Early Years

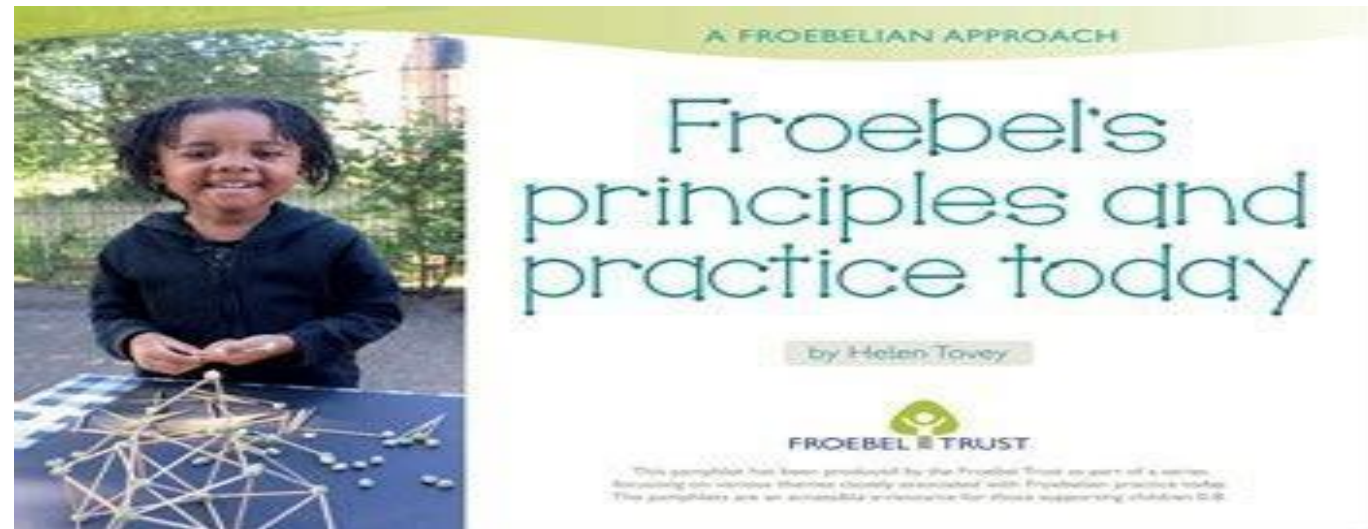


David Fulton Book

Pete Moorhouse

"Every so often a book is written that helps practitioners to develop their work in deep and far reaching ways. This is that sort of book." Tina Bruce, CBE

Our vision to encompass woodwork into the environment was influenced by staff who completed Froebel training and were empowered by woodwork and the benefits this has to children's development.



Creating constructions with wood and using tools builds on children's knowledge and encompasses all areas of learning.

Parents views



Prior to beginning the project, we consulted our parents on our ambition to develop woodwork within the setting. We did this by creating a power point and asked for parent's views on this and what concerns if any they have.

After consultation with parent's, we concluded that they were committed to supporting their children in exploring woodwork . We had lots of positive comments in relation to woodwork and how their children would benefit from this.

One parent commented they use a Hammer and nails at home with grandparents in the garden to build and create. Since embedding this we have created a photobook for parents to look at their children's work, this will be developed as the project continues.





Building concentration

Woodwork captures children's curiosity, and it has been particularly successful in engaging children who can be less confident and have more difficulty focusing.

"To learn a thing in life and through doing is much more developing, cultivating and strengthening than to learn it merely through the verbal communication of ideas."

Froebel 1885: 279



Early stages

Staff identified the need for an area where children can work together and enhance children's critical thinking skills and independence.

Staff initially had training with Pete Moorhouse , as advocated by Froebelians using a slow pedagogical approach to support children gain new skills would be of beneficial to children's understanding

As we implemented this, we decided as a team that we would do this in phases over a period of time.

This was created within our construction area. It was agreed a staff member Would be at the area at all times.

A risk assessment was made, the desired outcome was for children to be able to risk assess their own play and have freedom with guidance.





Our 1st phase was to start off with 1 adult to 1 child during woodwork time. This would allow children to get to know the tools and how they work

Our 2nd phase was to support children to use hammers and screwdrivers

Our 3rd phase was to provide all tools with support

Our 4th phase and end goal is for children to have freedom with guidance

Staff will support all children within their own capabilities and strive to be confident learners

RISK ASSESSMENT

What is being assessed	What hazards may be present	What degree of injury could be present	What precautions have been put in place to reduce the risk of injury	What is the level of risk
Woodwork area	Limit tools Tripping Heavy tools Not enough space to work Loose parts	Medium	- Staff member present and monitoring at all times when area is opened - Locate in area where there is less flow of traffic - Limit number of children in area 1-1 to begin with - Sufficient Storage for tools and equipment - Secure storage in tubs for self- selecting	
Splinters (Wood)	Infection	Medium	- Prepare wood before use - Avoid working with splintery wood - Ensure all wood is sanded once cut with saws to ensure no splinters - Ensure wood on offer is clean and not hardwood	
Eye protection	Injury to eye from nail rebound debris in eye	High	- Safety glasses always to be worn, if wearing glasses this is sufficient - Glasses to be worn at all times to eliminate excess dust from eye contact	
Children's clothing	Loose clothing	LOW	Remove loose fitting clothing - prevent catching on tools	
Sharp objects (tools)	Injury	Medium	Ensure all sharp objects are supervised when being used eg, nails	

How is it going -

Autonomy - Our children have been eager and more focused while exploring at woodwork creating more opportunities for scaffolding and enhancing their independence skills. Children have been demonstrating themselves being safe and supporting each other while also building new relationships.

Children becoming confident in their own learning was primarily a focus. Staff took time to discuss the safety aspect daily and revisited this frequently with the anticipation that children will have freedom with guidance at the woodwork station, which Fredrick Froebel advocates.

We have further aspirations for the woodwork area and are excited to see the progression children make.

Wood and tools ignite interest and curiosity, stimulating children to express their imagination, emotions and thoughts, making the inner outer.

(Froebel in Lilley 1967)





Impact

By integrating woodwork into the provision, it has become apparent that many factors are being highlighted within our children's development. We have observed more positive interactions and children reflecting on their own learning and becoming autonomous learners.

Woodwork has supported children in their wellbeing giving time to re-regulate themselves and become focused again. Having another area to support children has mitigated levels of stress and emotions.

Froebel advocates that children learn best from doing things by themselves, this scaffolds the ethos that we create within our environment encouraging children to become independent and play to their own agenda.

"Woodwork is active learning at its best."

Bruce 2004: 109

What's next

We anticipate that children will continue to be influenced by woodwork. We will continue to provide opportunities for them to take ownership of their learning and add more variety of loose parts to allow children's imagination flourish.



Build strong relationships with our local primary in the community, we hope to create garden planters for them to display here and enhance our Froebelian vision in working in partnership with the community.



All staff to be trained further in Pete Moorhouse's characteristics of effective learning to continue to support staff. This will enhance staff's knowledge and confidence in embedding Froebelian principles further within the environment.

As we continue to support staff in enhancing their own professional development, we will continue to advocate to parents Froebel's philosophy in supporting children in finding their way with guidance rather than direction.