

SUBMISSION TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION
ECEC EXAMINING 1000 DAYS OF A CHILD'S LIFE

By Janet Hannah Tooby

May 2023

PREFACE

In my retirement from ECEC in 2001 I began a series of self-study that began with a question. How can committed educator's endeavour to make a difference in the lives of children and their parents; so to benefit human society.

The following passages represent some of that study, being on equal terms with the questions of this Royal commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

I realise the fragmentation of this work is due to my aging brain so if there are points of reference worthy of sharing I am happy if sections are used especially the cases in point about my experiences with children in ECEC learning environments.

INTRODUCTION

Answering the first question simply in a word CARE is the core purpose of ECEC. How that relates with the ethos of Fredrik Froebel circa 1854, equally the secondary purpose compliments the first in Care the word EDUCATE as both purposes are so closely bound together the word educare can suffice. Educare¹ as a derivative of the original meaning of the verb educate from the Greek source.

Safeguarding Froebel's Ethical Pedagogy for these uncertain times, as the enduring Pedagogy from the Greek source that secures safe and supportive learning environments for the Whole Child's 1000 days of life.

As the ethos of early childhood pedagogy has stood the test of time and leads on by recognising the sequential order of nurturing the phases of a Growth of the Whole Child.

In the evolution of early childhood many changes have come to illuminate humans need to nurture and be nurtured and how that begins at birth. .

In considering Froebel's vision for the Growth of the Whole Child he saw how the force of children's natural habit by collecting experiences so to learn about how the living world works.

¹ By using upper case letters in words for emphasising repeated and related themes

Froebel's insights left an ever deepening legacy that has evoked the potential status of children that exponentially cultivates human's creative evolution in the ever expanding fields of human ingenuity.

Adding to Froebel's vision John Dewey reinforced how children's ideas are forged by their senses; through the immediacy of their living experience.

Further to that we can appreciate how Modern Science is illuminating a deeper understanding of children's need for meaning. For example in robotics industry evidence shows that most information processed in the brain comes through our hands.

As we continue to grow and learn throughout the lifespan we persist in exploring and discovering how the living world works. Understanding and interpreting evidence from Modern Science, especially Neuroanatomist working in various fields of interest; we may agree that we are all learners here.

In respect of being present we are open to receiving the one hundred languages of children².

Science and Nurturing the Nature of Human Childhood

It is well worth while to consider the Epigenetic Principle which is derived from the growth in utero. As educarer's are specialised in understanding children's need for meaning we may look to how children grow and learn as the magnification of growth in the embryo evidenced by Modern Science for whom the discoveries of many naturally occurring structures, presented with economical explanations these forms I see in relation to Aristotle's notions about qualities of substance.

In the principles that states anything that grows has a ground plan. In regard to that finding evidence of antecedents of learning and interpreting scientific evidence are we duty bound to share and work together on applying that evidence that reveals what we intuitively know as real when we observe children learning through their immediate living experiences.

² Loris Malaguzzi

Considering a basic template on how a child evolves throughout early childhood, by reflecting on 1000 days the first point of reference depends on growth in the embryo.

The Chemical Basis of Morphogenesis was written by Alan, M, Turing in 1954 in that seminal paper he describes growth in the embryo across species.

- One a global template
- Random patterns emerge
- Through diffusion
- Boundaries in the flesh
- As an electromagnetic force
- Ignites a kinetic impulse
- In a sequential order
- Separate particles come together
- In a process of self – organisation
- These separate parts are integrated
- And forms a whole living system.

As I make mention of these faculties of growth throughout this writing.

Recognising this process of growth in the embryo and how that relates to our living experiences. As we are all borne of our mothers the special ascendancy have arisen to form a functioning whole person.

Meeting with that growing influence from the womb, that brings Froebel's insights to the forefront of ECEC ethos. As that represents the meaning of the whole child in which a Holism states that the whole child is greater than the sum total of their separate parts. Within that ethos we can attest how the nurturance for human children requires the Hippocratic Oath, that we do no harm.

In forming qualitative programs we are looking at the day to day reality of human relationships. When families cross the thresholds of ECEC learning environments; the information we collect from the families about growing children rarely covers the basics. How may educator's come to know how to receive children in their care and by that; nurturing the nature of human childhood. Understanding how antecedents of learning represent an innate

patterns of self-organisation. The basic psychosocial holding patterns defined by Erikson

By activating the special needs, interests and concerns of every child so to support their learning progression. What is useful in knowing how a child's regulatory patterns come into being when they are born? For every child we see the exceptional way of organising themselves. Trusting their natural propensity to explore how the living world works in the process of self-discovery.

As parents hope for their average expectations in that the personal integrity of the new born child has no compromises to the babies' personal integrity. This integration of all the separate represents the whole child. With respect, how will we receive them in kind as the pace of nature moves slowly in comparison with to the rush and push in the race of survival of the fittest. Within a natural social paradigm for ECEC there is always time and nothing is too much trouble.³

Beyond our average expectation we look to children living in adverse conditions that will compromise the integrity of the unborn child. And I will explore the damaging influences of disadvantage later.

From Froebel's insights we appreciate an evolutionary force as children naturally select experiences for solving complex psychophysical problems, such as suckling after birth and toddlers learning how to walk. In this first order of learning how to navigate the living world Froebel saw a way of supporting children's ongoing exuberance to discover their need for meaning.

In relation to the features of cause and effect the actions children take represent the Meta self through which the correction of one self as to a matter of balance integrating inner sense of being a child with the outside sense of being a child living in a psychosocial environment. Getting on with the job of being a child depends on the freedom to explore and discover for themselves within diffused social boundaries.⁴

³ Steiner Rudolf

⁴ Sanders Catherine 2002 Bower place in training programs on Systems theory and family therapy.

Understanding children's need for meaning begins at birth and continues throughout the lifespan. In those subjective and objective experiences, the process of self-organisation is represented by Meta Self.

And the first order of self-organisation begins with solving complex psychosocial problems. In matters of having the right balance that alludes to the subjective and objective experiences within which; children are forming social schemas that influences their growing interests in how the living world works. .

Froebel's insights included practical applications for learning by presenting multifaceted material resources, designed to benefit children's intellectual acumen.⁵ Through which they were encouraged to solve complex psychophysical problems. In that nurturing influence children's Intuitive Intelligence promotes every child's positive self- image an important feature In forming individual's psychosocial schemas.⁶

Through children's problem solving endeavours educarer's will observe children's creativity soaring beyond average expectations. In that creative influence an emergence of learning about how the living world works. As these creative influences reiterate children's logical reasoning, in forming mathematical, scientific, and psychosocial schema's. By encouraging children's lexicon of language that expresses children's thoughts and feelings. How that leads into children's development within which instinctual and intuitive intelligence underpins children's personal integrity. Communicating with children successfully appears to be in that giving and taking children practice when they become upright and walking. Back and forth we observe these patterns of reciprocity as we are the stable force within which the child can trust their autonomous actions.

The influences of children's basic need in finding meaningful work in child care environments represents an integration of the basic psychosocial skills that energises children's capacity for cooperative learning.

⁵ Froebel Fredrik... circa 1854

⁶ Piaget John Paul: as a biologist Piaget explored how psychosocial schemas represent impressions made from sensory motor activity.

Case in point, I observe Amelia, 16 months old, she's created a task for herself, wrapping a dolly in a small cloth. In attempting that task I am watching how her movements wax and wane. I do not make any attempts in helping or speaking. Quietly she is working and between we have this active silent knowing that becomes us, I am in that act of trusting Amelia's autonomous judgements. These diffused psychosocial boundaries make allowances for children's creative endeavours. By attending to her action, Watching over her and being present, paying this attention appears to me as gift of being a witness that reinforces Amelia's capacity for self-organisation. As most toddlers will move into and out of various tasks, as Amelia go back and forth in the duration of her experiences.⁷ Seemingly toddlers appear scattered as they inclined to follow random patterns of self of exploration and discovering their place in the scheme of things. As children want to get on with the job of being a child;⁸ Busying themselves with various articles of their interest.

Yet that task Amelia has set is on her agenda this day. Watching her I see how Amelia wants to wrap up a dolly in a cloth; she finally succeeds and looks to me for some validation of her success yet she moves another step in the creative evolution of this task. Lifting the dolly up and placing that on her right shoulder patting the dolly with her left hand and she says Cause Shush.

In analysing Amelia's duration, going through the motions of her task as she revealed he capacity for logico linguistic reasoning. By expressing the cause of her actions, meaning because, she shows an understanding of how cause and effect as it works itself out through her hands. In patting and saying shush we can interpret that Amelia is reflecting on her own experience recognising how that action is a comfort cause shush calming the dolly as she herself has been calmed by that action. Mimicry can be a subject of research as in all these exchanges we are learning about how growing children are learning in the 1000 day of life.

As children's inner sense of being is initially driven by instincts and intuitive intelligence other essential thinkers have contributed to supporting children's Meta Self for navigating their external frames of reference. Following those threads of meaning from the embryo towards birth and how the Whole Child's

⁷ Bergson, Louis, Henri. Circa 1904 Creative Evolution. Macmillan and co UK

⁸ Sanders Catherine; in conversation 2002 Bower place Adelaide

emergent sense of self. Committed educator's engender an awareness of one- as an individual whilst learning about awareness of others. Acting as a mirror in witnessing a child actions is a gift in the presence of 'Living in the Now'⁹ in this regard I recommend that observations are for sharing and in that case educator's interested in how children grow and learn can specialise in researching evidence from Modern science we can promote the influence's and bring about some change if using epistemological approaches for teaching and learning that has a trickle pressure on very young children to perform to the standards of performance determined by a distant authority.

As neuroanatomists working in various modalities as for the robotics industry evidence that most information processed in the brain comes through the hands, equally linguist and neuroanatomists Stephen Pinker states that language is limited, as did Einstein, Froebel, Huxley, Bergson, Malaguzzi to name a few essential thinkers that have shaped the way we perceive the reality of our relationships.

Matters of Child Protection

On matters of child protection every child counts exploring an exceptional child's frame of reference whilst living in adversity advantaged or disadvantaged how may we find that unity between opposites. In view of a child's identity as it evolves over the lifespan average expectations can be useful in defining the fine line between advantage and disadvantage.

For myself I have learned from small children's need for meaning and reflecting on my experiences on ECEC a democratic ideal dangles on the edge of a regulatory body that has an entropic compulsion to keep everything uniform as we have come to this need to control educational outcomes. As I was taught in a systemic practice of chalk and talk having to pay attention to what the teacher is telling me.

When working for the society of children I took to asking more questions and found it useful to listening more to what children as a group are saying rather than my talking over them telling them what to think. Listening to a group of five year old answering my question how we can be safe here in sharing and

⁹ Toll Eckert

working together. In telling me their unexpected responses were perfectly orchestrated by all that was not safe, indeed. As I contemplated on the words I had scribed I waited a while for my light bulb moment of response. So I asked so can anyone tell me what does that mean. In another long pause I waited for a response. A child summed this up, it means no hurting. So there we were with one class rule we could rely on.

As history has a way of repeating itself, we can be wary of those baby farms introduced in the early phases of industrialisation of Europe. Many children died and that is a sober reminder of what we do not want. So it's always good to know what we want when we look at what we do want. Here in the philosophy of the Sceptics as Loris Malaguzzi the founder of Reggio Emilia infant programs looked to the one hundred languages of children.

Inspired by an address to ECEC conference in Melbourne Reggio Emilia Pedagogista Carlina Rinaldi spoke about any disadvantaged child is accommodated by trusting what infants want. Besides providing the basic expectations of care quality educational programs follow the course of children's living experience; allowing for self-expression evoking artistic inclinations in all artistic endeavours. Communication between child and adult in Reggio Emilia programs significantly promotes awareness of self and how that cultivates awareness of others.

Whilst reading the therapeutic work of by Virginia Axline she too provided children with an outlet by allowing children's personal integrity to play out in play therapy sessions. As for a case in point, one child was beaten in the face by his mother when he was two years old, in that injurious event he spent two months in hospital recovering. His exceptional anticipations that he perceived as significant threats that compromised his personal integrity we worked as a team to support his needs and in doing so we learned a lot about trusting a child's intrinsic motivations, he had a narrow view on what he wanted and that did not include any formal instruction. And we persisted to allow space for him to follow what he wanted.

In nine months he had changed by various critical events accumulating in a last act of defiance as he pretended to pee over a table to the delight of other children. Come here I said sternly, I walk to sit on a chair he came with me as

we both sat away from the group. I asserted; when you pretend to pee on the table that is offensive. No one in our team had spoken this way to him like that and as he hung his head in shame he showed remorse. Yet being on the edge of trust and mistrust that moment was a make or break situation.

After that reprimand a long pause in which a softening came between us. That rebuke was enough as I understood his sense of shame that gave me a deeper insight as to the positive influences we had impressed over our time together. This presented an opportunity to fix a stronger position in nurturing the very broken child I asked Adam: You know we will never hurt you. He nodded I felt like crying but I said generously. Can you say that Adam? As he repeated my words he was still nodding, this was an intense moment. And that response formed a contractual arrangement. So I asked; Adam can you be our helper? Yes he said nodding his head enthusiastically. Then I stood up and he took my hand first time, can you tell me Adam what you want to do now. Here was a relief for both him and I. Blocks he said so we walked to the blocks anticipating we would work together, first time.

Some-time Later I asked Adam to help me choose a big book, he picked one and brought that to me I put it on the stand and asked him to help turn the pages he was examining the book as other children came to hear the story. After reading is Adam asked me To Do That Again? So together as a group, first time, we read the familiar story once more.

When he was going home with his father he came and asked if he could borrow the book as he often borrowed puzzles overnight. They took the book home and the next day father was excited about reading the big book, how the older brother of nine years could not read. Seated on the lawn greeting other children Adam came over to the group. He was carrying all the big books. You read these to me he ordered. So he sat with the others, in a cluster, for the first time.

This breakthrough from deep mistrust to trust was earned by allowing Adam the space to create social boundaries to secure his personal integrity. There were times when we intervened as he reacted strongly to children he perceives as 'invading his space.' I believe that children living in adversity are searching for meaningful attachments, either negative or positive, the

negatives of mistrust are acted out and bring troubles and stigma that a child may not know how to shake off the damage done. Whilst having no deep impressions of a nurturing attachment with his mother Adam defied our female team. Maturation of empathy becomes clearer when empathy is shown in repeated and related experiences.

As a team we worked on the narrative of No Hurting was expressed, at every turn in our relationships with children. Rarely did we say no to children's to children's positive impulse to find out about how the living world works. Given we stay close to those average expectations of trusting children's autonomous inclinations. As most children go along swimmingly, in the mainstreams of the society of children. Understanding exceptional children resist the flow of being part of the group. As they are disadvantaged as castaways lost in a sea of adult's turbulent emotions, through no fault of their own. Observing the indicators of distress we see those kinetic impulses for being on high alert, reacting to any perceived threats.

As we understand from Adam's teachers he did follow the mainstreaming pathways. In six months of school Adam's father called me and spoke excitedly, describing Adam's success in receiving a literacy prize.

As that was a rewarding closure in that episode, given Adams significant disadvantage in that loss attachment to his mother and the lack of nurturance to that harm done has an effect on mistrusting adults, especially females. To his credit he worked on forming safe boundaries intuitively forming physical boundaries in the sand pit as he dug deep holes each day for moths copying the workmen fixing pipes in the street next to the child care centre, he was sensitive about being too close to other children, striking out throwing things in their faces. To rectify these outbursts we stayed near Adam to intervene when necessary and asking his to be a part of fixing wet clothes or sand he there in the faces of the children. So we persisted in saying No, stop that hurts, we have no hurting here. As he was sensitive to the effects of other children's being too close to him. Puzzles were a way for Adam to be connected with his exceptional calm teacher.

In these circumstances matters the repercussions of mistrust and defiance in Adams experiences in betrayal of adults trust through no fault of his own the

dene mechanisms for survival were very strong underpinning our communications.

In our zone of awareness of Adam's resistance to our program we adults can learn through the gradual process of maturation as these children living in adversity teach us how to respond in kindness rather than using punitive reactions.. understanding children's need for meaning as a team we able to manage Adam's mistrust by passive resistance. Learning how to trust another is a fragile thread that is easily broken. Broken trust for a child is manageable when we appreciate the average expectations we can have for children's stability and increasing their self-organisation builds a self-confiding feature of self understanding. As trust, engenders trust; so too intuitive sympathy engenders empathy.

Conversely by accepting our limitations, for so many children living in adverse conditions represent on one hand a deep sense of vulnerability whilst on the other a strong resilience to survive. In survival mode an acute resistance that defends a child's integrity. As I have noticed in issues of trust a spectrum; as one child may openly express mistrust whilst another may express implicit trust. Either way is a defensive act of resilience so to protect the vulnerability. Given the information we can access about these exceptional children living in adverse conditions psychosocial problems abound in this modernity as the myth of Pandora's Box reveals when all the ills of the world are leased upon the lands, hope that is last voice to leave.

Without hope for change in children's deprivation of nurturance How we engage with that can be represented by reacting punitively as that has been a habitual expectation for schooling young children and in child care settings we know of that naughty chair. Casting a child out of the group, as disconnected, disruptive, disobedient does that happen on purpose? That attitude towards teaching a child a lesson in discipline shows a lack of adults ability to discipline the impulses to react in ways that negates the child's personal integrity. Through repeated and related critical incidents a child learns to be the alien of humanity. In feeling that punishment is the right thing to do; just damages trust and destroys our no hurting policy.

In viewing disadvantaged children we may not deny the nature of that disadvantage for the hapless child has no wrong and so for every child a personal integrity that needs defending. These matters on the protection of children may take up volumes and whilst information can be shared by professionals our reading on this subject cannot be replaced by the day to day comings and goings in a child care facility.

I am at 'pains'¹⁰ to describe my experiences in this regard and hope to share a glimpse of countless children needing support as they represent an exception from the mainstream of average expectations. My writing a paper Before Mandatory Reporting speaks to the choices we can make, representing sympathetic responses to children living in adverse social conditions.

In working For the Society of Children a simple fact remains that all individuals are all borne by mothers: that everybody was once a child that all peoples begin to grow up in their nurseries. And in that society consists of individuals in the process of developing from children into parents.¹¹

As Child Protection matters for every child advantaged or disadvantaged through the equal eye of equanimity may we find that key touch stone that holds this polarised bridge together. As this subject of troubled children we see how exceptional these children are, living as they do in adverse conditions that they have to cope with day on day months on months. In one thousands days how can educarer's make a difference in the lives of vulnerable yet resilient children so to benefit human society. .

Simply by keeping up to date with the heartbeat of the nation's children; seeing at once their vulnerability whilst a show of resilience to defend their personal integrity.

Sharing our stories about children living in adversity with other agencies are useful however in the day to day reality of our relationships with a child and their family, specialised training is required. Play therapy can redress hurt children's wounds. In that I refer to a paper I presented at a family therapy conference about redressing the hurt and finding that the average

¹⁰ Paying Attention to the details of children living in adversity

¹¹ Erikson Erik 1980 Identity and the life cycle

expectations we have creates a levelling out of disruptive influences that have compromised the child so much so they compromise the learning programs.

Sometimes we face the most horrible traumas children can experience and as I have found how to walk forward gently to preserve one another's personal integrity. To communicate our concerns we can stay close to the facts as we find them with a reliance on our vulnerability and our resilience. To speak about atrocities that is happening against children's nature I find it is best to do that without any embellishments. In my professional practice that trusting children to explore their immediate concerns and being open to their discoveries we can always advocate for the society of children, generously appreciating their force nature.

Conclusions

Reiterating the simple facts that all individuals are borne of their mothers, that everybody once was a child, human society consists through the phases of growth. Therefor too we are leading children on through our process of self-awareness and awareness of others. How can we manage the magnitude of information about how children learn and grow if not to face the day to day reality of our working relationships and forming positive boundaries so to secure safe and supportive learning environments.

What are we learning about children's need for meaning In Carl Jung's reference he warns how adults are in the habit of trying to correct the negative faults of children adults that they have learned from adults. How are we able to correct the faults in one-self before correcting those faults we see in children. growing up can be difficult for adults too.

Its it's negation of reciprocity between adults and children can backfire, In the act of giving and taking adults are maturing being further on from a small child. How may we choose the direction of our actions, tempering the kinetic impulse to react defensively. May we ask what is we are adults are trying to defend? Are we for children's capacity to learn and discover for themselves by following their inclinations. For in children's force of nature that striving to grow and learn can be a most joyous experience for educarer's. We may attest that no other agency can take the part of children's capacity to self-organise. In the art of communicating with young children our faculties of observation

precedes our group think. As a creative evolution emerges out of the old and leads into new of now. As each new day is dawning are we ready to wake up and see how children's need for meaning is their special gift to human society. I am thinking how researching the day to day comings and goings. Keeping up with the general heartbeat of our humanity and being immersed on the society of children.

Promoting the protection of all our children in our service to nurture the nature of human childhood. In caring educating the youngest members of human society in actions can speak louder than words can convey. By supporting children's unique capacities to creatively solve complex psychophysical problems; that may be of greater benefit to human society and perhaps sustain the future of the planet .

I believe we are cultivating intuitive intelligence by presenting our sympathy towards children's concerns, as that is the adult thing to do, with our intellect that option is worthy of practicing. In our basic humane responsiveness a unity of purpose is waiting in hope of change from survival of the fittest to survival of the friendliest. In our basic humanity we will learn how to cultivate our capacities to nurture the nature of human childhood. What else is there to do in this life we have been gifted with this status of being present?