



Series 1. Episode 10
Turning *Little Stones* show notes
Listen to a conversation with Clare Iles
about her work with Little Artists

Episode 10
Adventures in Art
PART 1
with Clare Iles

In this podcast (the first of 2-parts), Clare shares with us her personal journey as a working artist, who also has experience working with students and adults in higher education, access courses and community initiatives. She now finds herself increasingly engaging with early years and primary aged children.

We wanted to find out more about the Toddler Art Group she set up some years ago at a local Art Gallery. Clare shares her story and some of her discoveries on her journey to release young children's natural creativity in inspirational ways.

How does the Toddler Art Group work?

Once a week, parents and carers register to come along. There are a maximum of 15 child spaces, and it is held within a large exhibition space in her local gallery, Firstsite.

Clare prepares the space by setting out several zones. These clearly defined 'stations' have large pieces of paper taped to the floor (roughly 2m x 1.5m). Each one has a range of open-ended resources that children use as they wish. Each week introduces different and new resources. Those mentioned in this episode are:



Messy play (clay, paints, slime...),

Loose parts & off-cuts (wooden blocks of varying sizes and shapes, tubes, marine rope, string...)

Clare has learnt to vary the stations with stimulating open ended resources; previously she might have 'themed' each session.



She explains that even though she sets up the zones, the children 'disrupt' them, moving between 'stations', making discoveries and mixing resources.

She describes how one child went to find lengths of string to pass through some holes that were drilled in a timber block; another found novel ways to turn



cardboard crates into 'boats'. The motivation to do this came from a length of marine rope found at another 'station'.

She describes how the children take over, re-define their play and own it.

Why does it work?

Clare explains that the key is to carve out a single period of time. At the Toddler Art Group, children arrive with their carers to a space that is 'frozen', blocked out, with no distractions or agenda. Here children spontaneously express their amazing innate creativity. And they do!



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In a single hour children express themselves uniquely as creative little people. They are free to move about, paint what they wish, initiate, and follow through their own ideas.

The carers who bring their children have a role, which Clare goes on to share in Part 2...

Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through

Turning Little Stones

Delving a little Deeper

See website for details.

Clare's Art Club sessions are available on

<https://firstsite.uk/your-visit/learning-activities/children-families/parent-toddler-art-club/>