

Passionately
Curious...

The Curiosity
Approach™

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Yesterday Lyndsey and I attended the 'Play Iceland' Seminar in Northampton and it was wonderful to meet and hear so many passionate people.

Lyndsey Hellyn and I are the co-founders of The Curiosity Approach, more than just another consultancy company; together we want to impact on the Early Years industry – to make a change to the educational system. To inspire practitioners to bring back curiosity, awe and wonder to childhood and to the lives of educators.

Sadly the educational systems haven't changed in over 100 years, sadly children are being still drip-fed information through the tops of their heads, not taking into account that the heart and mind are one system, Children need to be educated following a child's innate urge to be curious and investigate, to seek out answers for themselves and not handed the answers by well-meaning adults. To make sense of the world, according to as Piaget he sees it as an opportunity for coherence and organisation.

American Philosopher John Dewey once said, "What's in a question, you ask? Everything. It is evoking a stimulating response or stultifying inquiry. It is, in essence, the very core of teaching."

Children need the opportunity to explore to discover and investigate, to be curious and discover answers for themselves. We as educators and parents must provide these opportunities, allowing children time and space to seek out answers for themselves. To step back and allow children the freedom to play, explore, investigate. To ask open-ended questions, "I wonder?"

We are all facing challenging times! We are living in a technological age when toys are becoming more and more intelligent. The more intelligent a toy becomes, the less opportunity a child has to think.

We need be brave and stand up to tradition, move away from 'plastic fantastic' settings, closed resources that offer no room for creativity or freedom to think. We need to create play spaces that offer opportunities for children to be individuals, following their own learning styles and following their own interests.

Spaces that offer a calm tranquil atmosphere and one that ensures children don't become over stimulated by a barrage of laminated signs, posters and number lines. Move away from painted windows that block the natural light cascading through the room. Move away from colour explosion decor, that distracts from the real work at hand, play-based learning!



As passionate educators, we need to stand together and ensure that our children are not losing the freedom, time and space they deserve. The time to explore and discover the natural world around them. To get outside and experience all the treasures our beautiful world has to hold.

Curiosity is an innate drive, an impulse and an urge for children to be persistent, to seek out answers, to question the unknown. An active state of mind, in which children and out answers for themselves and take ownership of their learning and their discoveries.

Our brains are 17 billion years of evolution, a library of knowledge and information. We need to ensure that children do not lose the opportunity to use this gift, to fill it with a wealth of knowledge and experiences, instead of zoned out staring at a screen or TV.

In this technological age, children and adults are losing the opportunity to be curious, we seek instant answers through internet searches and the click of a mouse. We are sadly believing all the answers presented to us on the internet, instead of challenging or questioning the information presented. Conforming to tidal wave of social pressure, instead of exploring solutions and answers for ourselves.

Albert Einstein said, "It's a miracle curiosity survives formal education."



Einstein didn't consider himself a genius. He did, however, consider himself curious saying "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious".

As adults/educators, we need to also ensure we follow our own curiosity just like Einstein did! Or have we left it behind in our childhood? Recall how certain things made us curious as a child. Do you still feel curious about things or accept them 'as they are'?

Let's all start standing up together, today's education system is robbing children of their childhood, the opportunities to be curious and to be investigators. To seek out answers for themselves, to discover, explore and to interact with their peers.

What can you remember from your childhood?

I have happy memories of being outdoors, exploring the local neighbourhood – the only boundary I had was the fading daylight. These were the best years!

What memories will our children have of their childhood?

Sadly children at many school today are spending less than 45 minutes outdoors: this is less time in the fresh air and natural world than prison inmates.



When they do get outside educators and schools are so scared of health and safety litigation that ludicrous rules and boundaries are restricting our children to play, learn and be happy.

Educational testing of children is stripping them of their creativity, and curiosity. Due to increased pressure on schools, teachers and early years educators to rank children through SAT or exam scoring. Plotting them on developmental cohort summaries and making sure children are meeting set targets. Children are sadly being stripped of the joy of learning, turned off education by rote learning and the freedom to learn through active hands-on discoveries. Education today is stifling children's natural impulsive urge to be curious, to learn holistically, to risk take and to develop those all-important communication skills.

Who is going to be the explorer of the future, the scientist, the adventurer? Who is going to find the cure for cancer? We need to give children the opportunity now to lay down the urge to be curious, to empower children to strive for answers!

We need to ensure children are given the opportunities to be curious and creative. To become the thinkers and doers of the future. Giving the children the wings to fly.

It's up to us as educators to stand up for the rights of our children, we are in such a privileged position and we need to ensure we make a change!



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Did you know that we are committed to the United Nations 17 Global Goals? We focus on Global Goal 4 – A Quality Education For All. We donate directly to Sparkle Malawi and sponsor numerous children to attend school!