

Manifesto for Dr Margy Whalley

Proposer – Professor Dr Joao Formosinho

Seconded – Felicity Norton



**Dr Margy Whalley: Early years educator –
practitioner researcher – adult community educator
– mum – grandmother- community activist**

Context and Experience

As an Early Years Educator I've operationally led multi-disciplinary, multi-functional early year's services in the UK, Brazil and Papua New Guinea. I was the founder head of Pen Green (1983). As a fully integrated service for children and families, Pen Green became the prototype for the UK Government's Early Excellence, Sure Start and Children's Centre Programmes. I am a committed practitioner researcher and we established the Research Base at Pen Green to promote and celebrate practitioner research. As a research base Pen Green influences policy and practice at a national, regional and local level. We offer a comprehensive programme of initial and post qualifying training, working with practitioners across the UK, Ireland, Israel, Germany, New Zealand and Australia. This year I retired from this headship role but remain actively involved as a Pen Green Trustee. My own doctoral studies in the nineties on Leadership in ECE led me to focus particularly on constructing professional development opportunities for heads of integrated settings and services.

Involvement with EECERA

I have been an active member of EECERA for over 20 years. At an organisational level EECERA membership has been critical to the development of the Pen Green research base. I have actively encouraged all the research team to be research active and have published widely, often through EECERA. All staff have attended EECERA conferences every year since the research base opened. In my role as a member and as a Trustee, I have worked hard to engage Pen Green Masters and Doctoral students, and Pen Green staff and Research staff actively in EECERA conferences and publications. I have also personally encouraged and enabled many early childhood educators and ECE advisors from other local authorities to attend. Personally, membership of EECERA and conference attendance has radically shifted my own practice and has led to fantastic international collaborations and a dissemination of understanding around the work of involving parents in their children's learning and leadership in children's centres.

As a member of the Board of Trustees I feel that the most significant contributions that I have made to date have been:

- Co-constructing the work of the ethics committee and developing materials to support practitioner researchers on ethical issues
- Attending EECERA Trustees meetings and journal publishers meetings to discuss critical ethical issues in relation to publication
- Promoting EECERA to practitioner researchers throughout the UK, in New Zealand and in Australia
- Being an energetic, supportive and constructive critical friend at all times to the EECERA Trustees and team at conferences and Trustees meetings
- Actively supporting a number of EECERA Special Interest Groups

The Future

I have been an EECERA Trustee for a number of years and am deeply committed to the work that EECERA undertakes. I would therefore welcome the opportunity to continue in this role and to support the Board in furthering the work of an organisation that has made such a difference to the lives of so many ECEC practitioners - both those still working directly with children and those who are training others to do so or developing the knowledge base through practitioner research.

At a time when support for ECEC from governments in many countries is waning it is imperative that the ethos of the EECERA conference and its growing range of publications, are there to remind people that we have not yet achieved many of the things that pioneers in the field of ECEC were fighting for at the turn of the twentieth century - we still have an enormous amount to do and an uphill struggle to improve things for the children and families facing the greatest challenge. I am fully aware that the nightmare figure of 4.1 million children growing up in poverty can only get worse with the continued austerity policies in a number of European countries, including the UK. I believe EECERA is an active and influential force internationally, generating knowledge and influencing policy and practice worldwide to benefit young children and their families.

I have benefited enormously from being an EECERA member and feel that in my semi-retirement I'd like to do more for the organisation. I think I have successfully encouraged many practitioners to come to EECERA and share their work and I will continue to do so as I continue to work across the UK and in Australia and New Zealand. I have always tried to support and sustain the work of the Trustee Board and I am always looking for ways that I could make a greater contribution. I am committed to extending the membership and promoting EECERA's work. I am a strong ethical entrepreneur and would do as much as possible to make it possible for practitioners to access conferences in future. I want to invest time in supporting practitioners to publish their exemplary work through the journal. If I am elected I can offer the Trustees Board my energy, enthusiasm and openness in support of EECERA's mission.