

# Case study

## The Joey Club

### Details

**What:**

The Joey Club child care centre collaborated with Scale Free Network to deliver the *Little Laboratory Project*, an art-science laboratory. Scale Free Network is an Australian art-science collaborative made up of two artists (Briony Barr and Jacqueline Smith) and a microbiologist (Dr Gregory Crocetti). Their interdisciplinary workshops and interactive installations focus on observation of the micro-scale as a source of inspiration and wonder, combining drawing processes, sculpture and microscopy as tools for visualising, exploring and learning about 'invisible' worlds.

In the *Little Laboratory Project*, small groups of children aged three to five, focused on close looking, shared wonder, beauty in nature and experimentation with art materials. The children used technology that was new and exciting to them, including a microscope camera from which found objects and artworks could be projected. This theatrical light-play space allowed the children to make and interact with large projections and capture video and photographs.

An exhibition showcased the variety of drawing, painting, sculpture, video, photography, collage and assemblage that was produced by the children.

**When:**

July 2015 to June 2016

**Where:**

Brisbane



Little Laboratory at the Joey Club. Photo: Scale Free Network

**Key stats:**

- 3 artists
- 33 children
- 14 educators

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$20,000 – Artist in Residence Fund

**Contact for further information:**

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Website: <http://scalefreenetwork.com.au/project/little-laboratory>

**Links:**

[www.flickr.com/photos/scalefreenetwork/sets/72157665082805880](http://www.flickr.com/photos/scalefreenetwork/sets/72157665082805880)

## Outcomes

- Through an arts-led process, the children learned about the complexity and connectedness of the ecological world. They were also able to explore other points of view and engage in new ways of seeing.
- At the Exhibition and Open House for the wider community children and their families participated in activities from the Lab and demonstrated their capabilities and confidence in the space.
- The educators learnt that quality materials were central to the art/science project. As a result they invested in a large range of materials recommended by the artists.
- Scale Free Network hadn't worked in early childhood previously and they were able to develop skills working in this area such as understanding what engages young children, how to reinforce their learning and introduce new language.
- 'The Lab' has been set up as a permanent dedicated space at The Joey Club. It is now available for other groups in the centre to experiment with the technology, equipment and art materials.



Little Laboratory at the Joey Club. Photo: Scale Free Network

## Learnings and reflections

The educators also made discoveries through this project:

*Early in the project we learned that sessions should allow for small groups of children as opposed to the whole class as originally thought. This presented several challenges in maintaining staff ratios while facilitating a separate group of small children to go on an incursion to the lab. A recommendation for other services would be to invest in a four-hour casual educator.*

*Setting aside time for educators and artists to meet and reflect on the experiences was very valuable and recommended for other people doing similar work.*

*Having a dedicated space was very effective as the whole project was a 'work in progress' and an evolving art installation that recorded past experiences as they were built upon.*