

# Sightlines' Network West Midlands

*Empowering children to learn through enquiry, expression, imagination and curiosity*



13 April 2016

Dear colleague,

this is a warm invitation to join with us to participate in a West Midlands network of people inspired by the values and principles of inquiry based learning promoted by Sightlines-Initiative. They are a national organisation promoting creative and reflective practice in early childhood education, referencing the work of the preschools and infant /toddler centres in Reggio Emilia in northern Italy.

These initial meetings are to gather interest and ideas from like-minded people to shape the local network agenda.

If you are an early years educator, teacher, school / setting leader, artist, parent / carer, adviser, lecturer, governor who believes that CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS, CREATIVE, AND PLAYFUL EXPLORERS – and you want to give them the best start possible – not crush them in to a system that only has one size for all, then come along.

Madeley Nursery School,  
Telford

Bridle Road, TF7 5ET

On

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May

10.30am to 12.30pm

Venue TBC in Coventry /  
Warwickshire area

On

Saturday 2nd July

10.30am to 12.30pm

Please contact: **Paula England** at Madeley Nursery School,  
email: [paula.England@taw.org.uk](mailto:paula.England@taw.org.uk)  
telephone: 01952388210

To express interest and confirm attendance.

This invitation is from Louise Lowings, Head teacher and educator of Madeley Nursery School and Debi Keyte-Hartland, pedagogical consultant and artist-educator.

**Sightlines Initiative**

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[www.sightlines-initiative.com](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com)

*Reggio Children International Network UK reference centre*

W Mids contacts: Louise Lowings ([louise.lowings@taw.org.uk](mailto:louise.lowings@taw.org.uk))  
Debi Keyte Hartland ([debi@sightlines-initiative.com](mailto:debi@sightlines-initiative.com))

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Children are **rich in curiosity**, competence and potential. They are innately sociable and seek exchanges. Their desire and predisposition to be curious, to enquire, to **hypothesise**, to **interpret** and make sense of their experiences, to be in relationship, are basic human characteristics.

Education is the creative process of **exchange and relationship** with the world, ourselves, and others. The task of educators is to support and encourage children's exploration and understanding. The acquisition of skills is not in itself an aim of education. Skills grow in the course of children's engagement in their learning, their relationships and their meaning-making.

All human beings are **innately sociable**, and so effective learning environments must be characterised by opportunities for sociability. Encouraging children engaged in explorations and shared interests to form **small learning groups** is a key pedagogical strategy.

**Listening and exchange** are also important activities in our pedagogical practice, and regular analytic reflection by educators in small groups is a necessity. The practice of observation, as a way of trying to see and understand what children are doing and thinking, accompanied by **reflection and analysis**, enables educators to work with the grain of children's learning.

Our educational work typically begins with engagement in, and imaginative **exploration of, the natural world**. Moving indoors, we see **the school environment as a studio** for the exploration and exchange of ideas, a place where children can bring all of their senses to the business of learning, and use all their expressive languages to make their learning visible.