

Developing Environments of Enquiry

an experiential professional development course for early years' education

Everybody knows that early years' educators are creative, critical and reflective; that young children are creative, strong, powerful learners, and that educators and children thrive in creative enabling environments. It is very difficult to turn beliefs, values and aspirations into practice: there's a gap between what we want to do and what actually happens. This work is designed for everybody who wants to bridge that gap.

Developing Environments of Enquiry is a continuing professional learning programme developed and led by Sightlines Initiative consultants. It provides an opportunity for educators (and those working in the educational field) to develop their practice, expertise and capacity to build environments in which children's learning flourishes. It is founded upon building learning environments of

ENCOUNTER



ENQUIRY



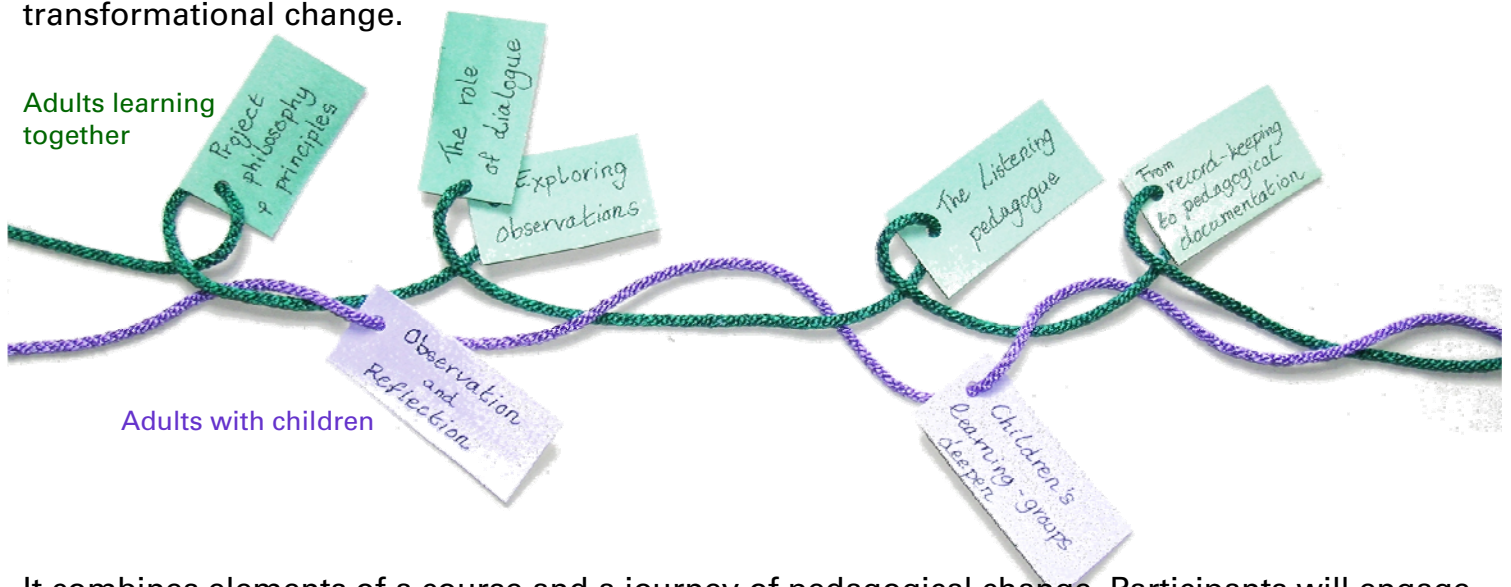
EXCHANGE



EXPRESSION



In order to construct these learning environments participants also need to be immersed in enabling learning environments. The project invites and challenges educators to deepen their understanding through action research, reading, reflection, dialogue and the undertaking of transformational change.



It combines elements of a course and a journey of pedagogical change. Participants will engage in ongoing enquiry and development in their settings. A framework of review, reflection and development days wraps around, and is interwoven, to offer guidance and support. This design has emerged from the work of Sightlines Initiative and associated projects.



Developing Environments of Enquiry: Is it for you and your colleagues?

Developing Environments of Enquiry is centred on valuing children as competent, sociable, imaginative and expressive learners. It aims to develop pedagogical frameworks that focus on children's fascinations and enquiries in relationship with others using many expressive languages. It is additionally informed by the experiences of colleagues in Reggio Emilia whose early childhood centres are built upon and embody such an approach.

The course invites educators, EYPS, artists, advisors, tutors to move together through challenging and exciting experiences of: Encounter, Enquiry, Exchange, Expression

It is for those who wish to develop the ideas explored through the course in their work; bringing their experiences, expertise, competences, aspirations, questions, tensions, dilemmas, their desire to know and understand.

"For me, the whole course, and especially my classroom enquiry were profound experiences; through active listening, through attentive, respectful interactions, I saw so much learning. The Cambridge Primary Review highlights 'well-being, engagement, empowerment and autonomy' as key values: my own small-scale enquiry has convinced me that these are not just fine words on a page, but practical possibilities for all educators and their children."

Tracey Hutchinson,
DEoE M.A. cert course Uni of Northumbria
Also see her article in ReFocus Journal 10

"The learning group was made up of ten leading educators from seven early years settings, and seven advisors. I made visits to the settings to support their process of change. There were four professional learning days and the project culminated in a day of presentations to an invited audience. The work involved transforming attitudes and culture within settings. All the group members said that the company of others in the learning group going through the same transition was crucial to the success of the project. The introduction of such a cultural change requires enthusiastic, determined, assertive and passionate participants."

Clare Schmieder, Poole Early Years Advisory Team, DEoE in Poole

"At a time when ... the powers-that-be seek to reduce education to a technical practice ... We need a sensibility that is critical & open, sceptical and hopeful, inventive and transgressive..." Peter Moss, IoE, Lecture, Univ. of Winchester (2013)

The course can be adapted to the characteristics of your group, whilst maintaining its essential characteristics. It can be initiated at a local level through a network of schools or early childhood settings, Local Authority advisors, educational institutions or centres for learning.

It can link in with, for example, a study visit to Reggio Emilia, a local learning group, visits or exchanges with colleagues in other parts of the International Reggio Network.

It can form an MA-accredited course in conjunction with a University.

For further details or to discuss possibilities please contact:

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Sightlines Initiative

Reggio Children International Network UK reference point