**2019 TACTYC Conference Report**

**Focus: Happiness and well-being in the early years**

TACTYC moved its annual conference in the summer for the first time for many years in 2019 and we were delighted to welcome around 50 delegates to the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Saturday 15th June 2019. Our conference focus was on ‘Happiness and Well-being in the Early Years’ and our conference title was ‘You’re Doing my Head in’. At the one-day conference, delegates were treated to three excellent keynotes as well as our marketplace and a fascinating workshop programme. Following a warm welcome to the conference from TACTYC President Wendy Scott OBE, Sally Goddard-Blythe MSc. gave her keynote ‘*Learning to move; moving to learn. Why physical development provides the foundations for learning success’.* Sally emphasised the importance of understanding children’s biological and developmental needs in tandem and shared some ways we can support young children to acquire neuromotor skills to enhance their overall development. Next, we welcomed Tanya Richardson who shared her doctoral research in her keynote ‘*Confident communicators: the impact of the environment on children's language’*. Tanya’s presentation focused on what constitutes a quality learning environment with regard to speech and language development for young children and how factors in the learning environment may influence the quality of utterances made by young children.

During the breaks and over a delicious lunch, delegates were able to view posters and enjoy our marketplace and a discussion forum and research briefings followed the lunch break. The discussion forum items offered delegates an opportunity to discuss current issues in early childhood. First, Hiroo Matsumoto (Kagawa University, Japan) led discussion about whether young children’s play should be regarded as intrinsically valuable or more instrumentally as a tool for learning. Next, Denise Corfield (Edge Hill University) and nursery colleagues asked delegates to consider the impact of 30 hours nursery funding on early years practitioners. Both items stimulated extremely constructive discussion. Alongside the discussion forum, research briefings took place. Margaret Clark shared her most recent research on phonics in the briefing she gave. Samantha Jayne Hulston (Cambridge University) gave a most interesting presentation on *‘Embodied meaning making: children’s use of physical actions to respond to wordless picturebooks’,* while Rev. Dr Geoff Taggart’s presentation on *‘Building the ‘compassion muscle’ for secure attachments’* was most thought provoking. Christina MacRae’s stimulating workshop *‘The Red Blanket: sensing difference in body play*’ was an opportunity to consider the value of sensorimotor intra-action and play of two-year olds and Deputy Head Louise Jackson’s presentation about her MA research on *‘Mental Health in Early Childhood: Challenging perceptions and changing responses when vulnerable children start school’* was highly topical.

For our third conference keynote, delegates heard from Laura Earnshaw (My Happy Mind). Laura’s keynote ‘*The Science Backed Secrets that lead to Resilient, Balanced and Happy Minds in the Early Years’* was very well received. TACTYC Chair Dr Jan Georgeson then led the plenary session for the conference before TACTYC members moved into the Annual General Meeting. During the AGM, non-members had opportunities to network or join Jane Murray and Jemima Murray for a presentation about their research on parents’ views of their two-year-olds funded childcare provision and their experiences of its effects on family life.

It was then time for delegates to say ‘Goodbye’ as they picked up their afternoon tea and cake ‘to go’ and journeyed home.

With its rich offer of keynotes, presentations and networking opportunities, our first summer conference for many years was a nourishing experience for all who attended. We look forward very much to welcoming you to TACTYC Conference 2020!

Dr Jane Murray and the Conference Team