

Outdoor Play and Learning Special Interest Group

European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA)

Report 2018-2019

SIG Convenors

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1. Aim of the SIG

The SIG Outdoor Play and Learning is an emerging field of interest in international research and practice in early childhood education. Whilst in some countries, especially in Scandinavia, outdoor environments have long been established as crucial sites for learning, in others such as within the UK, the need to provide children with regular outdoor experience has only recently been given more emphasis in policy and practice. This change is due in part to concerns about the restriction of opportunities for outdoor play over the last three generations due to rise in traffic, greater institutionalisation of childhood and parents' safety concerns. At the same time, access to the outdoors for children has become limited with far greater use now of adult controlled and structured space. However, a clear pedagogy for the use of the outdoors as a site for learning has not been established and there has been relatively little research on what actually happens in outdoor environments.

The Outdoor Play and Learning SIG at EECERA is well placed to coordinate and disseminate international research on the international discourse in this emerging field. It aims to:

- create a space for shared thinking about play and learning in outdoor spaces;
- develop synergies between participants from wide range of professional and scientific contexts;
- provide an academic and rigorous forum at European and international level to develop and disseminate high quality research on outdoor play and learning.

2. Activities 2018-2019

Special issue in the International Journal of Play

The SIG is organizing a special issue of Outdoor play and Learning in the International Journal of Play and the issue was published May 2019. The special issue included eight articles and one editorial, and was edited by Shirley Wyver and Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter. The SIG started to prepare for the work on the issue during the SIG meeting in Bologna 2017.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rijp20/8/1?nav=tocList>

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

Several members of the SIG have contributed to the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development and its special section of Outdoor Play by writing small articles in the genre of *According to experts*. <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/according-experts>

International PhD course

Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér took forward the suggestion to start the work to organize an international PhD course in outdoor play and learning in connection to sustainability. The PhD course is now open to take part in from autumn 2019 for information contact: Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University.

EECERJ special issue

Contact has been taken with Tony Bertram about an EECERJ special issue for OPL. The responses will be discussed at the SIG meeting in Thessaloniki.

Overview of the SIG's work between 2008-2018

Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Jane Waters are, as part of celebrating 10 years retrospective OPL, writing an overview of the SIG's work between 2008-2018

Symposiums

At the EECERA conference in Thessaloniki, Greece three self-organised symposia from the Outdoor play and Learning SIG, including 9 presentations were accepted by the conference committee, however since then two authors have had to withdraw their papers so the SIG has two self-organised symposia, with 6 papers, and another paper in the main conference.

The SIG meeting

The SIG meeting for 2019 is going to take place on Tuesday 20th of August between 15.30-17.00 at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Membership of the SIG

This year the Outdoor Play and Learning Special Interest Group's total number of paying members is 40 and 80 associated members (2019-06-12).

Publications (a selection from the conveners)

Elliott, S., & Ärlemalm-Hagsér, E. (2019). Early Childhood Teacher Education – Socio-Cultural Contexts. I V. Margrain & S. Stover. *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education*. Springer. doi:10.1007/978-981-13-1179-6_101-1

Ärlemalm-Hagsér, E., & Elliott, S. (2018). Transcultural explorations in nature based early childhood education: Sweden and Australia. I P. Becker., C. Loynes., B. Humberstone & J. Schirp (Red.), *The Changing World of the Outdoors - European Reflexions*. (pp. 89-103). London: Routledge.

Kennair, L. E. O., Sandseter, E. B. H., & Ball, D. (2018). Risky play: healthy or dangerous? In A. B. Kaufman & J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Pseudoscience: The Conspiracy Against Science* (pp. 171-194). MIT Press.

Wyver, S., & Sandseter, E. B. H. (2019). A playful introduction. *International Journal of Play*, 8(1), 1-2. doi:10.1080/21594937.2019.1580274

Storli, R., & Hansen Sandseter, E. B. (2019). Children's play, well-being and involvement: how children play indoors and outdoors in Norwegian early childhood education and care institutions. *International Journal of Play*, 8(1), 65-78. doi:10.1080/21594937.2019.1580338

Waters, J. & Rekers, A. (2019) Young Children's Outdoor Play-Based Learning. In: Tremblay RE, Boivin M, Peters RDeV, eds. Brussoni M, topic ed. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online]. Published May 2019. Accessed May 7, 2019. Link as above.

Bateman, A. & Waters J. (2018) Risk-Taking in the New Zealand Bush: Issues of Resilience and Wellbeing. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*; Special issue. 12 (2) 7-29. <http://www.pccerajournal.com/?page=3&vol=12&no=2>

Future activities:

Publications, meetings, networking, cross-national collaboration, symposiums.

3. Networks established with other institutions and organisations

Each member of the SIG has a network within their own country and area of work. The collaboration within the SIG between members mean that the SIG is informally associated with a wide variety of local, regional, national and international networks and organisations.

4. How do the SIG's activities fit with aims and ethos of EECERA

The activities in the SIG encourage and support cross-national collaborations, with multi-disciplinary research on early childhood and early childhood education. The collaboration between the researchers in the SIG group also study outdoor education and play and its applications to policy and practice.

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Ellen Beate H. Sandseter, Jane Waters and Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér