



The show notes for this first Turning Little Stones podcast is not typical because this introduction primarily focusses on who I am and the inspiration and vision for the Podcast series.

Although the podcasts are hosted by me, the real stars are the many guests we will meet each week. Each one with different giftings and insights into the hidden world of young children. It is an absolute joy to meet them, and I **know** each week will offer fresh inspiration to our listeners.

Getting to know Caroline... the early days

So who am I? The youngest of 4 children and ill prepared for parenting. I knew the type of parent I wished to be, but had few role models, so I floundered, hungry for any knowledge or understanding to guide me.

When our youngest was still pre-school age, I trained in early years. It felt like an epiphany when I discovered an approach that 'fit' with how I had been grappling to be as a parent. It was here that I discovered my vocation. The child centred approach inspired me and has impacted my whole career.

Whilst studying, I began to work in both a nursery and a pre-school and was soon promoted to lead practitioner positions.

After a serious back injury, I thought I would not be able to continue in the profession. So, I trained to be an early years tutor and later continued to study in childcare and education to post degree level. I am so grateful for this unexpected shift in direction because theory of child care has remained fresh for me. Even at my busiest, my practice was rooted in research-based theory.

Whilst tutoring, I opened my first nursery provision which operated from our home. Small and intimate, and the perfect context to see the synergy between theory and practice. I could observe each child closely, gain insights into what were their current needs and how best to support them.

Getting to know Caroline... what came next?

Continuing to tutor and running a small-scale provision, I then took the big step of taking on a large not-for-profit day care nursery, linked to a Children's Centre.

This was the big shift. Operating 10 hours a day, weeks a year, serving families from a wide variety of backgrounds. This became the next training ground. Unable to afford many trained staff, I needed to train the staff team myself. What a privilege to see how they absorbed their training to establish an excellent provision with an enviable reputation.

And... it was a privilege to see how whole families responded, their confidence grew as their parenting skills developed. And the children clearly benefited, leaving for school confident and ready for their next step.



Episode 1 Turning *Little Stones* show notes
Caroline Allen introduces the new podcast
series Turning Little Stones

Introducing Turning
Little Stones

In time our provision extended to 4 settings operating across 4 different communities. I handed over the nurseries to its managers in 2020. They continue to flourish!

Why Turning Little Stones?

Turning Little Stones was birthed out of seeing first-hand how research-based child development theory can be made relevant and accessible for everyone. Some of our families would struggle to read a book, but they could 'see' theory in practice with just a little prompt to notice what was going on inside their child. Such nuggets helped them to reflect and understand their children from a new perspective. They began to respond to their children differently and could better support them.

And I love Podcasts! I'm learning new hobbies, a new language and being entertained when I'm driving, walking, or cleaning. They are so accessible. And that is why I've chosen podcasting because as busy adults who look after children (parents, practitioners, managers, students, family carers...) it must be possible for everyone to snatch half an hour each week to listen in and find fresh inspiration in their child caring.

And podcasts should be fun!

Alongside Turning Little Stones, we are also developing a companion podcast series called 'Delving a Little Deeper'. This will be just what it says on the tin... for those who want to dig a little deeper to know a little more. We'll let you know as they are ready to be published.

But in the meantime, we hope you will enjoy the podcasts and share them widely. We honestly believe that you will enjoy them and these precious fleeting years with young children will be transformed!

Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through

Turning Little Stones &

Delving a little Deeper

See website www.turninglittlestones.co.uk for details.