

Free to Learn: Honouring the Pace and Potential of Every Child

What if education wasn't about ticking boxes or chasing grades, but about honoring the natural pace and unique journey of every child?

Educator turned forensic psychologist, Dale McGregor, believes it's time we stop asking, how do we fit children into a system and start asking, how do we free the system to fit the child?

With a background in understanding human behavior, trauma, and resilience, Dale saw firsthand how rigid structures can stifle not just learning but also a child's sense of self. His work with mental health, especially in supporting those with PTSD and anxiety, taught him that healing and growth happen when people feel safe, seen, and free to explore life in their own way.

The same is true in education.

Children aren't empty vessels waiting to be filled. They are curious beings with natural intelligence, capable of deep learning when trusted to follow their questions, make mistakes, and discover answers. Whether in a classroom, a workshop, or the wider world, learning flourishes when it's not forced.

True education isn't about control. It's about creating the space for confidence, curiosity, and creativity to grow.

In the latest '*All Learning Reimagined*' podcast, Dale discusses his ideas to help children and adults thrive:

- asking children what they want to learn,
- being goal oriented,
- asking questions and
- linking learning to what children value in real life – what do they want to achieve.

Dale also shares his perspectives on the value of smaller class sizes allowing more opportunity to build relationships and trust and to slow down the pace of learning instead of a one size fits all curriculum.

As more parents and educators begin to see the connection between mental health and meaningful learning, a quiet revolution is underway one where the heart of education is no longer compliance, but connection.

Because when we honour each child's pace, we don't just teach them facts. We teach them they are enough.

And that is a lesson worth learning.

If this topic resonates, then I encourage you to listen to the 26th July podcast **on All Learning Reimagined** when I interview Dale McGregor. He is a passionate forensic psychologist with experience in the RAAF and an educator.

Enjoy! Teresa 2025

