

How Do Our Learning Environments More Fully Respect The Capable, Competent and Curious Child?

St Francis of Assisi School, Newton
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All Staff involved in the Research

What?

Whole school research on **Image** of the **Child**. Our key focus questions were 'What kind of school?' 'What kind of Teacher?' 'What image of child?' Which led us to.....

How Do Learning Environments More Fully Respect the Capable, Competent and Curious Child?



Professional Learning



Dialogue amongst Staff

Engaging Experts

Why?

To reflect on how our teaching pedagogy supports our image of the child at St Francis of Assisi.

Franciscan Values

Inquiry Based Learning

Quality Teaching



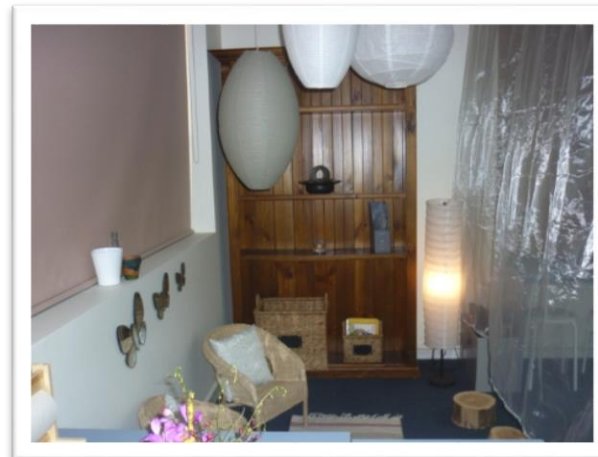
How?

Change of learning environments to support our image of the child.

BEFORE



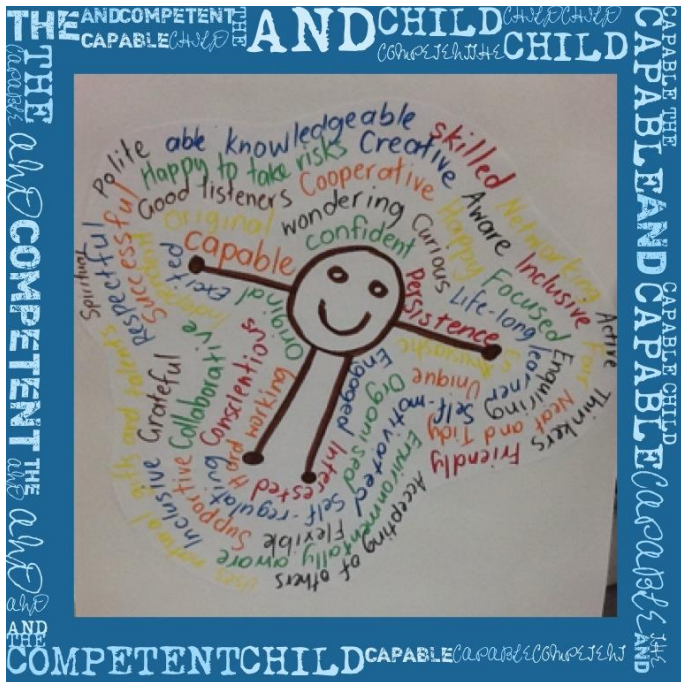
AFTER.....



Implications For Children's Learning:

- *Classrooms decluttered
- *Resources organised
- *Calm and organised start to the day
- *Respect for learning environment
- *Engaged and intrinsically motivated learners
- *Knowledge is expressed in an infinite number of ways
- *Clear Learning Intentions
- *Relationships built on Respect
- *Persistent and Resilient Learners
- *Diverse needs are catered for
- *Interact and learn from each other

Our image of the child at St Francis of Assisi



OUR JOURNEY SO FAR.....

In the last three years, staff at St Francis of Assisi, have been exploring the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia. Our focus and inquiry has been looking at the "Image of the Child" and how does our teaching and learning support this image.

Our vision is to establish an Early Learning Centre at St Francis of Assisi with the principles of Reggio Emilia underpinning our Philosophy.

Staff have been on a continuous learning journey. We have visited other sites in order to build our understanding and awareness of how other schools have translated the educational approach of Reggio Emilia. We have been involved in the Thinker's in Residence – Making Learning Visible Seminars, CESA Re-imagining Childhood research and are members of the CESA Early Childhood Network. Our school was also privileged to have Jan Millikan facilitate professional development for us.

Staff have been involved in their own personal research where they have investigated different principles in their classrooms.

Our learning spaces now reflect our understanding of our image of the child at St Francis of Assisi. We have seen the benefits of a whole school approach in developing our learning environments to cater for the competent, capable and curious child.

Our understanding of children and childhood has developed. Our whole school community is seeing the benefits of the influence of the Reggio Emilia principles.

Reggio Emilia underpins our whole school philosophy and influences our vision statement.

CESA Re-imagining Childhood Research Schools Exhibition.

We feel very honoured to be a research school and to have the opportunity to work with Professor Carla Rinaldi, Jan Millikan, Tina Adamo and colleagues from other research schools.

Being given the opportunity to exhibit our research work was a very valuable experience. It enabled us to reflect deeply on our journey so far as colleagues posed questions and commented on our research work. It also affirmed to us how far we have come and that we now have the confidence to support and share our knowledge and experiences with others.



Sample Reception Parent Responses:

PARENT SURVEY

In 2014 we asked all Reception children to enter (in the morning) through the double doors into the shared learning area. Has this entry procedure been positive for your child? Why? Or why not?

"I have liked the entry through hallway into shared learning area. Not as congested at classroom door" Michelle

As a parent do you believe the new entry procedure has assisted your child to settle and separate from you in the mornings?

"The new entry procedure has helped my child settle quickly this year compared to previous experiences with my other children. I have noticed my child pick up the morning routines quicker which has developed independence and she is happy to come to school." Antoinette

When considering the classroom environment what is something you like or think works well?

"Separate areas partitioned are good for different activities. Catering for students who would like their own space." Michelle

"Open plan, bright happy spaces that are very nicely balanced with technology and play areas. I loved the shared space with the kitchen and dress up areas. Riley has just loved this type of creative play this year." Judy

How do you think our classroom environments cater for all learning styles?

"The children seem happy, calm and although their work is displayed in a respectful way it is not cluttered or hanging low and it doesn't interfere with their days." Rachel

"Bringing in Reggio Emilia teaching allows children with different learning styles to learn. Boys tend to be more physical and learn by doing, whereas girls are more adaptable to sitting and learning. It is good to see different learning styles being embraced. Hopefully this will also increase science and mathematics outcomes." Leanne

Teacher Responses From Staff Meeting.

What are the most significant changes you have noticed?

"Increased pride in the learning environment by the children increased ownership by the children is obvious to us." Margaret

"We have noticed an increase in the children's curiosity. We are observing children doing things like collecting natural materials at play times." Margaret

"Some students are now more open to work in different and varied groups. They appear to be more confident in working with a variety of children instead of working in friendship groups." Year 6/7 Teachers

"Decluttering has been significant. Some of the more obvious changes have been mood lighting, the use of natural/ neutral colours, natural lighting (removal of work from windows) and bringing the environment into the classroom to create curiosity." Adam

"We have noticed the way we are displaying our work is changing. It is no longer about displaying the final product or having to display all the children's work. We now display the children's learning processes." Mardi

"Although our classrooms have a very neutral tone, colour is still a focus as it is coming from the children's work." Ninetta

How have the changes affected your image of the child?

*"What I have noticed, you may think it is a little thing, but when teachers used to bring children to me, there was a list of 'he can't..... he can't. Now it is different, teachers tell me what the children **can do**, for me this is an absolute joy." (Katrina - Key Literacy Teacher)*

"I feel my image of the child has changed. I now see children as more capable, doing things for themselves. Children have a better understanding of the purpose of their learning." Year 4/5 teachers

"I have been using the language, we need to listen with all of our senses. It redirects me and it redirects the children too." Natalie

"I am finding that my understanding of children and childhood is increasing." Year 7 teacher

"We are noticing how much rich learning is occurring during developmental play. The children are owning their learning and taking responsibility to take their learning further." Mardi and Ninetta

How have the changes affected your image of the Teacher?

"The listening is helping me to understand that our community has changed and is more multicultural. Listening to the child has made me look at myself more- my programming, my words, my questions and the environment we offer." Sandra

"As teachers we are always learning and reflecting. We understand we have the ability to build positive relationships which requires patience. The focus has been on developing a positive and respectful class culture." John

"I have really been making an effort to get to know every child at a deeper level in my class. I am now focusing on children's strengths and assist them in reaching their full potential" Gina

"We believe our children are more visible now. Their confidence and competence is more visible now. This is bringing a change in teachers' perceptions, expectations and appreciation of the children." Josie