

## **PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN: DEVELOPING HIGH ORDER THINKING FOR GIFTED LEARNERS IN THE GENERIC EARLY YEARS CLASSROOM**

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This presentation is aimed at early childhood educators, and will showcase on DVD a philosophical community of inquiry in a pre-primary setting. There will be a detailed exploration of the benefits of philosophical inquiry for gifted young students.

Rae Hickman and Ali Roundtree trained in 2005 as Level 1 teachers of Philosophy for Children. Rae immediately implemented the program with her pre-primary students, and as the school's literacy specialist teacher, Ali recorded several philosophy sessions in action in her classroom. Rae will explain how she differentiates her teaching in order to cater for various gifted and non-gifted young students' learning needs within this particular context.

Young children are less able than older children to seek out an environment that meets their needs and therefore it is essential that they are provided with a high quality environment in which to learn. Philosophy for Children is structured to be emotionally nurturing whilst encouraging mental exploration. All opinions are welcomed and valued. This is an environment that provides an opportunity for giftedness to develop.

Educators are often driven by the belief that, in order to progress, gifted students must be in the company of like-minded peers. In their experience with Philosophy for Children Rae and Ali learned that high order discussion is possible in any classroom, and that gifted students will appreciate and engage with the opinions of their classmates as equals. All children are innate philosophers, and all benefit from developing their speaking and listening skills, learning to agree or disagree respectfully and building on the ideas of others.