

Reflecting on respect: an evaluation of educator practice

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Context

- 57-place long day care centre established in 2004
- Located in disadvantaged area, with high and increasing number of welfare recipients



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AEDC Data: Percentage of Children Developmentally Vulnerable in 2015

| Geography | Physical | Social | Emotional | Language | Communication | Vuln 1 | Vuln 2 |
|---------------------|----------|--------|-----------|----------|---------------|--------|--------|
| Australia | 9.7 | 9.9 | 8.4 | 6.5 | 8.5 | 22.0 | 11.1 |
| SA | 10.8 | 10.8 | 9.7 | 6.8 | 8.2 | 23.5 | 12.2 |
| Location of service | 16.2 | 15.1 | 12.1 | 12.5 | 12.3 | 32.6 | 18.1 |



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“Many current early years educators may not be familiar with key content knowledge, child development theory or the kind of high quality interactions that children require for their learning. It is, therefore, essential to model these high quality interactions for them, to provide them with rich examples and illustrations for learning and reflection, and to work face-to-face in the delivery of PD to establish their trust and rapport.”

Fostering effective early learning study (Siraj et al. 2017)

Magda Gerber

- 1930s Emmi Pikler pioneer in care and education in Hungary
- 1957 Magda Gerber introduced Pikler's concept in USA
- 1978 Resources for Infant Educators (RIE®) founded



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Respect as the basis

- Demonstrating respect as part of every interaction
- Respecting a child means treating the child as a unique human being, not as an object



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RIE® principles

- Trust in the infant's competence
- Sensitive observation
- Safe, challenging, predictable environments
- Time for uninterrupted play and freedom to explore
- Involving the child during caregiving times
- Consistency



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RIE® principle: Sensitive observation

- Observation guided by respect for infant's competence
- Careful observation to understand infant's communication and needs



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RIE® principle: Sensitive observation

“In our society we are trained to do, do, do. And if you don’t, you pretend to do, do, do. You must act as if you are very busy, because being busy is virtuous. Not doing anything is considered laziness ... Nobody talks about being observant. The more we do, the busier we are, the less we really pay attention.”

(Gerber 2002, p. 63)

A photograph of a woman with dark hair looking down at a baby who is wearing a blue shirt with a yellow flower. The text is overlaid on the image.

"Do less,
observe more."
~Magda Gerber

www.sydneysteiner.com Facebook.com/learningmotherhood



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RIE® inspired approach: Sensitive observation

- Creating a separation ritual
- Naming and acknowledging emotions
- Noticing cues

RIE® principle: Safe, challenging, predictable environment



- Create environment where child can do all things they would do naturally
- Natural inborn desire to move should be supported



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RIE® inspired approach: Safe, challenging, predictable environment



- Open spaces for uninterrupted play
- Freedom to explore and interact with their peers and surroundings
- Improved indoor and outdoor aesthetics
- Staff predictability



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RIE® principle: Involving the child during caregiving times

- Involvement of child in all care activities to allow them to become active participant rather than passive recipient
- Opportunities for interaction, cooperation, intimacy and mutual enjoyment by being wholeheartedly with infant



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RIE® inspired approach: Involving the child during caregiving times

Routines as connection times



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Eye contact and touch can have a significant impact on how people respond to stress and anxiety

Simple touch can stimulate stress receptors and hormones that reduce pain and improve trust

Tests on brain activity showed that looking someone in the eye who may be distressed or anxious triggered a calming response

Professor Fiona Kerr (2016)



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“The essence of resilience is a positive, adaptive response in the face of adversity.

On a biological level, resilience results in healthy development because it protects the brain and other organs from the disruptions produced by excessive activation of stress response systems.”

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child Working Paper 13, 2015



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It's all about the relationship

“Multiple lines of research have identified that having one stable, committed relationship with a caregiver predisposes children to positive outcomes in the face of significant adversity.

Providing sensitive responsiveness and scaffolding protects children from developmental disruption.”



National Scientific Council on the Developing Child Working Paper 13, 2015



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“Science now tells us it is the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship and multiple opportunities for developing effective coping skills that are essential in building blocks for the capacity to do well in the face of significant adversity.”

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child Working Paper 13, 2015



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Children who attend early childhood education for at least a year before starting school are half as likely to have developmental vulnerabilities when they start school as children who have no early learning.

RoGS Report table 3A 75, p. 3.36–3.37, “Children who received some ECEC were less likely to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (19.9 per cent), compared to children who did not receive any ECEC (38.5 per cent).”

<http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2017/child-care-education-and-training/early-childhood-education-and-care/rogs-2017-volumeb-chapter3.pdf>



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Investing in high quality ECEC supports increased educational attainment, better employment prospects, and improves health and general wellbeing, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Siraj-Blatchford, 2004; UNICEF, 2008; Melhuish et al., 2015, cited in Siraj et al. 2017, *Fostering effective early learning study*, NSW Dept. of Education.



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“Infancy is a vulnerable stage of development, therefore, it's not enough that babies receive good care, the care must be excellent.”

Magda Gerber



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