



Series 2. Episode 5  
Turning *Little Stones* show notes.  
A conversation with Wendy & Eddie  
Hepper from Creative Education Centre

Episode 5  
**The choices we make for  
our children (2)**

This is the second of two podcasts focussing on some the choices that parents and carers have to make affecting our children. This is timely for many families who are considering what education provision is best for their child.

Wendy and Eddie have a unique perspective, speaking from their broad professional experience *and* from parenting four children.

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### *Introducing Wendy and Eddie Hepper*

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Wendy's background is in the Arts. After taking a break when their 4 boys were young, she trained in the Montessori approach. Creativity and this teaching ethos have together influenced the work she and Eddie running the Creative Education Centre (CEC).

Eddie's background is in Primary Education, spanning both independent and state sectors. He spent 33 years as a classroom based primary teacher and in headship roles.

Their 4 children were all educated in school, apart from when they took a two-month family adventure. Something that profoundly influenced them all!

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### *The Creative Education Centre*

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Their combined experiences have shaped the provision that Wendy and Eddie have run since 2014.

CEC is a part-time setting which offers an 'add on' for children who are home educated. For this reason, the provision they offer does not exceed 15 hours/week.

Creativity, in its broadest sense is fundamental to their provision together with a Montessori approach, which sees children grouped in mixed ages, having their own individual learning plans, 'owning' and caring for *their* space and manipulating concrete materials to make sense of abstract ideas.

Wendy and Eddie spend a lot of time with parents, who come to them with varying prior experiences and from different starting points.

- Some wish to home educate from the start... They may want to delay starting school, believing their 4-year-old is not yet ready for a formal school environment.
- Some are home educating their children and find they have "hit a wall".
- Others have children who are unhappy at school. They may have reacted to pressures or encountered difficulties at school.



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A common concern is that most schools are highly regulated establishments, whether by the timetable, testing and even peer pressure.

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*We are a different choice for those who either want it or need it.*

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Wendy and Eddie share a typical example of how a child might come to CEC with some kind of anxiety. Over time and in a different environment, they begin to de-stress. This is something that a child in a mainstream class with typical class sizes would find hard to manage.

At CEC the ratio is 1:6 making it easier for teachers to see what the child needs and work with their interests and natural inclinations.

CEC offers children quiet, calm spaces, where creativity in its broadest sense is valued and given expression. With a 'rolling schedule', 'deep learning' is possible.

### Key Questions

Eddie and Wendy explain that for most children (their own included), school "is fine". Home education is an option for those who are not thriving and need a different approach. They suggest that parents carefully consider some key questions before choosing the home education route...

1. Am I able to provide something that is:
  - better?
  - more creative?
  - sustainable in the long term?
2. What is my motivation for wanting to home educate?
  - Why am I doing it?
  - Am I on the same page as my child?
3. Can I practically sustain it over time?
  - How will I manage being both parent and educator?

### Key messages

Eddie and Wendy have many stories that celebrate the successes of children who have been supported by CEC. They explain that contrary to commonly held opinions, home educators typically have higher expectations for their children."

Their own children received a good education in the school system, and so they offer caution to those who may find themselves "rolling into home education" with little consideration.

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*"Go in with your eyes open".*

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*And finally...*

Eddie reminds us that every child has the right to a good education (enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Home educators need to learn how to *work with* their child, giving clear direction to their learning without being over-prescriptive. Add-on experiences, such as the Creative Education Centre offer home educated children something unique and special.

You can find out more about Creative Education Centre, Suffolk at  
<https://cecentre.wixsite.com/cecentre>

& on Facebook

*Further information, practical guidance and advice are available by subscribing to*

***Turning Little Stones &  
Delving a little Deeper (Set 1)***

*See website for details.*