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enhancing children's **e**motional-wellbeing, **c**reativity, & **l**earning

ecl story

In 2002 we, as a group of parents, teachers, leaders, academics and education policy advisors, gathered in London to explore more innovative ways of releasing the creative potential of children. We voiced a mutual concern that the education system was more often than not educating the creativity out of their children.

Thus ecl began with an intuitive desire to shift the emphasis in education from predominantly intellectual skills and knowledge to include more holistic, affective and creative aspects of growth. After eight years of funded research projects in both primary and secondary schools in the UK, ecl has now developed into a powerful new approach for parents and educationists who wish to enhance the emotional well-being, creativity and learning of our children and young people.

From an initial focus of finding ways to support head teachers in leading schools, we quickly discovered that a 'whole child, whole system' approach could also generate profound new ways of thinking about classroom practice, parenting and governance - as well as the role and place of schools within local communities.

While early work in the nowhere foundation centred upon exploring families as systems, we quickly realised that a similar 'systemic' perspective, when applied to schools, could significantly help children engage with learning.

So we started working co-creatively with head teachers, teachers and parents on projects that explored classrooms, staff teams and schools and families as interconnected, living human systems.

We developed and worked with a framework of 'Four Ordering Principles', the subtle, yet powerful forces that influence children's behaviours and emotions, as well as the tensions they are managing, and the roles they take on. This perspective shifted how teachers and parents saw things and how they then chose to intervene.

Similarly, we developed a 'whole child' focus that went beyond the cognitive emphasis of conventional educational practice to include the emotional, somatic and intuitive realms.

This opened a space for teachers and parents to nurture a child's wider potential and innate creativity. A framework of 'Four Ways of Knowing' was then articulated to help enhance children's awareness and understanding, and increase their ability to access insight and generate new ideas.

We have woven these two dimensions of 'whole system' and 'whole child' together into a holistic practice, producing a number of practical tools, activities and processes for us all to use - but it only a start on a longer, deeper journey.

We still feel that we are at the beginning of an important quest, to enhance well-being, transform learning and release the creative potential of our children and young people. We therefore whole -heartedly invite you to join us and contribute to this quest.