

Freedom with Guidance in Childhood Practice - Ms Sue Azzopardi

In this presentation we delve into the profound concept of 'Freedom with Guidance' in childhood practice, drawing inspiration from one of Froebel's timeless educational principles. Central to our exploration is the idea that young children are holistic beings, where their thoughts, feelings and actions are intricately intertwined. We contend that learning for children should never be confined to predefined compartments or narrow boundaries.

The presenter reflects on her journey from a primary class teacher to a lecturer and emphasises the pivotal role of fostering a deep connection not only between educators and students, but also between students and the environment, especially with nature. The challenges posed by Malta's academic-oriented education system and limited outdoor spaces are examined, prompting a forward looking approach to transform school playgrounds into gardens. The aim is to support schools in providing children with more opportunities for exploration and learning in natural environments.

The presentation focuses on the importance of adapting educational practices to the evolving needs of students, drawing on the principles of Froebel and the national early childhood policies to create a more holistic and child-centred approach to education.

Keywords: Froebel's principles, childhood practice, outdoor learning, school gardens, Malta national policies, freedom with guidance, holistic learning.