Little Minds
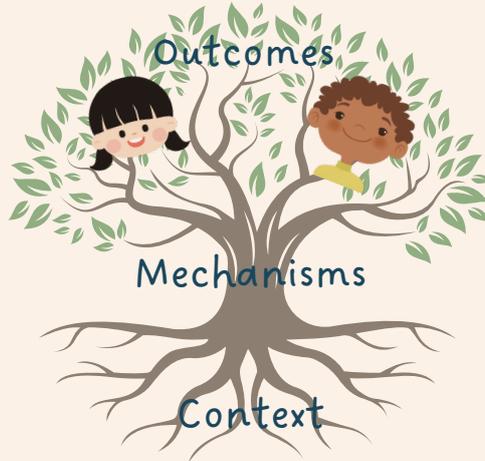
Little Minds, Big Insights:
How realist research methods support development of an ethical approach to early years education and wellbeing

Realist method overview
A theory driven approach to understand what works, for whom, in what context and why

Outcomes

Mechanisms

Context

Moving beyond 'does it work?' to uncover how mechanisms are triggered in different settings

What is realist methodology?

Context
Early years settings and classrooms
Professional development
School and setting culture
Child demographics

Mechanisms
Children's access to co-regulation, sense of safety, attentional control, adult facilitation of mindful interactions and practices

Outcomes
Increased emotional regulation, better peer interactions, improved self-awareness and calm, deeper involvement in learning, improved focus

Who was part of the research group?

Early Years specialists
Educational Psychologist
Realist Methodology expert
Wellbeing specialists
Intervention experts
Early Years educators
Mindfulness practitioner

What data collection approaches were used?

Educator reflections
Interviews
Reflective practice and wellbeing tool
Mindful environment tool
Narrative language task
Child voice group activity
Brief-P

WellComm language screening
Leuven scales (wellbeing and involvement)
Dimension Card Change Sort (DCCS)
Adaptive Test of Emotion Knowledge (ATEM)
Researcher visit

Benefits of this approach

Respects the complexity of early years settings
Highlights variation in child outcomes based on different conditions
Enables educator-informed theory building
Enables educators to 'be' mindful rather than simply 'do' mindfulness

Find out more

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