

Froebel Certificate Course Feedback

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Before starting the Froebel Certificate, I hadn't even heard of Froebel. However, I feel that things that we are already doing at the setting are led in a very Froebelian way. Examples of these are allowing children to make decisions, make choices in their own play and allowing children to dictate their own narratives of what they want their own day to look like, and to explore. As a setting we already adopt an 'in the moment' approach and we are also looking at each child as a unique individual.

For me childcare is a passion, so over my 10-12 years I have worked with children, every year my passion grows, and my approach changes and I understand why things I did are the right or wrong things to do. Literature I read on Froebel resonates with me on a practice level and helps my understanding. People ask me: 'How do you control a group of 3-year-olds?' For me it's not a question of control. It's a question of freedom and negotiation. That's something that comes up a lot in the Froebel Certificate course. In our setting, for example, we have lots of resources and the children know that there is an expectation they can't take out all the resources at the same time. We need freedom with guidance. This is why I have found the Froebel Certificate setting visits very helpful. These resonate more with me because I hear people at my level discussing their practices.

In our setting, being Froebelian translates into all the everyday activities that children will lead themselves, such as our mud kitchen, or the various vegetables we are growing. Anything that's child led is Froebelian, and obviously there is also guidance from adults. The children's activities can be enhanced. But adults have got to be skilled to see if the children need their input. If not, the adults should not interrupt. They should feel comfortable to sit back and observe.

In my own experience, by doing the Froebel Certificate course I have learnt the meaning for some things I do. I always knew that growing and planting was a good idea, and that the mud kitchen was purposeful, but I never understood why or where that came from. Now, having read some of the literature Froebel has written, I can see how these practices are inspired by Froebel's work. Now, because my understanding is better, I have also been better able to cascade that message when I am talking to staff. I can explain to staff why we are doing certain things, such as guiding children. For example, I learnt in one of the Froebel Certificate visits that clay is important for children. Just listening to all the information from this visit, about how clay incorporates the senses, I had never known that before. We had always brought out clay once a year, but I did not understand why. I knew it was expensive but talking with other people on the Froebel Certificate course, we learnt cheaper ways of doing that. So, now one of the practitioners at the setting, after a conversation we had, has a target to set up clay and playdough materials in a corner in her pre-school room. Therefore, the Froebel Certificate is leading to changes in our practice.