

professional books



# Words of wisdom

If you had to pick just one key early years text, which would it be? We asked some experts to choose a book that has inspired them



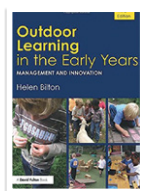
**Young Children Playing and Learning in a Digital Age: A Cultural and**

**Critical Perspective** by Christine Stephen and Susan Edwards, 2018 (Routledge, £23.99)

‘This wonderful book explores the emergence of the digital age and young children’s experiences with digital technologies at home and in early years settings, and really challenges ECE educators to shift their thinking about what

it means to grow up in a digital age rather than an industrial age.’

**Professor Chris Pascal**  
Director, CREC

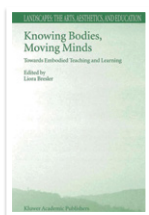


**Outdoor Learning in the Early Years** by Helen Bilton, 2010

(Routledge, £19.19)

‘It has had a direct, very practical impact on my setting and practice.’

**Anna Ephgrave**  
Assistant head teacher,  
Carterhatch Infant School



**Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds: Towards Embodied Teaching and Learning**

edited by Liori Bresler, 2004 (Springer, \$44)

‘The first section explores the cultural and philosophical contexts for embodied learning from a range of perspectives – music, fitness and exercise, education – and includes a particularly interesting chapter that contrasts the role of young children’s bodies in Japanese and American schools.

‘Section two focuses on how children’s bodies are perceived from a dance and music perspective – with a fascinating contribution that highlights the similarities between the management of bodies in prisons and classrooms.

‘A wonderfully bold and brave book that really provokes and illumines in equal measure – it has been the catalyst for so many productive discussions – often providing the necessary spur for further exploration and investigation.

‘A book I return to with great pleasure!’

**Lala Manners**  
Physical development expert



**People Under Three, Young Children in Day Care** by Elinor Goldschmied and Sonia

**Jackson, 2004 (2nd edition. Online, £25.99)**

‘When *People Under Three* was first published in 1994, not only did it bring together all that I had had the privilege to learn from Elinor in my early career but continued to then guide my future practice with children and my own teaching and writing for practitioners later on. It was one of the first (and very few) books focusing on practice with birth to threes at the time and still, when I hear myself and others talking about best practice with babies, toddlers and two-year-olds, I hear Elinor’s wisdom shining through. Every setting should have a copy!’

**Julia Manning-Morton**  
Early years consultant and author ▶

## book extract



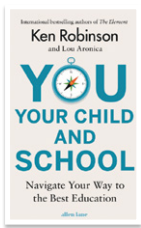
**How Children Fail** by John Holt, 1964 (Pitman Publishing Company, online)

‘First published in 1964, this transformed my ideas about how we should educate young children. It opened my eyes to the fact that children learn differently from each other and taught me the importance of valuing all children and responding to their interests.’

**Mary Dickins**  
Early years inclusion expert

**Extract:** ‘...[the] alternative – I can see no other – is to have schools and classrooms in which each child in his own way can satisfy his curiosity, develop his abilities and talents, pursue his interests, and from the adults and older children around him get a glimpse of the great variety and richness of life. In short, the school should be a great smorgasbord of intellectual, artistic, creative and athletic activities, from which each child could take whatever he wanted, and as much as he wanted, or as little. When Anna was in the sixth grade, the

year after she was in my class, I mentioned this idea to her. After describing very sketchily how such a school might be run, and what the children might do, I said, “Tell me, what do you think of it? Do you think it would work? Do you think the kids would learn anything?” She said, with utmost conviction, “Oh yes, it would be wonderful!” She was silent for a minute or two, perhaps remembering her own generally unhappy schooling. Then she said thoughtfully, “You know, kids really like to learn; we just don’t like being pushed around.”’



**You, Your Child and School** by Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica, 2018 (Penguin, £18.99)

‘Although it is predominantly targeted at parents, it covers important issues for teachers about the kind of education that children really need and what close adults can do to help children to develop in different ways, identifying the personal talents and interests that absorb them most.’

**Marion Dowling**  
Early years consultant and author



**Dibs in Search of Self** by Virginia Axline, 1964 (Ballantine Books, online)

‘This was originally written in 1964 and is from a therapy perspective in the early years. It had a major impact on me when I was training.’

**Eunice Lumsden**  
Head of early years, University of Northampton



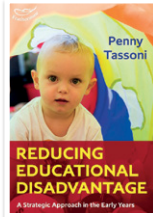
**Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It** by Sue Palmer

**We Can Do About It** by Sue Palmer, 2006 (Orion, £12.99)

‘This book was so thought-provoking and quite upsetting. It really opened my eyes to the new challenges that we needed to overcome and the changes we would need to make in our schools and in our teaching to hold the attention and meet the needs of young children.’

**Judy Shaw**  
Head teacher, Tuel Lane Infant School

## book extract



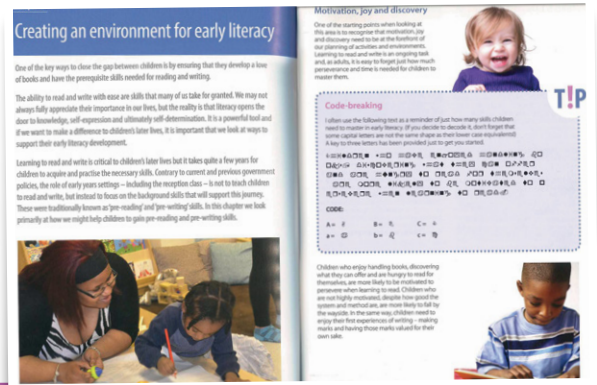
**Reducing Educational Disadvantage: A Strategic Approach in the Early Years** by Penny Tassoni, 2016 (Featherstone, £17.99)

‘I love this book because it challenges our thinking – it reminds us that what Penny calls “the unlucky children” may need adults to play a more directive role in their learning than we might assume.’

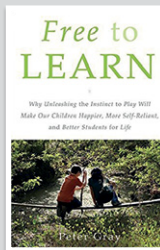
**Jean Gross**  
Education expert and chair of Bercow: Ten Years On

**Extract:** “Lucky” children begin the process of reading and writing already fluent in the language that they are to be taught in... Some children pick up on links between sounds and the symbols of letters without fluency, but they often decode without making any sense of what they have decoded. This problem may materialise when it comes to writing, as without being able to speak in full sentences, children will be unable to write them

independently. This may all seem obvious, but often children are being set up for failure by being expected to learn to read and write without having the language to do so. This in turn can lead to children losing their confidence and their motivation. If it were possible to wave a magic wand and change the education system so that reading and writing are introduced when children are ready, outcomes for some children would be very different. Unfortunately, despite numerous campaigns over the years, backed by research evidence that indicates the need to wait, no wand has been waved.’



## book extract



**Free to Learn** by Peter Gray, 2013 (Basic, \$27.99)

‘An incredibly inspiring book, which has become like a reference book to us, it expresses beautifully how children need freedom in life, not only in the early years but throughout childhood, to allow them to be happy, develop and learn to their maximum potential.’

**Leanna Barrett**  
Managing director, Little Forest Folk

**Extract:** ‘Children come into the world burning to learn and genetically programmed with extraordinary capacities for learning. They are little learning machines. Within their first four years or so they absorb an unfathomable amount of information and skills without any instruction. They learn to walk, run, jump and climb.

‘They learn to understand and speak the language of the culture into

which they are born, and with that they learn to assert their will, argue, amuse, annoy, befriend, and ask questions. They acquire an incredible amount of knowledge about the physical and social world around them. All of this is driven by their inborn instincts and drives, their innate playfulness and curiosity. Nature does not turn off this enormous desire and capacity to learn when children turn five or six. We turn it off with our coercive system of schooling.’



**Little Forest Folk aims to cater for children's need for 'freedom in life'**