

Little Minds Infographics

The research methods of the Little Minds project

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

Outcomes

Mechanisms

Context

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

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

What is realist methodology?

It involves recognising the contexts and mechanisms that impact participants for example –

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

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