

The International Froebel Conference 6-8 September 2018.

Marie, Patsy and Katherine appreciated the opportunity to represent the Froebel Department at the recent International Froebel Conference held in Hiroshima in September 2018.



In advance of the conference, we had a fascinating visit to Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, which houses the *oldest* Kindergarten in Japan, established in 1876. We witnessed the purity of the Froebelian philosophy, which was as evident today as it was when it was founded, only twenty-four years after Froebel's death. The IFS conference in Hiroshima began with an excursion to another Kindergarten, the Jogakuin Gensu. The photos below show the dedication to the Froebelian principles of Play, choice, and respect for children which are espoused in Japan.



The theme of the conference was "Education for peace – Froebelian contributions at global and local level". The theme was made particularly poignant by locating the conference in Hiroshima, which witnessed such devastation in the wake of the atomic bomb in August 1945.



We were moved by the accounts of survivors, one of whom, Prof. Dr. Michio Ogasawara, presented a keynote address. He described the key impact of Froebelian education in the 73 years since the tragic event, and referred to the need to “develop students’ motivation and attitude to contribute to world permanent peace.” Our presentations on the “Froebelian Influence on Early Childhood Education in Ireland” (Patsy), “Keeping the Peace or Challenging the Status Quo? Instilling Agency for Change in Froebelian Student Teachers” (Marie), and “Playing Froebel Forward; Student perspectives through the Froebel Gift Award” (Katherine) aroused interest and were well received. We benefitted from this opportunity to rediscover how Froebel’s belief in the unity of all living things can make key contributions to an education aimed at international peace.

Preparation for workshop of Block Play, Hiroshima, 2018.

