



Intergenerational care: A new generation

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Over the last decade an awareness of intergenerational care has grown globally, although the notion first came about during the 1970's in Japan, when Shimada Masaharu amalgamated a nursery school and care home. Following this success, more intergenerational care facilities opened across Japan and in the US and are growing in popularity across the UK.

Apples and Honey Nightingale was the first intergenerational care home in the UK built in the grounds of Nightingale care home. The founders, Judith Ish-Horowicz MBE and Ali Somers, who opened the setting in September 2017, it has become a global exemplar of practice through embedding daily intergenerational activities into the curriculum. Judith Ish-Horowicz recently spoke at our student conference '*seeing the world through a child eyes*' [Education and Childcare Careers Toolkit | NCFE | NCFE](#) and emphasized her belief that a child's holistic development includes interaction with all age groups. As people live longer and have stories to tell it gives children a sense of being part of an extensive line of history as well as offering a sense of belonging. Within the talk Judith shared three main principles for intergenerational care based on Beth Johnson foundation 2001:

- Principle 1: purposeful, mutual and reciprocal – all participating generations should benefit.
- Principle 2: promote greater understanding and respect between generations.
- Principle 3: Contribute to building more cohesive community ties.

The bringing together of different generations within a community space that empowers individuals to share experiences and engage with one another is known as intergenerational care. Beth Johnson (2001) outlines intergenerational practice as an approach that 'aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations.' So, through creating opportunities to *it is* possible for a new generation to evolve, allowing for a more cohesive community. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (Centre for Aging Better 2021) comprises of eight domains one of which includes respect and social inclusion for building and sustaining age friendly communities and projects. They also state that:

"Investment should be made in intergenerational contact interventions, which aim to foster interaction between people of different generations."

'Responding to this demographic shift will require us to make adaptations across many aspects of our lives: how we work; how we care for, communicate and interact with each other; the built environment we live and work in; the way

we live our lives; how we learn; and how we use technology.' (Gov 2016: Future of aging population).

In a recent interview with Fey Cole, author of *Intergenerational Practice in Schools and Settings 2023*, we discussed why intergenerational care is not everyday practice, her responses were that 'we're so used to being segregated, even from toddler groups, nursery rooms, school classes, so we're used to that in our lives.' This fragmentation of society is recognised in her book, she states that one older person said to her 'that you talk to your group, and I talk to mine and that's the way it is within our society, defined by age and status.' She emphasises the need for generations to come together, share their knowledge and social experiences to build and enrich communities.

This is reiterated by United For All Ages (UFAA's) in a report titled 'Next Generation' (2019), which recommends 'Every nursery, childminder, parent/toddler group and children centres should link with a local older peoples care home.'

The report highlights the value of interweaving community spaces to share experiences through focusing on building positive relationships and creating opportunities to learn together. Fey states there is a 'fear of breaking free from constraints' and that once free 'we are able to see how easy it is to adopt an intergenerational care approach'.

Linking Generations were awarded grants to enable intergenerational events to take place across NI in the month of April 2022. The Linking Generations NI Report: All Ages April 2022, identified that a total of 1,164 participants were connected from nursery age to 80+ [Resources – Linking Generations NI](#). The report highlights the significant responses of those taking part:

- 87% felt more connected to their community as a result of taking part in the activities.
- 98% would be keen to take part in more intergenerational activities.
- 98% stated they felt welcomed within the community.

Comments from participants included:

'No matter the age we all have links between us, spending time with each other and listening to their stories and songs. It has had a massive impact on myself which I knew it would as I see both generations linking together it is nothing less than magical.'

'The project gave elderly participants a chance to develop their cognitive skills and draw upon their memories.'

'I leant that children and adults alike can get nervous when using their learned language and meeting new people and that simple, interactive events such as these can be a huge benefit to all ages.'

It is this inclusivity that allows *all* the freedom to be heard and their voices respected in providing a deeper connection between generations and valuing the importance of an equal learning experience towards developing a New Generation.

If you are interested in pursuing a career in Intergenerational care, take a look at the NCFE/CACHE Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma in intergenerational Care and Education.

Signposting, further reading and references

Beth Johnson Foundation. (2001). Building better communities for all ages between the generations. (Online). Available at: <http://www.centreforip.org.uk> (Accessed March 2023)

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Linking Generations. (2021). Care homes and intergenerational practice. (Online). Available at: www.linkinggenerationsni.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ACE-Care-and-IP-.pdf (Accessed March 2023)

UFAA. (2019). *The next generation: how intergenerational interactions improves life chances of children and young people.*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/816458/future-of-an-ageing-population.pdf (Accessed March 2023)

<https://myhomelife.org.uk/community-engagement/> (Accessed March 2023)

<https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/projects/intergenerational> (Accessed March 2023)

<https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/blog/a-forest-of-hope> (Accessed March 2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fv75UeP9tGM> (Accessed March 2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aISXCw0Pi94> (Accessed March 2023)

[Resources – Linking Generations NI\(Accessed March 2023\)](#)