



Series 1. Episode 23
Turning *Little Stones* show notes.
with Georgina Hood from Paint Pots
nursery schools.

Episode 23
**On the move... heuristic
play & music** with Georgina
Hood

This subject follows on from two earlier podcasts in Series 1. **Baskets of Treasures (episode 4) & Sharing baskets of Treasures (episode 6)**. These refer to Heuristic Treasure Baskets which are used for younger children (6 to 12 months). At the end of episode 6, Emily asks, 'For a child who is on the move... What next?' To answer this, we've come to visit and hear from Georgina Hood, principal of Paint Pots nurseries in London, where she offers heuristic play and music 'classes' for accompanied young children who are 'on the move'.

Working with the parents is so important... we are taking them on a journey... making it joyful... with a very light touch.

Preparation

The room is prepared perfectly for the 50-minute session. Children and their carers arrive to find a peaceful space scented gently (aromatherapy diffusers), quiet music, and a 'marketplace' set out in a horseshoe shape, *filled* with attractive, appealing 'real' objects and materials.



Every object has been risk assessed, cleaned and is fit for purpose.

Children on the move (12-to-18 months), can get to the market themselves, select whatever appeals and find out what they might do with the objects. Here there are *volumes* of



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resources, laid out with care and each holding an appeal to children who whose dominant open-ended question is...

What can I do with it?

The resources are laid out thoughtfully and beautifully, intriguing for the curious child who is motivated to:

- open drawers to discover what's inside...
- find strings of beads in a wooden box and in a cloth bag...
- hear metal things making different sounds on a tray and in a basket...
- discover bells inside different containers...
- throw pompoms and feathers...



Parents and carers of 'on the move' children are encouraged to sit a little further back from their children, giving them time to sit and watch what their child is interested in. They witness their children taking the initiative, allowing carers to relax, be present, and notice things they would not otherwise see. Based on her professional understanding, Georgina may gently offer parents ideas on resources to include at home, such as to support a child's dominant schema.

Some less obvious benefits to children's development

Georgina also explains that typically children between 12 and 18 months play in parallel to one another. In this space, they can connect with other children and begin to share and play cooperatively. Their non-verbal communication skills are also developed in this quiet, purposeful space; important for all children, particularly those exposed to multiple languages.

Children are exploring and learning much from the rich array of objects. How long the 'heuristic play' session lasts is dependent on how absorbed they are. When practitioners judge the time is ready, the session subtly moves on...

- A large box is brought out, 'This is the way we tidy up' song is quietly sung (to the tune of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush') into which children and carers place the objects they have been using.



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- Sit spots are places in a circle as practitioners sing, 'Make a circle' (to the tune of London's Burning) and parents are invited to come closer.

Singing is important... "If you sing something, you're happier doing it", explains Georgina.

And music...

The quality of the music sung and played is significant, Georgina employs a professional musician. A large 'field' mat is laid in the centre of the circle and each child is given a basic bag with two of each instrument (e.g., two castanets may be used for quacks or clip-clops). There is no need to share or take turns.

New resources are subtly brought out for each song...

- A large collection of different ducks for the children to hold as Georgina uses her set to sing 'Three Little Duck went swimming one day'
- The magic apron with props for Brown Bear's story
- Mirror bags for the mirror song
- Scarves for falling leaves
- Various animal bags for themed songs

Everything is woven together.

Songs are not repeated; they simply flow from one to the next... without disruptions. The next set of props just arrive! Children enjoy repetition and many songs are familiar from week to week.

Parents and carers are engaged, mimic practitioners showing their 'silly side' and hopefully continue singing after the sessions and at home.

Named time.

What makes this distinctive is that these sessions are **named times**. Resources are brought out for specific times and not freely available as toys. The atmosphere, scents, music, heuristic play moving into a music session create a special space, which allures children into circle time.

Involving everyone...

Georgina's experience with children with 'delayed development' or what she describes as children with a "special ability", mean that these sessions are perfect for including all children. Everything can be adapted, there is no 'right way' or 'end product' to these activities and resources.



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And finally...

The classes that Georgina runs at Paint Pots are distinctive and have been honed and resourced over decades. She is quick to assure us all that everything is transferrable, into nurseries, child minding settings, family homes, paediatric wards... and... we probably already have everything we need to start with.

If you change the way you look at something, the things you look at change.

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Further information on Paint Pots classes can be found at
[The Boltons classes – Paint Pots \(paint-pots.co.uk\)](#)

Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through,
Turning Little Stones (Series 1, Episodes 2 & 4) **& Delving a little Deeper**

See website for details.