

30th EECERA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS:

Book of Abstracts

‘Cultures of play: Actors, Affordances and Arenas’

Glasgow, Scotland

23rd – 26th August 2022



GLASGOW | 2022

CULTURES OF PLAY: ACTORS,
AFFORDANCES AND ARENAS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

EECERA 2022 organisers would like to thank the Scientific Committee for their freely given time, diligence and scholarship.

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‘Peer-Reviewed Abstracts of the EECERA 2022 Conference Proceedings’

These Abstracts have been formally assessed and approved by the Conference Scientific Committee against EECERA’s published acceptance criteria.

CONDITION OF PARTICIPATION: Some abstracts submitted by delegates for participation in EECERA 2022 have been revised and edited in good faith by the Scientific Committee. The organisers cannot be held responsible for the contents of the abstracts published in this book.

Contents

Keynote I.....	4
Keynote II.....	5
Keynote III.....	6
Keynote IV.....	7
Symposium Set A.....	8
Symposium Set B.....	34
Symposium Set C.....	61
Symposium Set D.....	87
Symposium Set E.....	113
Symposium Set F.....	139
Poster Symposium Set I.....	164
Poster Symposium Set II.....	174
“PED”agogical Talks.....	184
INDEX.....	190

Wednesday 24th August 2022

9:30 – 10:30

KARIN MURRIS

University of Oulu, Finland

Reconfiguring child agency in digital play: the lenses we use

We often use visual digital technologies as research instruments in early childhood. But they are never innocent. How we theorise the *metaphorical* and *literal* lenses of our eyes and our cameras informs our observation practices and shapes what we mean by child agency. My talk will trace some of the complex scientific, philosophical and religious influences that account for our current notion of child agency. I reconfigure child agency through detailed postqualitative analysis of an example from educational research on digital play with South African children and their human and other-than-human families. African philosophies and listening to young children as philosophers forge 'new' relations to 'nature' – an ontological paradigm shift that is urgently needed in the Anthropocene.

Keynote II

Wednesday 24th August 2022

11:00 – 12:00

LYNN MCNAIR (1), DEIDRE GROGAN (2), LYNN TAYLOR & MARION BURNS

(1) University of Edinburgh, (2) University of Strathclyde, (3) Education Scotland

Connected cultures; identifying and celebrating Scotland's actors, affordances, and arenas of play through stories of practice

This keynote presentation journeys through Scotland's current play context by illustrating our Scottish connected cyclical approach of practice to policy to practice. Marion Burns and Lynn Taylor will set the scene through outlining impacts of Scotland's permissive policy and practice landscape which has been in part transformed through the national practice guidance of *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*. Deirdre Grogan will then share her reflections gathered via a case study from her knowledge exchange work of leading of play with settings and local authorities across Scotland to enable educators to be confident in facilitating child-led learning. Finally, Lynn McNair will end by revealing some beliefs, customs and traditions of 'storytelling'. Children's repertoires will be shared through fluid delivery, oral traditions and story interpretations.

Keynote III

Friday 26th August 2022

9:30 – 10:30

ALISON CLARK

University of South-Eastern Norway/ UCL, United Kingdom

Time for play? Claiming back time in Early Childhood Education and Care

Time has been brought into sharp relief during the pandemic. Education systems and their testing and examination structures have been shaken, calling into question the compulsion to 'run ever faster in order to maintain our place in the world' (Rosa, 2017: 415). Political agendas move on and tend to have short memories but as researchers and educators it is important to be able to take a longer view.

The relationship with time in ECEC is rarely made explicit but is embedded in everyday practices and bound up with young children's opportunities to play or the constraints placed on play. I suggest there is a need to claim back time for young children and for those who work with young children, especially as we gather in a conference that has taken play as its theme.

I draw on examples from my recent two year study: 'Slow knowledge and the unhurried child' (Clark, 2023) funded by the Froebel Trust to explore the relationship with time in ECEC practice, in research and in early childhood teacher education. Who might benefit most if a *timeful* approach to ECEC can be reclaimed, where are the challenges and what urgent issues may emerge?

Clark, A. (2023) *Slow knowledge and the unhurried child: time for slow pedagogies in early childhood education*. London: Routledge.

Keynote IV

Friday 26th August 2022

11:00 – 12:00

ANNE GREVE

Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

In this presentation professor Anne Greve will present results from an ongoing study about teachers' participation in dramatic play in kindergartens and schools. The research question she and her co researchers Knut Olav Kristensen and Eilen Bergvik ask is: How can teachers participate in dramatic play with children in a way that inspire to more play? Inspired by mosaic approach, developed by Alison Clark and Peter Moss, and autoethnography, Anne and her co researchers have invited children and teachers to express their experiences with dramatic play. Theories from dramatic play and improvisation have been useful to understand and analyze our data. The results show that teachers can participate in play in different ways without disturbing the children's agendas. Both teachers and children can be actors in the dramatic play, as well as scenographers, directors, audience, etc. Teachers and children express that the relations between those who participate in play, are likely to be stronger if teachers participate as equal play partners. This in return, may influence how teachers are able to secure a good life for children here and now as well as in the future.

A 1

SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Tünde Puskás, Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Sweden

Promoting wellbeing through a counseling model in Kindergarten and first years of Primary Schools

Ilaria Folci, Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore Milano, Italy

The aim of this contribution is to present a counseling model, in which caring relationship is widespread, including all people involved (scholastic headmaster, teachers, parents and pupils) who attend last Kindergarten's years and first years of Primary School in North of Italy. The goal of this counseling approach is to improve individuals and group empowerment, from the starting point that cooperative network is a fundamental basis to enhance scholastic wellbeing. In Italy A. Antonietti (2016) has implemented a model of learning based on the co-participation of all stakeholders to increment well-being context. Our Center of Study has created a model of counseling in preschool and primary school from these studies. At the basis of this counseling model, it is possible to recognize a concrete realization of Community of Practice (E. Wenger, 1998) in order to consider different elements, dynamically interacting in the school. The peculiarities of the model are: a shared view of problematic situations to connect different perspectives; observations in classes to identify educational problems; close connection between different roles and scholastic resources; systematic communication with local services. The family of children involved signed a consent and information form and join the consulting deliberately. Main results related to this counseling approach are: more widespread care taking of children difficulties, increased awareness about cooperation and community role, improved shared responsibilities and strategies. Existing practices, policies and inclusive cultures enhance with the share and the communication of them among the stakeholders.

Cooperation, Innovative counseling model, Community, Inclusion, Wellbeing

Living in the heaven and buried in the earth? Strategies of teaching young children about death

Tünde Puskás, Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Sweden

This study explores the strategies employed in Swedish preschools when teaching about death for children between 3-5 years. Previous research has shown that preschool teachers often feel that they lack sufficient training and knowledge in dealing with issues related to death (e.g., Bowie 2000; Pratt 1987). The theoretical framework draws on Alexander's ideas about dialogic teaching (2006) and the theoretical concepts that are of importance for understanding what biological death entails: irreversibility, finality, inevitability, and causality (Christian, 1997; Tamm & Granqvist, 1995; Slaughter & Lyons, 2003). The study was conducted within a qualitative, participant centered paradigm. The data consist of video recordings of four visits to cemeteries conducted by 6 practitioners and 26 children from two preschools. The participating preschool practitioners and the guardians of children were informed about the advantages and the risks of the study, that participating was voluntary, and that the research data are treated as strictly confidential (Adler, Salanterä and Zumstein-Shaha, 2019). A written consent form was signed by practitioners and the guardians of children. The children's consent was sought in a rights-based and ongoing manner.

The findings show that relying on a child centered pedagogy, when the practitioners do not plan the content of the activity but rely exclusively on the children's curiosity, does not function well as a pedagogical strategy in relation to an existential question that the practitioners themselves find sensitive. The article contributes to developing practitioner's strategies for managing children's death anxiety and for understanding and dealing with children's death play.

Child centered pedagogy, Swedish preschools, didactics of death, preschool teachers, strategies

Dogs in the early years: exploring the potential (and challenges) of dogs as playmates for young children

Helen Lewis, Swansea University, United Kingdom

This study explored whether the presence of a dog had an impact on interactions during playful learning in early childhood settings. The potential benefits of play for young children are widely recognised (eg Murray, 2018). However, research has primarily focused on children's play with humans and has paid less attention to play with non-human animals (Melson, 2010).

Yet many children are fascinated by animals. This research was conducted within a social constructivist framework, where an animal as a 'social other' provides children with someone to talk to, and something to talk about, creating opportunity for meaningful interaction (eg Meadan and Jegatheesan, 2010). Four teachers and their dogs participated over one academic year. 24 three-to-five-year-old children were observed regularly during play-based sessions either in the company of a real dog or a stuffed toy dog. EECERA's Ethical Code (2015) and the institution's ethical processes were followed. Informed consent from parents/carers and informed assent from children was gained. The dogs had the right to withdraw from activities at any time. Findings indicate that the presence of the dog offered opportunity to develop social skills such as oral communication. The dog provided a stimulus for conversation, the children made more utterances with the live dog present ($M=26.5$, $SD=8.4$) compared to when a toy dog was present ($M=20.46$, $SD=6.18$). This difference (6.04) was statistically significant $t(23)= 5.01$, $p<0.001$. In some cases the dog also supported more cooperative play. The paper makes recommendations for safe, ethical and humane play-based animal-assisted interactions in early years settings.

Playful learning, human-animal interactions, school dogs, social skills, oral communication

A 2

GENDER, CARE AND POWER RELATIONS IN ECEC

Self-organised Symposium

In this self-organised symposium the presenters will discuss different aspects of the relationships between gender, care and power in ECEC. Gendered expectations and the policing of gender roles emerge in this scholarship with dominant gender discourses prevailing. This symposium raises questions of the conception of care, the division of power, and the influence of gender on child-educator interactions. The need for gender sensitive approaches to promote equitable practices in ECEC are examined.

Chair: Kari Emilsen, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC), Norway

Crossing the gender line: The pervasive power of gender roles in ECEC

Joanne McHale, TU Dublin, Ireland

This doctoral research project aimed to investigate the mechanisms by which the small minority of men enter the Irish ECEC workforce and once there, the path their trajectories take. This research drew on the foundational work of Cameron, Moss and Owen (1999) and subsequent studies internationally which have shown men's entry into the ECEC sector as multi-faceted and their experiences complex as they navigate the gendered workplace (Brody, Emilsen, Rohrmann and Warin, 2021; Brody & Hadar, 2017; Peeters, Rohrmann & Emilsen, 2015; Warin, Ljunggren & Andrä, 2021; Warin, Wilkinson, Davies, Greaves & Hibbin). Connell's (2005, 2009) theoretical perspective of gender as constructed and embedded in the structures of society and policed through relationships framed this study. An embedded mixed-methods design was employed in which semi-structured interviews with men and women ECEC workers, focus group with careers guidance teachers and a survey of parents accessing ECEC provision were conducted. Ethical approval was granted by UCL Institute of Education and ITB (now TU Dublin). Ethical considerations included informed consent, right to withdraw, privacy, anonymity and data protection. Issues of safeguarding and disclosures were considered and a supervisory mechanism embedded. This presentation discusses issues of power, gendered expectations and policing of gender roles reported by the men in this study. The issues of the continued association of ECEC with notions of maternal care and gendered expectations both on a societal level and in the workplace are discussed and suggestions for a less gendered workforce and conception of care are presented.

Men in ECEC, Gender roles, ECEC workforce, Gender construction, Professionalism

Gender and disciplinary power in child-practitioner interactions in early childhood education and care (ECEC): A comparative study of Edinburgh, Hong Kong, and Tianjin

Yuwei Xu (1), Barbara Read (2), Michele Schweisfurth (2), (1) University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, (2) University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

This study analyses how male and female staff and children in ECEC settings in Edinburgh, Hong Kong, and Tianjin construct and navigate gendered power relations. We analyze how practitioners and children perpetuate gender stereotypes/norms through their interactions. The paper draws on the underutilized observational data to inform debates on whether men should work in ECEC (Rohrmann & Brody, 2015; Xu, 2020). We employ Connell's southern theory (Connell, 2007) to explain subtle and dynamic manifestations of gender as disciplinary power, shaped by dominant cultural discourses. Our conceptions of

gender are informed by Foucault (1982; 1985), Butler (1990; 2004), and Confucianism (Yim et al., 2011). Taking a qualitative and interpretative approach, 17 ECEC classrooms were observed for one week each. All classrooms had a male and at least one female practitioner working on a regular basis with young children. The research gained ethical approvals from two universities in Scotland and China, and from Edinburgh City Council. Informed consent was gained from managers, practitioners, children, and parents. Findings reveal that gender is utilised as a pervasive technology of power to normalise children's (and adult practitioners') performances in ECEC classrooms, reproducing the power of dominant gender discourses in Chinese and Scottish societies. Men's participation in ECEC embeds no disruption to those gendered discourses, but rather rendering them more salient especially in Chinese ECEC. We propose a hybrid of gender-sensitive, interactive, and culturally contextualised approaches to promoting gender diversity and challenging gender norms, beyond simply calling for more men to work in ECEC.

Gender, disciplinary power, child-practitioner interactions, early childhood education and care, men in ECEC

Exploring gender in toys-libraries: An analysis of affordances and play episodes involving children and their parents

Véronique Rouyer (1), Corinne Ponce (1), Stéphanie Rubi (2), Stéphanie Constans (1), Yannick Hernandez (3), (1) University of Bordeaux, Laboratory of Psychology, France, (2) University of Paris-Descartes, France, Laboratory of Psychology, University of Bordeaux, France, (3) Passages, University of Bordeaux-Montaigne, France

This four-year inquiry aims at exploring how gender shapes play in toy-librarians, by looking at their affordances and play episodes involving children and their parents. Research has shown that gender-typed toy play takes place in many daily contexts (family, center-based care, kindergarten, school) and contribute to children's development of gender-type preferences and behaviors (Rouyer, 2007; Weisgram & Dinella, 2018). Toy-libraries are children's areas offering playgrounds, toys and games that are suppose to encourage free-play and choices (Mayfield, 1993). The theoretical framework draws upon current multidisciplinary theories of children's play (Corsaro, 1997, Vygotsky, 1967) and gender development (Blakemore, Berenbaum & Liben 2009; Rouyer, 2007). We used a qualitative, interpretative research paradigm (Guba, 1981) and socio-ethnographical approach (Beaud & Weber, 1997) in two contrasted French toy-libraries. We led semi-structured interviews (6 with toy-librarians, 15 with parents and children), 3 filmed commented-walks for each toy-library and 39 sessions of observations (36 ethnographical, 3 filmed). We proceeded with a thematic content analysis in a comprehensive approach. Ethical considerations of qualitative research were respected (consent form to each participant, participants' pseudonyms). Our findings show that the affordances and the spatial organization vary according to the toy-library's play project. Despite the principle of free play, children's choices of toys and games and playful interactions with children or parents are often gender-typed. These findings suggest implications for how toy-librarians could better considerate gender effects in free-play interactions, to promote a less gendered culture of play.

Toy-libraries, gender development, play interactions, children, qualitative research

A 3

LEARNING FROM PLAY: METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FROM COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES IN BRAZIL, ESWATINI, PALESTINE AND SOUTH AFRICA

Self-organised symposium

This symposium examines the affordances and spaces for playful research methodologies, for young children and their families/ carers, in low-income communities which deal with challenges of violence. Community case studies are underway in Brazil, Eswatini, Palestine and South Africa, as part of the UKRI GCRF funded project 'Safe, Inclusive and Participative Pedagogy' (2020-24). Fieldwork is engaging children aged 0-5, their parents/ carers, early years services' providers and other community stakeholders. Methods include ethnographic observation, local mapping, semi-structured interviews and focus groups using 'playful' participatory methods with a minimum, in each community, of 30 children and family members, 20 service providers and 20 community stakeholders. The symposium explores the application of the 'playful' participatory methods, their challenges and advantages under COVID-19 restrictions, and how they led to unexpected and/or productive research findings. It will start with a reflective overview paper, and then provide examples from two of the community case studies.

Chair: Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Playful methods in times of COVID-19: learning from communities

Patricio Cuevas-Parra (1), Linda Biersteker (2), Malcolm Bush (3), Clement Diamini (4), Rabab Tamish (5), Irene Rizzini (3), Kay Tisdall (1), (1) University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, (2) University of Cape Town, South Africa, South Africa, (3)

International Centre for Research and Policy on Childhood, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro Brazil, Brazil, (4) University of Eswatini, Swaziland, (5) University of Bethlehem, Palestine
For abstract see page 149

Barriers and opportunities of play in a violent, impoverished Brazilian community

Irene Rizzini, Malcolm Bush, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro Brazil, Brazil
For abstract see page 149

The rights of children in early learning: opportunities and challenges for research and advocacy in a South African case study community

Linda Biersteker, Lizette Berry, Children's Institute, South Africa
For abstract see page 150

A 4

SUPPORTING HOME LEARNING AND PARENTING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Birgit Huepping, PH Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany

Picking up the pieces: Co-designing a play-based community approach to supporting the home learning environment

Debra Davies (1), Kathryn Morris (2), (1) Centre for Early Child Development - Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom, (2) Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

Better Start is an inclusive partnership approach, focussed on Early Child Development and collectively laying foundations that enable babies and young children to thrive in the context of sensitive and responsive relationships through, interactions and playful experiences. Playful experiences offer a unique context for supportive and rich learning in early childhood (Zosh, Hopkins, Jensen, Liu & Neale, 2017), with the caregiver playing a crucial role in enabling responsive social interactions that build healthy brain connections. Inspired by collective impact (Christens & Inzeo, 2015) and community driven, the partnership is taking a whole systems approach to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and focus on recovery and meeting the needs of children in the current context. Focus groups (Dichter, 1961) with early years practitioners identified that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on children's development. Findings identified a need to support the HLE which will be developed through community consultation. Support measures are in place to mitigate risk, including maintaining the anonymity of participants and sharing the paper to ensure validity (Birt, 2016). Through co-production with our community, we have been able to align play-based opportunities and home-learning environments, developing stronger support structures for babies and children to experience rich and responsive social interactions, reduce social isolation and support parents to gain a deeper understanding about how children learn through play. The Better Start Partnership is illustrating the potential of joined up, systems-wide approaches to improving ECD outcomes and putting the theory, science, and evidence about play into practice.

Community, Co-production, Collective Impact, Partnership, Relationships

Role-play as Learning Strategy by Children in the Context of Home-schooling while the Covid-19 pandemic

Birgit Huepping (1), Melanie Kubandt (2), Mirja Kekeritz (3), (1) PH Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany, (2) Universität Vechta, Germany, (3) Universität Osnabrück, Germany

The qualitative study in a German primary school focuses on children's learning strategies at times of home-schooling while Covid-19. The study traces how students (school beginners, 6-7 years) incorporate school practices into their daily learning through role play to better cope with learning demands. With reference to findings by Popp (2014) and Hummrich (2015) the high value of school as a social interactive space beyond its learning function becomes obvious. According to Eßer (2014) the study is based on the thesis that children are actively involved in the (re)production of school as a social setting. Therefore, the study outlines a conceptual framework that merges socio-cultural theories with the idea of children's agency (Gallagher 2019). The data is based on Interviews with 21 children, questionnaires, children's drawings and non-reactive audiotape statements. The data was coded according to Grounded Theory by Strauss and Corbin (1996). Ethical considerations were given priority throughout this study. The EECERA Ethical Code for early childhood Researchers (2015) was followed with voluntary, informed consent sought from children, parents and educators. The results show different creative coping strategies by the children, but also point to the high relevance of attending school as a social interaction space. Here it is particularly evident that the children engage in role-playing with their siblings and parents, which helps to compensate for the lack of a school environment at home. Based on the results, recommendations can be derived for both parents and teachers on how home-schooling could be made more learning-friendly.

Role-play, Home-schooling, Coping strategies, Covid-19, Qualitative research

Collaboration between staff and parents in ECEC to promote peer interactions in ECEC

Ellen Elvethon (1), Helene Berntsen Svensson (2), Ingrid Midteide Løkken (1), (1) University of Stavanger, Norway, (2) Trondheim kommune, Norway

The aim of this study is to investigate how staff can collaborate with parents to promote peer interactions in ECEC settings. Collaboration between staff and parents is important for children's friendship, and a preventive measure for violations and bullying (Aaseth, Elvethon, Midteide Løkken, Nilsen, & Moser 2021). Partnership and dialogue is essential (Lund, Helgeland, Kovac, Cameron, & Godtfredsen, 2019), and to create social environments and to communicate about friendship (Hollingsworth & Buysse, 2009). The theory in this study is based on the knowledge that children's development takes place in relationships and collaboration within the social context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The study has a qualitative approach based on focus group interviews consisting of two parents and two staff members from four ECEC centers. The interviews were audio recorded, and later transcribed, coded and categorized through thematic analysis (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). We ensured that the ethical guidelines were followed during the interviews. We took turns to speak and secured both groups perspective. The consent was free and informed, and the study is approved by the Norwegian center for research data. Preliminary results show that staff and parents collaborate in exchanging information, having community practices, dialogue and creating a positive climate. The staff also highlights supporting peer interactions through inclusion, social-emotional and communicative competence. The pandemic affected the collaboration when physical meetings were not possible. Implications of the study are to contribute to the debate on how the staff and parents can create arenas and to improve practice for collaboration to support peer interactions.

Peer interactions, ECEC, Collaboration, Staff, Parents

A 5

IMPACT OF COVID IN 3 COUNTRIES: GERMANY, MEXICO AND WALES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom

No nursery 'til school – preschooler's academic and social-emotional development without institutional transition support due to the COVID-19 shutdown in Germany

Carolin Quenzer-Alfred, Lisa Schneider, Daniel Mays, University of Siegen, Germany

This study examines preschoolers' academic and social-emotional development during the COVID-19 nursery-shutdown in Germany. It connects to work exploring parents' perspective on preschoolers' transition-related development during nursery-shutdowns in the context of the pandemic (Specht, 2021). It draws upon current theories that conceptual play in institutional early learning environments supports the development of academic and social-emotional skills vital for a successful transition to school (Hauser, 2005: 153). To address the question what happens when conceptual playing opportunities shut-down, a

mixed methods approach was applied with a single-group pre-posttest comparison design and a follow-up after transition. 58 preschoolers were tested with a standardised test (IDS-2; Grob & Hagmann-von-Arx 2018). Interviews with children, parents and professionals added multi-perspective information (Einarsdottir 2007). Data was analysed anonymously to avoid stigmatization with non-parametric statistics and the coding procedures of Grounded Theory Methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1996). An informed consent form was provided to all participants and negotiated with children before and during the study. Withdrawal was possible at all times (including children). Small group-interviews were chosen for a comfortable setting and the study was approved by the university's ethics board. Quantitative findings show significant decreases of mathematical, language and social-emotional skills after the shutdown and remained persistent throughout transition. Qualitative data describe children that show themselves afraid of schools only a few weeks before transition. Concluding, the study implies that politics need to consider nurseries (shutdowns) well as they might have a greater impact on crucial developmental areas before school transition than previously thought.

Preschoolers, COVID-19 nursery shutdown, social-emotional development, mathematical and language skills, transition

Amplifying Young Children's Voices: Educational experiences of 3- to 7-year-olds in Wales during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Gisselle Tur Porres (1), Jacky Tyrrie (1), Jade Parnell [2], Sarah Chicken (3), Eleanor Grout (4), Dawn Mannay (5), Amy Simpson (6), Bridget Handley (7), (1) Swansea University, United Kingdom, (2) University of the West of England, United Kingdom, (3) UWE, United Kingdom, (4) UWE / Swansea University, (5) Cardiff University, United Kingdom, (6) Swansea University / Cardiff Uni, United Kingdom, (7) Cardiff Uni / Swansea Uni, United Kingdom

This Welsh Government-funded study aimed to capture the voices of young children during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding their educational experiences. Longitudinal research suggests young children's early educational experiences shape their development in later years (Goodman & Sianesi 2005). Given the significance for longer-term development, it is important to understand the educational experiences of children during COVID-19. However, few studies have centred children's voices when exploring the impact of COVID-19 within education (Pascal & Bertram, 2021). This research was conducted within a social constructivist paradigm and recognises children's experiences of the pandemic are context-specific. Children are conceptualised as experts in their own lives (Alderson, 2011). Drawing on the Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2017), creative, child-friendly methods of data collection were utilised. This allowed children to participate in knowledge exchange during the research process. Four schools were recruited, from which 25 children were participants. Data collected were analysed using qualitative coding to generate themes (Roberts-Holmes, 2018). Age-appropriate information and consent were provided to all participants. Ongoing consent was discussed with participating children during each research encounter. Participants were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time and issues related to power between adults and children were considered throughout. Anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Early analysis of the data suggests themes around social isolation from peers, difficulty with daily routines and accessing information, and increased outdoor playtime and family time. There are implications for practice and policy communities to ensure provision reduces adverse effects of the pandemic, while learning from advantageous outcomes.

COVID-19, Children's voices, Creative methods, Education experiences, Wales

Playful learning in Mexican preschools during and after COVID-19: lessons learned for future emergencies

Dina Fajardo-Tovar, University of Cambridge, Play in Education Development And Learning (PEDAL) Centre, Mexico

This research investigates playful learning in Mexican urban and rural preschools amidst the pandemic. Specifically, how it adapted and the challenges and lessons learned in this scenario. COVID-19 enforced school closures and social distance. Hence, ECE was significantly challenged. Mainly, the playful, social, and contingent nature of ECE was hampered (Timmons et al., 2021). Research on teachers' experiences shows the challenges and opportunities of distance learning. However, there is a lack of knowledge on how ECE in LMICs adapted and how playful learning changed. Therefore, drawing upon Bronfenbrenner's model, this study investigates how teaching and playful learning occurred during the crisis influenced by components of ecological systems. This research is conducted within a qualitative interpretive paradigm allowing in-depth exploration of perspectives and context. Teachers from rural and urban preschools were interviewed and observed. Interviews, observations, pictures, and lesson plans were analysed thematically. Participation was voluntary and confidential. Informed consent was negotiated with direct and indirect participants at each phase of data collection. To ensure a fair representation of perspectives, deductive and inductive analysis, and members' checks during data collection and analysis were undertaken. Last, constant reflection on positionality and actions to equalize power dynamics were essential during fieldwork. In Mexico, emergency ECE varied greatly. Some teachers conducted asynchronous and synchronous activities, some of them including playful learning in various ways, with or without technology. Following Bronfenbrenner's model these responses, outcomes, challenges, and opportunities are analysed. Finally, the lessons learned may inform distance learning initiatives incorporating playful learning in LMICs.

A 6

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Self Organised Symposium

Building on research on praxeology (e.g. Bertram and Pascal 2012) and pedagogical leadership we conceptualise leadership as praxis. Previously, we sought to identify the ideological and practical struggles that impact on leadership in early childhood education and care (ECEC) (Palaiologou et al 2021). There we argued that leadership needs to be (re) conceptualised as pedagogical praxis and “should not be viewed only as action(s) working with theory, but as an interplay of several contextually related factors (hexis) in any given situation” (Palaiologou and Male, 2019: 30) as well as attending to the ecology of the community. In this symposium we aim to explore pre-school leaders’ response to crises by examining how they: develop an understanding - in a comparative way - of how pre-school leaders react to difficult and unexpected situations to manage crises; develop a common understanding of leading practices in ECEC settings in times of crises.

Chair: Ioanna Palaiologou, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Leadership in crises: The case of England

Trevor Male (1), Amanda Ince (2), Ioanna Palaiologou (3), (1) UCL Centre for Educational Leadership, United Kingdom, (2) UCL Institute of Education, United Kingdom, (3) University of Bristol, United Kingdom

This research project, conducted in England, sought to investigate: pre-school leaders’ perceptions of crises and/or critical incidents, leaders’ response/s to crises, how contextual changes and constraints affected leading effectively, whether leaders changed leadership behaviours to adapt to new circumstances/challenges, the quality of support they received from outside their setting, any lessons learnt and changes to be continued in the future. Previous research had concluded successful leadership in ECEC was conceptualised as pedagogical praxis (Palaiologou and Male 2019; Palaiologou et al, 2021) . Thus, by employing notions of Praxeology (e.g. Bertram and Pascal 2012) and Pedagogical Leadership (Palaiologou and Male 2019), leadership is conceptualised as praxis. The research employed qualitative methodology with 13 leaders in 10 ECEC settings interviewed for between 30 minutes to one hour via the use of online platforms (e.g. Zoom and Microsoft Teams). All participants showed agreement to the research through signed consent form. Key findings show crises can be classified as “planned” (critical incidents) with procedures and policies leaders and staff can follow. There are ongoing crises (such as COVID lockdowns), however, to which leaders need to be continually responsive. We also found that the COVID crisis had an impact on leadership behaviour due to persistently changing guidelines and policies at national government level. The implications are that in rapidly changing environments leaders need to be flexible and adaptive. In ongoing situations, such as the Covid pandemic, key priorities need to shift from setting-based learning and teaching to supporting children, families and their staff.

Pedagogical leadership, early childhood education and care, crises, critical incidents, pandemic

Leadership in Crisis: The case of Greece

Eleftheria Argyropoulou (1), Ioanna Palaiologou (2), (1) University of Crete, Greece, (2) University of Bristol

This project examines pre-school leaders’ perceptions of crises and /or critical incidents, response/s to crises, contextual changes and constraints affecting leading, changing leadership style and /or modifying skills to meet new challenges and adapt to new circumstances and lessons learnt. The work builds on previous evidence on ECEC leadership, pedagogical leadership in ECEC and leadership response to COVID-19 challenges (Argyropoulou, 2013, 2021, Argyropoulou & Hatira, 2014, Palaiologou et al, 2021). The project is framed on research on praxeology (e.g. Bertram and Pascal 2012) and pedagogical leadership where leadership is conceptualised as praxis. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted -via skype- with ECEC leaders from various areas around the country, during the period 15.2.2021-31.3.2021. There was informed consent of participants. Data were anonymised, coded and analysed thematically. The research has been approved by the University of Crete Research Ethics Committee (approval no 16/8.2.2021). Findings indicate the abrupt change of teaching styles and the necessity of introducing alternative teaching procedures, the need for adopting a more empathetic and creative style of leadership, close cooperation among all education stakeholders, the impact of the new situation to families, the increase of parental involvement in the provision of home-based education; finally, the pathologies of government policies and the inequalities remote learning caused to less privileged students. Policies and practices need to

find effective ways to approach issues stemming from the COVID crisis and lessons were learnt on how to achieve closer and meaningful cooperation bonds.

Pedagogical leadership, State ECEC centre leaders, crises, crisis management, COVID-19 crisis

Leadership in Crisis: The case of Sweden

Maria Styf, Catarina Arvidsson, Mid Sweden University, Sweden

This project examines: pre-school leaders' perceptions of crises and /or critical incidents; leaders' response/s to crises; how contextual changes and constraints affected leading effectively; whether leaders changed their leadership style and /or modified their skills to meet new challenges and adapt to new circumstances; lessons learned. Previous research (Palaiologou et al, 2021) describes the assignment as a formal leader in preschool as a struggle to balance between administrative tasks and being a pedagogical leader who creates a good learning environment for both teachers and children, with trust and collaboration as key elements. This project is framed on research on praxeology (e.g. Bertram and Pascal 2012) and pedagogical leadership where leadership is conceptualised as praxis. Qualitative methodology was employed and 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews (30-50 min) were managed through an online platform (e.g. Zoom). All participants consented to be part of the project. Overall, the crisis has led to positive pedagogical improvement but also some negative effects. In most preschools, the ongoing pandemic has led to pedagogical improvement in outdoor teaching and better skills and routines for using digital tools. A higher workload and increased stress for the principals trying to keep things together cannot be neglected. For some children, the pandemic has affected development and learning, which is distressing and important to follow up. Findings show that accurate information from municipalities during crises is essential to support the ECEC leader and staff, to manage their own and the parents' questions and worries.

Pedagogical leadership, ECEC centre leaders, effects on learning and play, crisis management, COVID-19 crisis

A 7

IMPLEMENTING THE EYFS REFORMS DURING COVID 19 – THE LEADERSHIP STORY

Self-organised Symposium

In September 2022 the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) in England was reformed. This symposium comprises of a case study sharing three Early Years Leaders/Practitioners stories about how they created, developed, and implemented their curriculums during a worldwide pandemic, COVID19. Each setting was invited to be part of a national project supported by the Department of Education to support ECEC settings to develop their curriculum. The project participants met each month to process the challenges and celebrations surrounding the implement of the reforms. Research methods such as journaling and focus group discussion captured the stories of the participants. The research identified the significance of coming together as a group monthly to share the challenges of the implementation alongside leading a setting during a national pandemic, COVID19.

Chair: Felicity Dewsbery, Pen Green, United Kingdom

Creating emotionally containing spaces for leaders and practitioners to share experiences, process change and implement the EYFS reform during the global pandemic

Christina Wilson (1), Carly Polak (1), Felicity Dewsbery (2), (1) Charnwood Nursery & Pre-school Group, United Kingdom, (2) Pen Green, United Kingdom

The research aims to explore a leader's journey of the implementation of the EYFS reforms in England from September 2021 to May 2022, it demonstrates how we have gained a better understanding and how the opportunity to come together as a group of leaders has supported the development of the curriculum during the pandemic. The research builds on the group dynamics work of Lewin (1947) and the more contemporary research around work discussion by Elfer (2012) and Louis (2021). Change Theory; Lewin, K. (1947). Leadership; John, K. (2019), Journaling; Ortlipp, M. (2008), Containment; Bion, W. R. (1962). Work Discussion; Elfer, P. (2012). Louis, S. (2021). The research is located within an interpretivist tradition (Robson, 1993). The methodology for the project centred on case studies with data collected through reflective journaling, recorded discussion groups supporting a qualitative research design. 'Do no harm' to all participants is the most important aspect. The European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) code will be applied. Informed consent, anonymity, right to withdraw and confidentiality has been gained throughout the project. Discussion about the EYFS was overtaken by issues such as Covid, recruitment, being in ratio. Membership of the group was important; containing and safe sharing experiences created

empathy. Creating work discussion groups to support ECEC Leaders is vital to contain their experiences and enable them to support their teams who in turn are available to support the children and families.

Curricula, Change, Leadership, Containment, Group Work

Creating emotionally containing spaces for leaders and practitioners to share experiences, process change and implement the EYFS reform during the global pandemic

Lisa Davey (1), Stephanie Hales (1), Katherine Clark (2), (1) Davey Day Care, United Kingdom, (2) Pen Green, United Kingdom

The research aims to explore a leader's journey of the implementation of the EYFS reforms in England from September 2021 to May 2022, it demonstrates how we have gained a better understanding and how the opportunity to come together as a group of leaders has supported the development of the curriculum during the pandemic. The research builds on the group dynamics work of Lewin (1947) and the more contemporary research around work discussion by Elfer (2012) and Louis (2021). Change Theory; Lewin, K. (1947). Leadership; John, K. (2019). Journaling; Ortlipp, M. (2008). Containment; Bion, W. R. (1962) Work Discussion; Elfer, P. (2012). Louis, S. (2021). The research is located within an interpretivist tradition (Robson, 1993). The methodology for the project centered on case studies with data collected through reflective journaling, recorded discussion groups supporting a qualitative research design. 'Do no harm' to all participants is the most important aspect. The European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) code will be applied. Informed consent, anonymity, right to withdraw and confidentiality has been gained throughout the project. Discussion about the EYFS was overtaken by issues such as Covid, recruitment, being in ratio. Membership of the group was important; containing and safe. Sharing experiences created empathy Creating work discussion groups to support ECEC Leaders is vital to contain their experiences and enable them to support their teams who in turn are available to support the children and families.

Curricula, Change, Leadership, Containment, Groupwork

Implementing the EYFS reform and working with fathers to support their children's learning during the global pandemic.

Felicity Dewsbery, Lois White, Pen Green, United Kingdom

To explore a leader's journey of the implementation of the EYFS reforms in England. The research demonstrates how we have gained a better understanding of the EYFS reforms with a focus on working with fathers to support them in their children's learning and development. Research demonstrates that engaging in a knowledge sharing approach when working in partnership with parents benefits young children (Easen et al 1992, Whalley & Arnold 2013, Whalley et al 2017). Key theories include, Well-Being & Involvement (Laevers, 1997). Schema Theory (Athey, 1990, 2007; Arnold 2003, 2015) & Pedagogic Strategies (Whalley & Arnold, 2013; Lawrence and Gallagher, 2015; Whalley et al., 2017). The research is located within an interpretivist tradition (Robson, 1993). The methodology for the project will centre on case studies with data collected through reflective journaling and semi-structured interviews supporting a qualitative design. To 'do no harm' to participants, children, parents and colleagues is most important. The European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) code for Early Childhood Researchers (2015) will be applied. Informed consent, anonymity, right to withdraw and confidentiality has been gained throughout the project. Findings indicate a positive impact on fathers and their children. Fathers build knowledge and strategies to augment their parenting skills and improve their understanding and relationship with their child. Value in the approach even during the pandemic and whilst developing a new curriculum. Practitioners & fathers sharing theory, & knowledge to benefit the children, and parents confidently sharing their expertise about their child with EY practitioners.

Curricula, Change, Leadership, Fathers, Parental Engagement

A 8

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS ORCHESTRATING AND CONCEPTUALISING THE CONCEPT OF TEACHING

Self-organised Symposium

Taking Sweden as an example, the presentations focus on how preschool teachers construct and understand the concept of teaching, and what this may imply for how they orchestrate teaching in practice. The intertwined and, at the same time, in some cases contradictory views of the same teacher on what teaching entails are discussed in relation to what this implies for teacher professionals and their role when organising teaching in an ECE play-based practice. There is a fear that a stronger focus on teaching in relation to play will lead to 'schoolification' of ECE education, reduction of play-based teaching, and a loss of child perspective.

The symposium thus focus teachers' orchestration of technology in explorative play, exploring the interaction concerning technology as a curricular content area in play-framed activities and the intertwined understandings revealed in Swedish preschool teachers' constructions of the concept of teaching.

Chair: Carin Roos, Educational Sciences, Kristianstad University, Sweden

Intertwined understandings – Swedish preschool teachers' constructions of the concept of teaching

Jenny Henriksson, Kristianstad University, Sweden

The purpose of this ongoing PhD study is to contribute with insights about preschool teachers' understandings of the concept of teaching in preschool by examining their social constructions of teaching. Research shows that teaching is a concept that Swedish preschool teachers struggle with (Jonsson et al., 2017). Simultaneously there have been changes in the construction of the concept of teaching emanating from the National Agency for Education's governing texts about teaching in a play-based education. Preschool teachers' perceptions of teaching seem to be changing (Jonsson et al., 2017; Hildén, 2021; Vallberg Roth, 2019a, 2019b). Preschool teachers' life experience, their education and work experience affect how they conceptualise education and thus shape their understandings of teaching (Goodson, 1991). Social constructionism is used to analyse how teachers' conceptualisations are constructed in a social and communicative context (Burr, 2015; Linell, 2006, 2009). Adopting a thematic life story approach (Goodson & Numan, 2003) interview conversations (Goodson & Sikes, 2017) were conducted through videocalls or phone with nine participants. The research adheres to ethical guidelines (Swedish Research Council, 2017): informed consent from participants handled in accordance with GDPR, including researcher's interpretation and reconstruction of jointly generated data, lifestory narratives, and study reporting. Findings implies that preschool teacher's conceptualization of teaching can be constructed of multiple, concurrent and intertwined constructions of the concept of teaching. This study may contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding the conceptualization of teaching in preschool and open up extended discussions about teaching as social constructions and ideas beyond resistance and dichotomies.

Preschool, play-based ECE, teaching, teachers, social constructions

Teachers' Conceptions of Digital Technology Supported Teaching in Swedish ECE Settings

Olga Boksjö, Mälardalen University, Sweden

This study aims to gain insights in teachers' conceptions of digital technology supported teaching in Swedish ECE settings. The teaching concept is relatively new in Swedish ECE curriculum and creates ambivalence among teachers. It is feared that a stronger focus on teaching will lead to 'schoolification' of ECE education (Pihlgren, 2017). Introduction of digitalization goals in curriculum obliges teachers to integrate digital technologies into educational practices and calls for a relevant definition for digital technology supported teaching. A fenomenographic approach was used as a research tool to identify teachers' conceptions (Marton & Booth, 2000). Interviews were conducted with 11 teachers with a fenomenographic methodology applied. The participants were informed about the nature of the study and that the participation was voluntary. All interviews were audiorecorded with the permission of the participants. Three main fields of digital technology use were discerned in teachers' descriptions: goal-directed activities, spontaneous activities and activities for entertainment/relaxation/personnel relief. Teaching situations were identified within the first two categories whilst the third was mainly associated with a 'consumption' of digital technology. Paradoxically, most of the teachers define technology supported teaching as a goal-directed and planned activity. However, many examples given by the teachers show that situations originating from a spontaneous technology use have an essential role to play in everyday teaching practices. This understanding of teaching may have a counterproductive effect on ECE task with a traditional focus on child-initiated, spontaneous activities. The findings imply that any technology supported activity can potentially be evolved into a teaching situation.

Play-based teaching ECE, digital technology supported teaching, goal-directed activities, planned activities, spontaneous use of digital technology

From the specific to the general- preschool teachers' orchestration of technology education in explorative play.

Sara Eliasson, Göteborgs universitet Department of Pedagogy, Communication and Learning, Sweden

The aim is to study how technology as a curricular content area is orchestrated in play-framed activity in Early Childhood Education. Technology education in ECE is an emerging field, recurrently consisting of intervention studies of preschool teachers' perception of technology (Jones et al. 2013) which occasions more studies of in situ technology activities in preschool settings (Johansson, 2021). Underpinned by sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1934), technology activities were explored focusing the teacher's orchestration of the interaction concerning technology in play-framed activities with preschoolers. The empirical data encompass ten video-documented technology activities involving eleven children aged 2-5-years and four preschool-teachers in three Swedish preschool-groups with a pronounced technology focus. To analyze data, Interaction Analysis (Derry et al., 2010) was used. Ethical guidelines of The Swedish Research Council (2017) were followed, as were specific considerations regarding research with young children, like researcher wearing a signal vest indicating recording sessions (Larsson et al. 2019), and attentiveness to children expressing unwillingness to participate. The findings suggest that

the teacher's well-planned orchestration of technology activity within an explorative play frame enables interaction encompassing curricular goals, such as handling and exploring everyday technology to determine their properties, function and design. Findings also indicate tensions between a play frame and the participants' continued shared focus on technology subject knowledge. Play-framed technology activities have the possibility to enable interaction related to several curricular goals within the technology content area, but this requires that the teachers adopt a sensitive approach to enable both a play frame and a technology focus.

play-framed ECE, technology education, socio-cultural perspectives, curricular content area, preschool

A 9

LEARNING (TO TEACH) INQUIRY AND DOCUMENTATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM ECE SCIENCE

Self-organised Symposium

This symposium is based on the assumption that children and teachers can engage in inquiry to develop science learning as well as science learner identities. Inquiry and documentation have been throughout history, central to science practice. The symposium brings together perspectives from ECE classrooms, professional development and teacher education, to highlight how we can support children's and teachers' inquiry- and drawing-based learning. The first presentation shares the development of resources to teach early childhood physics in the playground through approaches grounded in open-exploration and documentation. The second presentation examines how children co-create meaning and representation in science, when they draw on the same paper. The third presentation builds on experiences from teacher training to identify obstacles to, and benefits of, becoming a 'science drawer', hence, of developing an identity as someone who draws to learn (teach) science.

Chair: Sofie Areljung, Umeå University, Sweden

Playful Physics

Sabela Fernández Monteiro (1), Sara Wilmes (2), Christina Siry (2), (1) Universidade de Santiago de Compostela / The University of Luxembourg, Spain, (2) The University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg,

The aim of this study is to explore the rapid development of ECEC pedagogical resources during COVID19 and uncover the structures which mediated the development process. Research has shown that play-based settings build foundations for scientific understandings through the movement involved in play (Fleer & Pramling, 2014). Relatedly, young children's embodied engagement in inquiry supports learning science (Cho, 2021). Our work is grounded in sociocultural theories (e.g., Sewell, 1992; Tobin, 2015), adopting asset-based, resource-rich perspectives (Siry, 2012) to children's engagement in science. Drawing on critical traditions, we utilize participatory methodologies and collaborative methods to develop teaching resources and case studies with ECEC teachers. All participants were informed of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and written consent was obtained. Findings have been explored collectively and foci revisited. Reflective analysis revealed that the collaborative, dialogic structures between researchers and teachers allowed for rapid development of ECEC resources at a time of crisis. Participatory methodologies mediated contextualized responses and resources focused on children's inquiry and movement (e.g.: pushing and pulling) that promote children's multimodal science meaning-making through investigations and science processes such as multimodal documentation, as, in our context, the language of instruction often differs from children's home language. Whilst the pandemic disrupted all areas of education, it also fueled the development of initiatives aligned with ECEC research recommendations. Locally-grounded outdoor instruction can extend beyond the pandemic in ways that support developing science understandings and communication competencies in meaningful contexts for young learners in diverse ECEC settings.

Playground, Physics, Inquiry, Collaborative Research, Documentation

Experiences of being "a drawer in science"

Helena Bichão (1), Sofie Areljung (2), (1) NTNU, Norway, (2) Umeå Universitet, Sweden

This presentation is about drawing in science activities, and particularly about educators' own relationship to drawing. Research indicates that drawing is a powerful tool for making meaning in science (Ainsworth et al. 2011). However, when children draw as a part of science activities in early childhood education (ECE), teachers seldom support children's drawing (Areljung et al., 2021). This presentation seeks to unfold obstacles to supporting children's drawing in science by focusing on the educators' experience of "being someone who draws (in science)". Grounded in sociocultural theory, we regard drawing as a culturally and historically important feature of science (e.g., Hoffman & Wittman, 2013) and assume that drawing in science is an act of participating in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Framed within an interpretative qualitative

paradigm, we draw on autoethnography (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010) to analyze the first authors' remembered moments from studying science and from teaching science to pre-service and in-service teachers. Ethical consideration has been given to researcher vulnerability of autoethnography (Lapadat, 2017) and to ensure that remembered moments are fairly and respectfully represented. Preliminary findings indicate that there are strong borders separating insiders from outsiders of the community of drawing in science. However, instruction can help many in-service and pre-service teachers to move from frustration, towards acknowledging drawing as a strong and important science pedagogy tool. The findings raise questions of how ECE teacher training can work to support teachers (to support children) to become insiders in the community of drawing in science.

Drawing, science practice, representation, teacher education, community of practice

Two children, one paper, two pencils: Co-drawing science explanations

Sofie Areljung (1), Johanna Andersson (2), Carina Hermansson (3), Marianne Skoog (4), Bodil Sundberg (4), (1) Umeå University, Sweden, (2) Linköping University, Sweden, (3) University of Borås, Sweden, (4) Örebro University, Sweden

This presentation examines how children (7-9 years) negotiate scientific and visual meaning when they co-draw a science explanation. Research has shown that the process of drawing is beneficial for students' meaning-making (Ainsworth et al. 2011) and reasoning (Tytler et al. 2019) in science. Still, previous studies predominately focus on drawing as product - not as process. As Wilmes and Siry (2021), we assume that science learning unfolds in interaction. Moreover, we employ a socio-material perspective on learning and communication (Barad 2007). Acting within a qualitative interpretative paradigm, we analyse video data from six primary school classrooms. Children's task was to draw a science explanation in pairs. Our analysis focuses on how children engage in the drawing process. First, we excluded the video sound, focusing on whether children participate with pencil, gestures and gaze in the drawing. Second, we added sound, to identify children's discussions about visual and scientific meaning. We informed children and parents about the project before we asked for their consent to participate. During classroom visits, we recurrently asked for children's consent prior to recording an event. Our preliminary findings show two ways of enacting the task: (1) Both children draw or (2) One child is the main "drawer", while the other (2a) occasionally breaks in with their pencil, (2b) engages in the process with gaze and gesture but does not draw, or (2c) is not involved in the drawing process. The findings raise questions about how teacher can scaffold children to make co-drawing exercises a joint venture.

science education, representation, multimodality, drawing process, socio-materialism

A 10

DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University, Sweden

The Fusion of Theory and Practice: Reflection on the Early Years & Childhood Studies Professional Practice Placement through a Community of Practice [CoP] Experience

Alison Moore, Marcella Towler, University College Cork, Ireland

The small-scale pilot study brought together students, university staff and placement mentors through a Community of Practice (CoP), creating a 'culture of meaningful engagement' [NStEP,2016], enabling collaboration, capacity building and identifying and sharing best practice. Our CoP Model [Wenger, 1998] grew out of previous research conducted in the field, acknowledging the need to 'shift from product to process...' (National Forum, 2019). Students, placement supervisors and placement mentors all need to be well prepared for the placement experience, fusing theory and practice. Holman and Richardson [2020] suggest 'the explicit knowledge from the university and tacit knowledge gained from the placement need to converge'. The study has considered the concept of 'situated learning' [Lave and Wenger, 1991] emphasising relationships and interactions in order to build understanding, supported by CoP Participation. We applied an interpretivist approach reflecting a praxiological paradigm [Pascal and Bertram, 2012]. Bringing reflection [phronesis] and action [praxis] together through a series of four CoP events over an academic year. The EECERA Ethical Code was applied [Bertram et al., 2014] ensuring the CoP was conducted with 'integrity, transparency and respectful interactions, 'knowing from multiple perspectives' and giving voice to all participants. The discussion will facilitate the sharing of best practice through the lived experiences of the participants. Key learning from the project will supports Action for Transformation Post COVID-19 requires us to creatively re-engage with and sustain this 'triquetra' relationship to ensure students are well prepared for and will experience a deeper and more authentic engagement with the professional practice placement.

Peer-Mentoring in Communities of Practice: Opportunities for Connection, Belonging, and Collective Efficacy

Laura Doan, Karolyn Hendra, Thompson Rivers University, Canada

This study explored early childhood educators' experiences (ECEs) in a peer-mentoring program in British Columbia, Canada. This represents an upscaling of a previous project, involving 200 ECEs and 20 facilitators in 17 communities. This builds on previous research with beginning educators who indicated a desire for an induction program (Doan, 2014), as well as research on pilot projects (Doan, 2019). This research draws on the theory of CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where each member is valued. The CoP is based on trust and respect, which "encourages a willingness to share ideas, expose one's ignorance, ask difficult questions, and listen carefully" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This research is framed within a constructivist paradigm and is qualitative in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Participants shared weekly photos and reflections, and took part in interviews and focus groups. The Canadian Tri-Council Ethical Conduct (Government of Canada, 2014) was followed. Participants' contributions were valued equally, and in order to hear multiple perspectives, multiple ways to participate were provided. Key findings include the value of the peer-mentoring CoP: sharing perspectives; developing professional friendships; learning from and reflecting with each other; supporting each other; and feeling valued and heard, which resulted in increased educator efficacy, as well as retention rates. This research positions educators as knowing, and values their agency, which challenges dominant images of educators (Moss, 2017). This research provides a model of support through peer-mentoring in a CoP that can be applied to many settings.

peer-mentoring, communities of practice, educator efficacy, professional identity development, induction

Enactments of pedagogical leadership in Norwegian ECE

Karin Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

The aim of this study is to explore what Norwegian ECE teachers do when they enact pedagogical leadership in their staff teams. In previous research (Bøe & Hognestad, 2015) six experienced ECE teachers as first line leaders were shadowed during their daily pedagogical practice leading their staff teams. Using Mintzberg's (1973) leadership taxonomy, the study found 14 different leadership categories. The theoretical framework draws upon leadership as social practice which provides an understanding of the realities of leadership work (Mintzberg, 2009, Tengblad, 2012). This is combined with theory of pedagogical leadership (Waniganayake et al. 2017). Our position is that leadership is socially constructed through experience-based practices (Bryman 2011). This study is based on a national questionnaire (n= 557) of what teachers as leaders do and to what degree they recognize themselves in the description of the fourteen leadership categories identified in the previous study. The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approved the quantitative study. The questionnaire in use is Nettskjema (UiO.no/nettskjema) designed to meet Norwegian privacy requirements. The questionnaire was for research purpose and by answering, the participants gave their consent. No participants have withdrawn from the online survey. The findings demonstrate what teachers as leaders do in their pedagogical leadership and the extent to which they perform the various leadership actions. The findings are discussed as if and how these leadership actions reveal effective pedagogical leadership. These findings suggest implications for how this pedagogical leadership creates a culture of professionalism in Norwegian ECE.

pedagogical leadership, practice perspective, Norway, first line leaders, questionnaire

A 11

POWER DYNAMICS AND POLICY IN EC

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Liz Latto, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Finding kinship in early learning and childcare: how the working relationships between practitioners does more than 'set the weather' within early years settings.

Liz Latto, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

This study makes visible the apparatus which continues to reinforce structural inequalities and relations of power within ELC in Scotland. Tensions exist within dominant discourses surrounding practitioners' professional status (Fairchild, 2019; Osgood, 2021). This research considers the materiality of memories and emotions and how their affects can be felt as spacetime-mattering (Barad, 2007). It explores how diffractive patterns intra-act to create environments and spaces in which children play and learn. The research focused on intra-actions, agential cuts and cutting-together-apart to (re)present practitioner identity through materiality of memories and stories. Using Haraway's notion of kinship (2016), Barad's diffraction (2007) and Deleuze & Guattari's assemblages (1987), it shows how professional relationships create shared understandings of

identity, culture and practices of play. Stories of affective capacities of social apparatus, becoming-practitioner, memories and emotions as assemblages, were diffracted and (re)made as I-poems (Zambo & Zambo, 2015), highlighting practitioner relationalities and the intergenerational sharing of practice. Information was provided and consent obtained from participants. Ethics is ongoing, with multiple opportunities to discuss, amend or withdraw information. Pseudonyms used and identifiers removed. University of Edinburgh granted ethical approval. Findings show materialities of memories and emotions continue to affect identity, culture and practice. This study creates a space where affective kinship can challenge classist and gendered stereotypes that are perpetuated within ELC. Implications suggest deeper understandings of the materiality of memories and emotions continue to affect practitioner relationships, and how supportive kinship has ongoing consequences for settings, cultures and pedagogy.

materiality, kinship, relationships, Posthumanist-Feminist-Materialist-Theory, identity

Managerial dialogue in ECEC policy making: the role of play and learning

Anne Homme (1), Kari Ludvigsen (2), (1) University of Bergen, (2) Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), Norway

Building on a five-year evaluation, we regard the role of preparatory elements in the policy design of the Norwegian ECEC 2017 Framework Plan. Research shows that Norwegian ECEC is both strongly related to the Nordic model and an educational tool for preparation and lifelong learning (Berge, 2015; Seland, 2009). We draw upon a synthesizing approach to implementation, stressing the relationship between policy design and the institutional context (Hill & Hupe 2003, 2022; Winter 2012). Relevant public policy documents and 11 in-depth interviews with 20 national level actors were coded and analyzed as part of a convergent mixed methods design (Creswell 2015). All participants gave consent and were given opportunity to leave the study any time. Data is stored in a server with strictly limited access. The policy process contained tensions regarding school preparation. White papers building upon OECD reports enhanced learning ambitions, and mobilized interest groups defending the role of play. Through negotiation, consultancy, dialogue and strategic positioning (Bleiklie et al., 2020), the final document was formed as a compromise. The process was characterized by managerial dialogue and different interest groups regards the plan a continuation and clarification. We point to path dependency (Christensen & Laegreid; Pierson, 2000), with the new Framework Plan gaining legitimacy by underlining core values of the sector, but also promote change by incorporating learning ambitions. Findings support a strong position for the Nordic model in ECEC sector policy-making processes, and how dialogue-based policy making both enhance partial change and secure legitimacy.

Policy design, implementation, framework plan, managerial dialogue, path dependency

Realising the Ambition: Being me, disrupting the discourse on play in Scottish early childhood arenas

Lynn Taylor, Marion Burns, Glasgow City Council, United Kingdom (See page 111 for abstract).

A 12

PROMOTING RESILIENCE AND INCLUSION IN EC SETTINGS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Rune Storli, Queen Maud University College, Norway

Interprofessional collaboration in municipality

Merete Nornes-Nymark, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

The project aimed to investigate how professionals in kindergarten, school, child welfare services and educational-psychological services experienced interprofessional collaboration in one municipality in Norway. Both Norwegian (Hesjedal 2017; Borge et.al, 2014; Glavin & Erdal, 2018) and international research (Edwards et.al, 2009; Fasting, 2016) have focused on interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration and find that there are many challenges associated with roles, routines and responsibilities also that these can be linked to unclear national guidelines. Project based on a Bronfenbrenner's (2005) systems theory perspective. Our study has phenomenological approach based on semistructured interviews (Tjora, 2021). We have completed 10 interviews with 14 participants. Eight Individual interviews with four kindergarten teachers and four school teachers. Two focus group interviews, one with three child welfare educators and one with three educational-psychological service. Informants were given informed consent and opportunity to conduct interviews without digital recording through the leaders in each workplace, before accepting participating our project. All participant agree to give interview with digital recording. We discuss implications of success factors and obstacles to collaboration based on a socio-cultural view according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (2005) and Bourdieu's theory (1991, 1996) related to social structures, power and positions are central. Preliminary findings shows that having knowledge of each other and having regular meetings across is

positive for the collaboration. It seems that the child welfare service has more power. The obstacle of power can ensure that children and families do not receive the professional help they may need.

Interprofessional Collaboration, Municipality, Child welfare, Educational-psychological service, Kindergarten

Resilience in ECEC in relation to post-pandemic times - a research review

Mia Heikkilä (1), Christin Furu (2), Siv Lundström (2), Linda Eriksson (2), (1) Åbo Akademi University, Faculty of Education and Welfare Studies, Finland, (2) Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The aim is to explore the potential of the concept of resilience by conducting a research review of the concept in relation to ECEC. The paper presentation aim to further deepen the knowledge of how to think, reflect and work around resilience within ECEC in post-pandemic times. Children, in times of a pandemic, encounters everyday challenges throughout life, which means children need support in developing their ability to handle the world and life - to develop resilience (Masten & Barnes, 2018, Goldstein & Brooks, 2013, Ungar, 2011, Opetushallitus, 2021, Heikkilä, et al. 2020), . For children's well-being and development, a possibility to develop resilience is important (Milican & Middleton, 2020, Ginsburg & Jablow, 2020), and resilience is seen in relation to relations and agency (Walsh & Kane, 2015, Furu & Heikkilä, 2022). The relational perspective and the importance of active participation in education are central theoretical positions in this conversation (Noddings, 2013 , Jans, 2004, Lingard, 2008). The research review is done by search processes in databases. Ethical considerations includes how values and norms affect work that strengthens resilience and how this is shown in the literature presented. A definition of resilience includes the capacity to deal with challenges and crises (Masten & Barnes, 2018). Resilience is a complex concept and move from psychological perspectives to other scientific perspectives. The implications is that resilience can be used together with children in ECEC, in strengthening children's play, as well as children's relationships, agency and active participation.

Resilience, post-pandemic, research review, relational perspectives, agency

Nonplay in Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions

Rune Storli, Queen Maud University College, Norway

The purpose of this study was to expand the knowledge of what children are doing when they apparently are not playing during free play periods in early childhood education and care institutions (ECEC). Several studies on children's free play and categorizing play behaviour among children exist (Dyment & O'Connell, 2013), but there are few studies of what children are doing when they are not playing in a supportive environment for free play (Wiltz, & Fein, 2006; Coplan, Rubin, & Findlay, 2006). While play is essential in ECEC institutions' daily life routines, nonplay behaviour can only be understood contextually within the cultural, social, and physical environment that promotes play (Kytä, 2006; Waters, 2017). Findings are discussed within a theory of affordances approach (Gibson, 1979). The study was conducted within a qualitative and inductive interpretive research paradigm, where the data collection involved systematic and randomized video observations (n= 452) of 80 children (3-5 yrs) during free play in 8 ECEC institutions. The study was approved by the Data Protection Official for Research in Norway. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of participants. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Qualitative analysis of nonplay activities resulted in five categories: conversations, practical tasks, passive observation, wandering and conflicts/crying. Knowledge of these categories of nonplay can support ECEC practitioners in detecting children who fall outside the play community or become aware of factors in the physical environment that prevent children from playing.

passive observation, free play, nonplay, child-friendly environment, affordances

A 13

BELONGING, SELF-REGULATION AND SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Zinnia Mevawalla, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

An alternative approach for early childhood teachers and parents to develop social-emotional competence skills in young children.

Gaye Tyler-Merrick (1), Sivanes Phillipson (2), Joanna Phillips (2), (1) Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom, (2) Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

The aim of TOGETHER (Phillips, Phillipson & Tyler-Merrick, 2022) was to develop a contextually responsive programme to grow a genuine partnership between parents and teachers so that they could work together to increase children's social and emotional competence skills. Previously, separate intervention programmes for parents and teachers were provided. For example, First Steps to Success (Feil et al., 2016), Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (Sheridan & Kratochwill 2007) and Webster-Stratton's (2000) Incredible Years Programme. TOGETHER draws from the theoretical models of family-centred practice (Dunst, 1997), the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). The study followed an experimental paradigm, adopting a single-case, AB-follow-up design across four phases. A mixed method approach using questionnaires, a rating scale and home and centre direct observations. The TOGETHER programme was delivered over two 120-minute workshops, held one week apart. Ethical approval was obtained from Swinburne University of Technology. Informed consent was obtained from the owners of the ECE centres, the participating teachers and parents. Assent was obtained from the participating children before each observation. Baseline indicated the parent and teacher's beliefs and practices varied. After the two training workshops parents and teachers worked together in partnership and shared knowledge. They increased their descriptive praise and responded to children's challenging behaviour more consistently, thus an increase in children's prosocial skills. Further research could develop TOGETHER across a broader range of family contexts and investigate how best teachers can pass on the TOGETHER knowledge to other families who find barriers to participation.

children, parents, teachers, context, partnerships

Doing belonging in early childhood settings in Sweden

Anette Emilson, Kristianstad University, Sweden

The aim is to contribute knowledge about the politics of belonging that is embedded in children's interactions in play situations in Swedish ECE. The research questions are: What appear as important aspects for belonging in children's play? How are positions and borders for belonging negotiated, produced and reproduced among the children? The study is based on findings showing that children's sense of belonging evolves gradually through experiences in joint play (Koivula & Hännikäinen, 2016) and that belonging appears as fleeting moments, hierarchies and group boundaries (Boldermo, 2020). The theoretical framework applies the conception of the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and three interrelated analytical dimensions: social positionings, identifications, and political value systems.

The study is within a critical paradigm since belonging is tied to power and inequalities (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Methodologically the study is interpretative in character. Data consists of video observations from two ECE institutions in Sweden. The study was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. A written consent from parents was a prerequisite. A sensibility to the children's signals and a permission before turning on the camera characterize the observation process. The findings show how the doing of belonging involves an ongoing positioning process among the children, and how the borders for being inside or outside the community are continually constructed and reconstructed. One suggestion is to talk about a glimpse of a sense of belonging. The study can be helpful in seeing what is happening in child interactions to be able to reveal and prevent the marginalization of children.

Belonging, Politics of belonging, Early childhood education, Positions, Values

Improving practitioner knowledge and teaching, and children's engagement and self-regulation through a well-being curriculum.

Ann Stubbs, Caroline Wright, Bright Horizons, United Kingdom

Reviewing the impact of a bespoke curriculum on children's well-being, involvement and teaching. We reference positive emotional wellbeing in early childhood (Moffitt, 2011; Raver, 2011) and highlight children demonstrating positive emotional wellbeing are less likely to experience dysregulation and poorer outcomes for mental health (Collura, 2014; Ritblatt, Hokoda, & Van Liew 2017). Positive Education confronts the difference between parents' aspirations and academic results promoted in school (Seligman, 2009). Ergo, focus on emotional well-being in early childhood offers opportunities to benefit children. We consider models of pedagogy and curriculum reflecting a learning environment where teachers actively establish, participate in, and support children's sustained learning experiences (Mortimore, 1999), using professional judgements to differentiate teaching for children (Edwards & Kelly, 1998). Our curriculum is a wellbeing curriculum, underpinned by principles in Hierarchy of Need (Maslow, 1943). Praxeological investigation (Pascal & Bertram, 2012) included a purposive sample of 31 English settings; 69 random practitioners. Environmental audits; assessed routine documentation; analysed electronic questionnaires, gathering quantitative and qualitative data. Written, individualised observations, used to collect data; children were not subject to any additional procedures. Adults volunteered to contribute to the investigation. Participants could withdraw at any time. Results suggest improvement in children's involvement and wellbeing (Leuven) and pro-social behaviours. Practitioners noted increases in children's self-control and recognition of positive behaviours in themselves and others. Practitioners' understanding of the interconnectedness of children's learning increased. Findings suggest a wellbeing

curriculum can increase practitioner knowledge and improve teaching, positively impacting on children's engagement, self-regulation and wellbeing levels.

Curriculum, Pedagogy, Childhood, Wellbeing, Teaching

A 14

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY USE FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Mikkel Snorre Wilms Boysen, University College Absalon, Denmark

On the border between play and creativity – an ethnographic study of children's interactions with digital technology

Mikkel Snorre Wilms Boysen (1), Anne Winther Jensen (1), Marianne Brodersen (1), Mikkel Hald (1), Katrine Løth (2), (1) University College Absalon, Denmark, (2) University College Copenhagen, Denmark

The aim of the study was to investigate children's interaction with digital technology in an afterschool context from the perspectives of play theory and creativity theory. Research conducted within the last decades has demonstrated that creativity can be conceptualized as a distributed, rather than an individual, phenomenon (Boysen, 2017; Clapp, 2017). This change of perspective is partly caused by digital technology because such technology allows people to engage in creative processes in ways that are less dependent on individual skills and intentions (Lierat & Glaveanu, 2018). According to widespread definitions of creativity, individual intentions regarding the creative product are given a predominant role (Weisberg, 2006). In this view, children's actions in a distributed creative process might be more appropriately understood as play, in the sense that the children's actions seem less oriented towards the product (Skovbjerg & Bekker, 2018). The study was based on ethnographic methodology (Emerson et al., 2011) and included 100 hours of observation in 10 afterschool clubs and 20 group interviews with children (aged 6-13). The data was analyzed through situated analysis (Clarke, 2003). A consent form and information sheet were provided to children, parents and pedagogues in the 10 participating institutions. The findings demonstrate that children's interaction with technology can be interpreted as more or less valuable from a pedagogical perspective, depending on the applied theoretical lenses. These findings suggest that pedagogues must consider carefully how they interpret the children's interactions with technology and how these interpretations affect their approaches to the children's actions.

play, creativity, after school clubs, digital technology, distributed creativity

Challenges and opportunities of digital technology use in Norwegian ECEC settings

Torstein Unstad (1), Marianne Undheim (2), Maria Dardanou (1), Natalia Kucirkova (2), (1) UiT - The Arctic University of Norway, Norway, (2) University of Stavanger, Norway,

This paper discusses the educators' perspectives on the key challenges and opportunities of using digital technology to support children's play-based activities, as part of technology integration in Norwegian ECEC. The importance of educators' reflection on the use of digital technologies is widely documented (Dwyer et al., 2019: 99; Palaiologou, 2016: 312). Further, Naper et al. (2021: 91) emphasise the need for pedagogical knowledge concerning technology integration amongst Norwegian ECEC educators. Drawing on socio-cultural theory and the principles of dialogue in thinking (Mercer & Littleton, 2007) and dialogic teaching in classrooms (Mercer & Howe, 2012), we understand knowledge as a dynamic process of meaning-making in dialogue with others. Inspired by previous learning networks that draw on dialogic knowledge exchange (e.g. Comeaux, 1995), we constructed a workshop-based qualitative learning network that connects researchers, educators and future classroom labs in Norway. Transcribed group-reflections, understood as a multidimensional construct in studying teachers' perspectives and actions (Moore-Russo & Wilsey, 2014), were thematically analysed. The EECERA protocols for ethical research were followed, including obtaining verbal and written informed consent from all respondents, who have the right to withdraw and anonymity throughout the study. The preliminary results point to time, competence and resources as the main challenges and Mastery, development/learning and togetherness/community as the most promising opportunities in using technology in ECEC. The findings highlight the need for educators' preparation for technology integration locally and across ECEC leaning networks.

Digital technology, Challenges and opportunities, Educators, Professional development, Learning network

Children's learning during play in a hybrid reality

Marina Wernholm, Linnaeus University, Sweden

The aim is to investigate children's learning during play in a hybrid reality, by studying how an only child learns to play digital games together with his parents. Hybrid reality refers to children's play practices when the physical and the digital worlds intertwine into one practice for playing and learning (Wernholm, 2020). This study answers researchers' call (Stephen & Edwards, 2018; Wohlwend, 2018) for new concepts of children's play which are required in the research field of digital play, a need that outweighs the need for further research on teachers attitudes or beliefs on using digital tools with children. A theoretical framework is applied using five concepts for interpreting and understanding children's learning at play in a hybrid reality: performing self, exploration, contribution, connection and multimodal participatory literacies (Wernholm, 2021). The study is qualitative combining the theoretical framework with multimodal analyses. This case-study focuses on one family with a four-year old child, playing various digital games at home. Both the researcher and the parents conducted the video-recordings, which were analyzed qualitatively focusing on the child's and the parents' actions when playing in a hybrid reality. The researcher was sensitive and paid particular attention to the child's nonverbal communication in order to ascertain genuine consent to participation. Familiar characteristics of play such as to interact and communicate, to become a moral subject and to take risks, take slightly different forms when children play in a hybrid reality. Applicability of the theoretical framework to pedagogical settings is suggested.

digital games, hybrid reality, learning, multimodal participatory literacies, play

A 15

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES, REFLECTIONS, NAVIGATIONS AND PREPARATIONS FROM 6 COUNTRIES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Helen Sutherland, Kingston University, United Kingdom

Navigating skills and play in between conditions and ambitions in kindergartens in Palestine

Marie Skeie (1), Mona Nicolaysen (1), Manal Abu-Monshar (2), Ibrahim H. Al Astal (3), Anders Davidsen (4), (1) University of South Eastern Norway, Norway, (2) Hebron Universit, Palestine, (3) Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine, (4) OsloMet, Norway

The aim is to get some insights of the teacher's perceivings of the pedagogical conditions in the kindergartens in Gaza and Hebron, and how this corresponds with the Ministry of Education's ambitions in the policy documents. There are few studies done in the field of early childhood in Palestine, and just some of them are relevant for this research, like Arafat (2012), Nasser (2018) and Khales (2015, 2016). The conditions of everyday life, living under occupation, gives strong value to the concept Sumud (resilience) as a part of the pedagogical approach (Fassetta et al, 2020). The shift from welfare to convention of the children's rights, provides the direction of this study. The focus on capability of senses, imagination and thought are important issues on this matter (Nussbaum, 2006). The study is within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The data set consists of questionnaires, interviews and policy documents. The findings (conditions) were compared with the Ministry's ambitions. The study follows Palestinian ethical requirements and data is anonymized and untraceable. This study identifies a gap between the conditions and the ambitions. In the framework, the children are seen as "active learners if they are allowed the chance to learn through play, action and self-expression" (Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2017). This opens up a discussion on children's agency and the value of play in Palestinian kindergartens. Our study addresses the importance of qualitative research to build capacity and competence in a field that recently got a national framework (2017).

Palestine, policy documents, between play and skills, Sumud (resilience), conditions and ambitions

Education and Teaching in Early Years from International Perspectives (ETEIP) Project - Being a Reflective Early Years Educator (EYE) Manual for Mobility Visits.

Helen Sutherland, Claire Jackson, Kingston University London, United Kingdom

This two-year ETEIP project aims to support Early Years Educators' (EYE) use of reflection to improve professional practice and ECEC provision through exploration of international perspectives while on mobility visits and job-shadowing experiences in England, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. Project uses reflective theories and models of Schön (1983), Pollard (2019), Brookfield (2017), Moon (2007) to recognise how reflection can develop 'professional thinking' challenging EYE educational assumptions, pedagogical approaches and comparing ECEC provision to improve practice. Conceptual framework draws upon Dewey (1933), Schön (1983) and Pollard (2019) use of developing 'professional-thinking' to challenge EYE 'routine-actions' in practice. Engagement in shared reflection of the experiences challenges assumptions and provides alternative perspectives from which to develop new strategies (Brookfield, 2017). Project used a qualitative interpretative paradigm with a case study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) evaluative approach. 2 focus groups were undertaken at the end of each mobility visits (4)

with 16 EYE. Construct categories for coding are being used to identify key themes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Evaluative approach used for project, ethical guidance BERA (2018) adhered to with informed consent given by EYE with identities anonymised. Preliminary findings identify that the use of reflection during the mobility visits has challenged EYE assumptions and perspectives of practice, enabling identification of strategies for improvement. The use of reflection within the project provides EYE with a framework from which to share experience and explore international perspectives. The reflective materials/tools produced support EYE reflection into their provision and practice creating new possibilities and perspectives.

Reflection, International Perspectives, Improving Practice, Collaborative Development of Practice, Shared Reflective Dialogue

Preparing for play or group work: Educators views on the use of preparation time in Icelandic preschools

Sara Margrét Ólafsdóttir, Kristín Karlsdóttir, Anna Magnea Hreinsdóttir, Margrét S. Björnsdóttir, University of Iceland, School of Education, Iceland

The aim of the study is to shed light on how educators use their preparation time to benefit children's play in preschools. Few research has been conducted on preparation time in preschools, they mainly focus on how much time teachers get and what they do (Utdanningsforbundet, 2018). Teachers cannot prepare children's play (Wood, 2013); however, they can prepare their play environment (Van Hoorn et al., 2011) and document learning through play (Svårdemo Åberg & Insulander, 2019). The study builds on ideas of quality in early childhood education as manifested in the interaction processes in preschools (Broström et al., 2016; Einarsdóttir, 2020), focusing on children as agents learning through play (Ólafsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2017). Individual interviews were conducted with 24 educators in eight preschools in Iceland; 8 preschool principals, 8 head of departments, and 8 preschool teachers. The participants shared their experiences and intensions of preparation time in preschool. Consent was sought at the participating municipalities; the preschool principles gave access to the preschools and the participants gave their informed and written consent. Their rights and confidentiality were ensured. The findings indicate that many educators used their preparation time to preplan the activities, such as group work, where they emphasized being present. They were more often absent from children's play, choosing that time to prepare the practice. The Icelandic National curriculum for preschool states that play is children's main way of learning. For children's best interest, preschool teachers should be present during play supporting, observing and documenting children's learning and well-being.

Preparation time, Preschool, Play, Learning, Educator's views

A 16

MULTICULTURAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL COHESION ISSUES IN ECEC

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Erin Tebben, The Ohio State University, United States

Exploring the promotion of social cohesion in early childhood services.

Melissa Dierckx, Michel Vandenbroeck, Jochen Devlieghere, Ghent University, Belgium

This four-year PhD aims at contributing to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of social cohesion in early childhood services in contexts of diversity. The study critically analyses social cohesion in contexts of increasing diversity, integrating the perspectives of academic literature, policymakers and practices. Despite the apparent consensus about the expectations for child and family social work to foster social cohesion, insights into what social cohesion may mean is limited (Dierckx, Vandenbroeck & Devlieghere, 2022). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon The Social Cohesion Radar, a comprehensive conceptualisation of social cohesion (Dragolov et al., 2016). The study was conducted within a qualitative mixed-method approach, combining a systematic narrative literature review (N=76) with thematic analysis of policy documents (N=44) and semi-structured interviews with policymakers (N=14). At the moment these results are elaborated with an ethnographic sub-study using the critical incident technique and observations in early childhood services. The General Ethical Protocol for Scientific Research at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Ghent University was followed. Additionally a Specific Ethical Protocol was approved by the Ethical Committee. A consent and information form was provided to all participants. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Reflecting on the possible role of early childhood services leads to contradictory expectations. The findings suggest that from a social-pedagogical point of view, social cohesion could imply that the diversity of society is given a place in the society as such. This requires a critical attitude towards one's own practices.

Social cohesion, Diversity, Early childhood services, Qualitative research, Family policy

ECE Teachers' understanding of their role in responding to issues of diversity, equity and justice in children's play

Erin Tebben, Sarah Lang, The Ohio State University, United States

We explore how early care and education (ECE) teachers use play to support children's understanding of diversity, equity, and social justice. Children under 4 recognize diversity (Kelly et al., 2007) and demonstrate awareness of and replicate social biases (Perszyk et al., 2019; Skinner et al., 2016). ECE teachers are important in shaping children's conceptualizations of themselves and others from different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Ashiabi, 2007). Theories of children's racial identity development (Cross & Vandiver, 2001) highlight the links between children's early experiences and emerging conceptualizations of their own and others' racial, cultural, and ethnic identities. Learning about such identities early can promote positive racial pride and identities, thus reducing the need for later interventions (Wright, Ford, & Moore III). We used a critical constructivist paradigm (Kincheloe, 2005) for our analysis and interpretation of qualitative data generated through a series of teacher focus groups. We analyzed our data iteratively using content analysis with consensus-building (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017). This study was IRB-approved, and all participants consented. We considered ECE teachers' and facilitators' identities and positionalities, allowing participants to choose if they wanted to participate in a mixed- or mono-racial/ethnic group. Preliminary findings indicate that some ECE teachers use play comfortably to engage with topics of justice, racial equity, and disrupting biases while others felt less comfortable doing so. Results have implications for children's exposure to diversity, equity, and justice within ECE settings and how teachers can be supported to use play within the context of broader social issues.

social justice, equity, racial and ethnic diversity, racial identity formation, early childhood educators

Enhancing solidarity through Interactive Groups in multicultural ECE settings

Andrea Khalfaoui Larrañaga (1), Rocío García-Carrión (2), (1) University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, (2) University of Deusto, Spain

This paper aims at exploring to what extent help and solidarity interactions acquired during a specific classroom organization are transferable beyond-the-school contexts, in a multicultural ECE setting. This contribution is framed in a wider research line focused on Successful Educational Actions (SEAs) (Flecha, 2015). These scientific-based actions have shown to be effective in promoting academic success and social cohesion in very diverse contexts worldwide. One of the most implemented SEAs is Interactive Groups, which enhances academic achievement (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013) and prosocial behaviour (Villardón et al, 2018). However, less is known about to what extent the "culture of solidarity" that is built in this space is potentially transferable to out-of-school contexts in culturally diverse ECE settings. This contribution is rooted in the Dialogic teaching and learning paradigm (Flecha, 2000; García-Carrión et al., 2020). This instrumental case study is grounded in a Spanish school serving mostly Roma and migrant families. The study includes participatory observations during IG sessions with a group of 20 5-years-old children. A communicative discussion group was conducted, where children shared how, when and why they help others in the classroom and beyond the school walls. Informed consent and assent were negotiated with all the children at the beginning of every session. 5 years-old children transfer help and solidarity interactions acquired during IG beyond the classroom, including playground and home. These findings open the possibility of enhancing solidarity interactions from school and boosting their impact on the entire community.

Interactive Groups, Successful Educational Actions, Peer interactions, Help and Solidarity, Multicultural setting

A 17

PLAYFUL LEARNING OF POWERFUL MATHEMATICAL KNOWLEDGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Self-organised symposium

The EECERA SIG 'Mathematics Birth to Eight Years' provides an academic and rigorous forum to develop and disseminate high-quality research on early childhood mathematics education. In this symposium organised by the SIG, we present research that develops teaching approaches for a broad range of powerful mathematical ideas: patterns, numbers and measuring. Catherine Gripton presents participatory research with teachers of 3- to 5-year-olds about possible approaches to developing pattern teaching. Judith Fábrega's naturalistic case study research shows that the use of games provides meaningful opportunities for children to apply number decomposition in real and play-based scenarios. The case study by Anne Hj. Nakken and Oliver Thiel illustrates how a child engages in measuring activities by producing Stop-Motion videos using digital technology.

Chair: Oliver Thiel, Queen Maud University College, Norway

Developing mathematical patterning in ECE classrooms: participatory research with teachers of 3-5 year olds

Catherine Gripton, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

This close-to-practice research aimed to generate possible approaches to developing pattern teaching in settings with 3 to 5 year old children. Pattern is fundamental to mathematical learning and attainment (Wijns et al., 2019) yet it is historically underplayed in curricula in England (Gripton, 2022). The theoretical framework for this research follows a critical realist notion of powerful knowledge with pattern conceptualised as essential to mathematics, learned within social and cultural structures, and powerful for the child (Alderson, 2020). Qualitative social constructivist participatory research was conducted with ten teacher co-researchers in England as they developed pattern teaching in their ECE classrooms. Within a co-learning methodology (Wagner, 1997), they collected fieldnotes, photographs, plans, assessments and reflections. Data was inductively analysed for each school and then for all schools using thematic analysis. The teachers led the collection and analysis of data to support ethical, accurate and authentic representation of both their practice and the children's patterning, providing a mitigation against researcher misinterpretation. All names used are pseudonyms and approximate school characteristic data is given to prevent accidental identification of schools by teachers. The findings indicate that teacher knowledge, pedagogic interactions and pattern-rich environments (all underpinned by an appropriate developmental progression and extended to form a setting-wide shared approach) support the development of patterning praxis in ECE classrooms. These offer potential priorities for ECE teachers in developing their patterning praxis in order to support children's mathematical learning.

mathematics, patterning, pattern, professional learning, participatory research

Supporting early mathematics through play: Number Decomposition

Judith Fabrega (1), Mequè Edo (2), Alba Torregrossa, (1) Innovamat Education, Spain, (2) Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

This study aims to investigate children's mathematical learning opportunities, within the composing numbers learning trajectory, during two different gross motor games in a kindergarten classroom. It shows how open-ended, based play strategies help all students to engage with high-quality mathematics (Van Oers, 2010). Based on the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987) and its extension to Mathematics education (Ball, 1993; Cobb, 1993; Cobb, Wook, & Yackel, 1993), the study focuses on the use of play in mathematical contexts for early years' education (Clements, 2003; Edo, 2008; Van Oers, 2003). The study was conducted using a naturalistic case study research approach (Bassegy, 1999), studying classroom settings through observation and collection of videos, field notes and students' work. The inductive analysis (Kuzle, 2013) was conducted through generating, testing and interpreting analytical categories. All institutional and practical requirements for ethics clearance, informed consent and participation were strictly adhered to. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of participants, data is protected, and the study respected the regular practice to diminish the disruption in students' daily routine. Our results show that the use of play-based activities provides meaningful opportunities for children to engage in high level cognitive demand mathematical activities (NCTM, 2014). Students apply mathematical concepts as number composition in real and significant contexts, represent their own mathematical knowledge, and participate in rich mathematical conversations. These findings suggest implications for how to increase children's numerical sense and specifically how to understand, systematize and apply the number decomposition in real and play-based scenarios.

Mathematics education, Number sense, Gross motor activities, Play-based learning, Mathematics representation

Child led animation video production to enrich mathematical thinking

Anne Nakken, Oliver Thiel, Queen Maud University College, Norway

The project ViduKids aims to explore how making videos in preschool empowers children to learn mathematics and express mathematical thinking. The case study illustrates how children engage in measuring activities by producing Stop-Motion videos. Previously Thiel et al. (2016) have shown that video production in primary school facilitates mathematics learning. By producing videos, children experience mathematics in an engaging and enjoyable way. ViduKids transfers this to younger ages. Video production in early childhood is possible, but still controversial (Leung et al., 2020). We use a framework for understanding young children's use of video cameras (Bird et al., 2014) together with a theory how young children understand measuring (Eichler & Lafrentz, 2004; cf. Perry et al., 2020, pp. 74-75). The study is stage 2 – Building, Intervention, and Evaluation (BIE) – of an Action Design Research (Sein et al., 2011). As usual in participatory action research (James et al., 2007), we collected qualitative data via participant observation, field notes and questionnaires. The professional relationship between teacher and children ensured ethical, accurate and authentic representation of children's ideas. The findings demonstrate that children's own animated video production is a way to deepen their involvement, joy and learning of measurement. The study shows how video production can be a powerful tool for children to be inspired by each others' mathematical ideas. By watching videos and talking about them, the children find new representations of growing sizes. The

study offers innovative concepts to strengthen children's digital skills and mathematical understanding through playful learning.

mathematics, digital tools, communication, measuring, representations

A 18

PERCEPTIONS OF PLAY IN TRAINEE AND EARLY CAREER PRACTITIONERS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Maelis Karlsson Lohmander, University of Gothenburg, Department of Education Communication and Learning, Sweden

Supporting the learning of prospective early childhood teachers (ECT): From the role of the student to the role of teacher

Marianna Efstathiadou, European University Cyprus, Cyprus

This research investigates how the learning of prospective ECT, can be fostered in order to help them build on the experiences they gain from university (content) courses. Based on the conviction that teachers teach the way they have been taught (Sacristan, 2015), the connection between the way prospective teachers experience learning and the way they approach their own teaching (Trigwell, 2012), two teacher education models will be used: Coaching/Modeling and Community of Practice Model. Both models are used to teacher training programs to bridge the gap between research and practice (Pierce & Buysee, 2014). Thus, teacher learning should focus on helping teachers develop as researchers and reflective practitioners (Avgitidou, 2009). A case study was conducted as a subjective qualitative (interpretive) paradigm (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Data sources include audio recordings, observations, reflective journals and personal interviews. The analysis was directed through a thematic analysis (Tsiolis, 2014). Securely stored data, pseudonyms and written consents for both children and teachers are ensured maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. Accepted withdrawal from the study at any time. Initial findings demonstrate the importance of modeling teaching and learning communities. Teacher learning will then "pass" into children's learning (educational practice) (Papademetri, 2015). Defining the ways in which this happens is significant for teacher education. Student teaching programs should be focused on preparing teachers in designing dynamic activities and to support children's needs of the future generation children who will have critical and creative thinking and skills that will enable them to survive in the diverse and demanding environment that we live in (Jacobs, 2001).

Student Teaching Program, Teacher Education Models, Critical and creative thinking, Case Study, Skills

How is play represented in Child Development Associate (CDA) Candidates' Learning Experiences?

Sarah Lang, Erin Tebben, Kristen Knight, Cynthia Buettner, Ohio State University, United States

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a critical entry point to early care and education (ECE) professionalism within the U.S.; we examine the presence of play-based opportunities in the pedagogical materials CDA candidates created for their professional portfolios. Opportunities for play are critical for children's development but the increasing emphasis on measurable ECE outcomes may limit children's exposure to play (Johnson et al., 2013). ECE teachers greatly influence the degree to which children have access to play and play-based learning and teacher training may shape attitudes toward play (Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019). We conceptualized our work within the continuum of play-based learning described by Daniels and Pyle (2018), recognizing that ECE providers may differ in the degree to which they integrate play and child-centered approaches into designed learning experiences. Using an interpretive paradigm, we examined 321 experience plans completed by 26 teachers as part of a larger training program to prepare them for CDA. We deductively coded these plans (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2021) using definitions derived from Daniels & Pyle (2018). All data was de-identified and from consented research participants. Preliminary results suggest that most teachers were able to create play-based learning opportunities where children had some level of autonomy in the experience. Infant/toddler experience plans demonstrated more child-centric and development-based learning opportunities compared to those for preschoolers. CDA candidates, when given proper training and support, can develop play-based learning experiences, which may help ensure more young children in the U.S. have relevant play-based learning opportunities in their ECE programs.

learning experiences, play-based, professional development, deductive coding, child development associate

Play-based pedagogy in Swedish ECEC. Preschool teachers' beliefs

Maelis Karlsson Lohmander, Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson, University of Gothenburg, Department of Education Communication and Learning, Sweden

This study investigates the importance attributed to play in Swedish ECE settings and teacher education programmes. It highlights preschool teachers' reflections about their pre-service education regarding a play-based pedagogy. A play-based curriculum is recommended in several countries including Sweden (EU, 2014; Colliver, 2019; Skolverket, 2019). Although the notion 'learning through play' is widespread in ECE (Sutton Smith, 1997), the conceptualisation and translation of the play discourse into everyday activities varies depending on cultural contexts (Bubikova, Moan, Ness Hjetland & Wollscheid, 2019). The theoretical framework for this study draws on socio-cultural theories of play and learning (Säljö, 2014; Vygotsky, 2005) and learning within communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Employing a qualitative interpretative research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) the study drew on policy documents, one programme of studies, and interviews with preschool teachers. Interview data were analysed through content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). Ethical guidelines were followed (Uppsala universitet, 2021). Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Signed consent was obtained and participants could withdraw at any stage. Findings indicate that exposure to theoretical notions underpinning a play-based pedagogy during pre-service education combined with supportive early years environments are important preconditions for the implementation of this pedagogical approach. Time and documentation pressure linked to the current societal focus on measurable outcomes were identified as challenges to a play-based pedagogy. The findings have implications for policy and practice. It is crucial for all staff to be knowledgeable about play, increase their direct engagement with children at play and reduce their time on documentation.

Play-based pedagogy, Teachers' beliefs, Pre-service education, Preschool, Play and Learning

A 19

PROMOTING WELLBEING AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH PLAY, AND THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY ON PRACTICE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Victoria Whittington, University of South Australia, Australia

Promoting young children's wellbeing through reframing educator thinking about emotions

Victoria Whittington, Elspeth McInnes, Amy Farndale, Bec Neill, University of South Australia, Australia

This research aimed to explore the impact of educator coaching in fostering children's emotional literacy and wellbeing. In the years birth to 5, children's social and emotional wellbeing in education settings is commonly positioned from an 'above', and often deficit and future perspective (Fattore et al. 2016), in terms of their relationships with significant adults: attachment to parents (Bowlby 1969), attunement with the carer (Bornstein 2013), or forming foundations for future life (McCain et al 2007). Using the Reggio Emilian principle of viewing children as rich, competent contributors to their world (Rinaldi 2013) the research positions children as emotional beings in the present, whose communications are valid and respected. Qualitative case studies (Simons 2009) of early childhood sites explored strategies fostering young children's emotional literacy. Researchers interviewed 25 educators about their thinking and approach to children's emotions prior to a program developing emotional literacy through on-site coaching. Each site received a Kimochis Kit of plush characters to foster children's ability to identify their own and others' feelings. Second educator interviews were then conducted regarding reframing of their thinking and approach. All educators gave informed written consent to participate, post institutional ethics approval. Educators stated that the training and coaching heightened their awareness of children's emotions, and the need for authentic responses, varying with the child's age. Rather than distraction, they fostered children's emotional learning. Educators benefit from in-service training regarding respect for the emotional expression of young children and value of authentic responding to validate emotions and make them visible.

emotions, children birth to five years, in-service training, authentic responding, case study

Play types potentials for participation in play in afterschool activities

Jens-Ole Jensen (1), Helle Marie Skovbjerg (2), Anne-Lene Sand (2), (1) VIA University College, Denmark, (2) Design School Kolding, Denmark

This three-year design-based research study aims to develop play activities and design principles which expand possibilities for participation in play. Recent studies show a close correlation between the lack of play competences and social marginalization (Butler et al; Jørgensen & Skovbjerg). The study investigate how pedagogues can design for play in ways that expand the possibilities for children who are challenged to initiate, develop and participate in. We draw upon theories from inclusive education and play theory. We understand inclusion as a social practice that consists of both inclusion and exclusion processes, interactions, and negotiations leading to a specific social order (Hansen et al.). Play is understood as part of children's culture and as a shared practice and children create play situations through collective competences (Skovbjerg). The empirical work is based on a pragmatic tradition and stem from a number of design experiments, taking a design-based

research approach. We involved 2 schools, 500 children age 6-9 and 40 pedagogues. It lasted for 1½ year, consisted of five interventions each with its own play type. The empirical materials consist of fieldnotes, photos and videos. Generating data was compliant with GDPR, and the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Schools, children and pedagogues are all guaranteed anonymity. Variation and versatility in play types increase the chances of different possibilities for children with different preferences since different play types have different affordances and potentials. Pedagogues can qualify the process of designing for play by including knowledge on different play types specific qualities.

Play types, Inclusion, Participation, After school activities, Pedagogues

Attitudes of Israeli Early Childhood Educators who work in kibbutz, communal settlements, and cities towards their community and the effect of community on their practice

Sigal Achituv (1), David Brody (2), Orit Dror (1), (1) Oranim College of Education, Israel, (2) Efrata College of Education, Israel

Identifying attitudes of ECEC educators from kibbutz, urban, and village settings toward community. Revealing their concepts of how community affects their daily practice, including play. Research about kibbutz and village communities identifies overlapping and unique traits (Dror, 2021), while lack of community is found in Israeli cities (Casakin, 2015). No studies were found examining ECEC educators' attitudes towards community. Based on Bordieu's (1986) theory of social capital, Sampson (2001) identified social control in neighborhoods that enhances and impedes child development. Pavin (2007) applied these theories to kibbutz communities, stressing resilience. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) emphasis on environmental variables showed communal culture as a major socializing force. This qualitative study utilizes semi-structured interviews with 24 educators. Transcripts were analyzed thematically using grounded theory. Participants' anonymity was assured and participant identity was suppressed. Consent forms were used. Oranim College Ethics Committee granted approval. Differences between educators' attitudes in the settings related to similarities and differences in communal structures. Strong associations were found between kibbutz and ECEC activities. Village educators expressed inconsistency in recognizing communal structures. In a threatening form of community, urban educators, prompted by digital media, competed for parental approval. Following the Covid crisis which affected EC and community aspects of ECE in particular, this research highlights the central role of educators in mediating between community and young children. Perceptions of ECEC educators regarding community illuminate inextricable connections between community and ECEC practice, highlighting the attention that policymakers should pay to communal contexts. The research will assist policymakers to develop communal aspects of ECE.

ECEC worker's attitudes, kibbutz, communal settlements, communal contexts, environmental variables

A 20

TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON PLAY, ATTENTIVENESS AND PARTICIPATION

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Eleni Tympa, International Hellenic University, Greece

Preschool teachers' views on Attentiveness in Preschool

Monica Ehrström (1), (1) Malardalen University, Sweden, Martina Norling (2), (2) Örebro University, Sweden

This study aims to investigate assessment and preschool teachers' descriptions of attentiveness to follow each child's learning process in preschool. Previous research (Ang, 2014) illuminates the global debates about assessment and preschool teachers' responsibility to support each child's learning process. Research (Alasutari, Vallberg Roth & Markström, 2014: 119) indicate that assessment involves risks for children's identity creation. However, studies (Elbaz, 1992) highlight the moral significance of attentiveness. The theoretical basis for the analysis is Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural perspective, which stresses the importance of cultural tools for communication and attentiveness in relation to children's learning processes. This paper emanates from the tension between the ethical aspects of assessment and the national requirement to follow each child's learning, thus advocating attentiveness as a concept to reduce the tension. Stimulated recall interviews were conducted with seven preschool teachers in Sweden as a tool for common meaning-making and for focusing on attention through communication. Content analysis was used to reveal the views that emerged in the preschool teachers' descriptions. Ethical considerations of confidentiality and informed consent were considered. The video-recordings and pictures used as starting points for the preschool teachers' talk were employed during the interviews only as a stimulus to elicit preschool teachers' talk. Therefore, were deleted directly after the interviews. Preliminary findings indicate that mediating tools, communication, and a play-based cultural context are potential resources for preschool teachers' attentiveness to children's learning processes. In addition, the concept of attentiveness can usefully be combined with didactic strategies, when applying assessment in preschool.

Preschool teachers, Preschool children, Assessment, Attentiveness, Learning process

Teacher's practices to design, facilitate and participate in play in ECEC institutions

Marion Oen, Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Alicja Renata Sadownik, Western Norway University for Applied Sciences, Norway

This paper aims to synthesise international knowledge on ECEC practitioners' views on the practices of supporting and facilitating play, and thus to address the need of a "much clearer sense of how best to realise play facilitation in a given context" (Jensen et al. 2019, p. 30). Teachers play a crucial role in making play accessible for the children; however, they are often uncertain about how to do play (Pyle & Daniels, 2017), the available literature seems to be overwhelming, scattered and foremost limited to teachers' beliefs about play-based learning, all of which strengthens the concern for the disappearance of play (Bubikova-Moan et al. 2019). In order to get an informed overview of teachers' practices in facilitating play a scoping literature review was conducted. The databases used in the scope are Eric, SCOPUS, Web of Science, ProQuest, Teacher Reference Center, Academic Search Elite, SocIndex and PsycINFO. As the ethical considerations involved in literature reviews involve issues related to potential conflict of interests, voice-giving and representation, we support the database search with a careful snowballing of relevant references on the topic. We aim to contribute to the salient scientific debate on the teachers' role in children's play by sketching possible typologies of teachers' facilitating practices that aim to make the play accessible for all children. This knowledge is internationally relevant for a wide ECEC field as it will clarify variations of practices and add to the pedagogical toolbox.

Scoping review, Play facilitation, Teacher's role in play, Teacher practices, Designing for play

Preschool teachers' perspectives on dialogic and playful practices that support children's healthy habits

Eleni Tympa (1), Eleni Stergiou (2), Vasiliki Karavida (2), Athanasia Siaviki (2), (1) International Hellenic University, Greece, (2) University of Ioannina, Greece

The aim of this study was to investigate the in-service preschool teachers' perspectives on the effect of dialogue in combination with playful activities in the classroom, on children's healthy habits adoption. Recent evidence shows that classroom dialogue has a direct impact on children's learning and cognitive development (Littleton & Mercer, 2013, Yin et al., 2020) and enhances the listening of children's voices and collective thinking (Likomitrou & Avgitidou, 2014). Important dialogic enquiry is a primary thinking skill from which other skills follow (Kennedy, 2014). On the other hand, teachers can be unaware of teacher-child dialogic patterns and need training to put classroom talk on their agenda (Khong, Saito & Gillies, 2019). In order to achieve this research, we contacted interviews with in-service preschool teachers all over Greece (n=32), to discuss their initial views and methods on their dialogic practices in their daily curriculum. Interviews were only conducted after obtaining informed consent from relevant participants. The results revealed that in-service preschool teachers try to use the democratic dialogue, not only as a communication practice in the classroom, but also as a tool to achieve health promotion habits. Nonetheless, the education of preschool teachers is not completely sufficient in areas such as dialogic communication or classroom talk, so any further knowledge on the subject would have a positive impact. In general, the practices preschool teachers use so far, the effectiveness and what will be legitimate to change will be further discussed.

Dialogic practices, preschool teachers, healthy habits, preschool children, interviews

A 21

YOUNG CHILDREN ENCOUNTERING RESEARCH

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Gabriela Tebet, Universidade Estadual de Campinas - UNICAMP, Brazil

Pedagogical research through play: Children's Experiences of Teaching and Learning in the Pandemic Classroom

Sara Lannin, Gabriela Martínez Sainz, University College Dublin, Ireland

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was crucial to understand children's lives and how the pandemic impacted them. This paper documents the implementation of a child-centred play-based approach to research the lives of children in the 'pandemic classroom'. Research into children's voice emphasises the need for enhanced participation (Flynn, 2013). This requires creating collaborative environments where children are "insider researchers" (McNiff, 2017). This unique positionality means children are experts of their own experience and are embedded in the environments they explore (Wright et al., 2020). The paper builds on theories of childhood which reposition children as capable actors (Devine, 2013; Spyrou 2011) and uses the underlying principles of 'Aistear', the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework in Ireland. The case study uses a phenomenological approach to focus on children's own experiences. Through the 'Children's School Lives' longitudinal study of primary schooling in Ireland, data was collected from 7 schools. Photographs, audio recordings and artefacts were created by children aged 5 to 7 and the methods involved sociodramatic and constructive play. The paper will discuss key ethical

considerations such as respect for children's autonomy, freedom and justice. This approach takes advantage of the familiarity of play to explore children's lived experiences of the curriculum, pedagogy and school climate while increasing children's agency in the research process and minimising interference from adults. Our findings demonstrate that play-based research facilitates a naturalistic and child-friendly approach to investigate pedagogy. We propose greater incorporation of play into pedagogical research in and beyond early childhood education.

play-based research, participatory research, children's agency, participatory rights-based methodology, children's school lives

Infants as actors in arenas of playing: mapping assemblages and affordances

Gabriela Tebet (1), Anete Abramowicz (2), (1) Universidade Estadual de Campinas - UNICAMP, Brazil, (2) USP, Brazil

The research aims to follow, map and discuss the movements, meetings and assemblages produced by infants in arenas of play at early childhood education context. Also aims to socialize and discuss the methodological approach adopted. We assume the importance of a specific look at babies, their arenas and their agency (Holt, 2013; Duhn, 2014; Belinda and Degotardi, 2014; Belinda et al, 2015; Ridgway et al, 2016; Tebet & Abra). This speech is inspired by Fernand Deligny's works and proposes the distinction between wanting and doing, assuming wanting as an aimless movement and doing a movement with purpose and meaning. We assume the cartographic paradigm and the method of observation, photography, and filming carried out in a ECEC. The methodology consists of tracing the maps of the babies' movements, inspired by Fernand Deligny. We follow the Ethical Code of EECERA, considering the agency of babies, social and cultural differences, focusing the babies' movement as a social expression of their unique way of living in lived contexts. It was also approved by Brazilian Research Ethics Committee. A baby experiences things, the world and objects in a unique way and in this process is an actor and producer of unique playings. These explorations should not be delimited by models of existence, nor by dispositif of power for the construction of individuals and subjects. Results highlights the need to invest in teacher training for the specificity of working with babies in early childhood education, based on the culture of play, respecting their singularities.

Infants, Babies, Todlers, Mapping, Methodology

Exploring young children's agency within research encounters in early years settings

Deirdre McGrath, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom

This paper explores the agentic potential of young children in research encounters. While children's agentic capacity in research encounters is not a new concept, there is a concern that it remains undertheorised and that, as a result, an uncritical view of children's agency is embedded in much of the writings in childhood studies (Sutterlüty and Tisdall, 2019; Esser et al., 2016, Raithelhuber, 2016). Using data gathered as part of a qualitative study that explored young children's (aged 3-4) experiences of participation in early childhood settings, this paper draws on relational social theories (Burkett, 2016) to explore the concept of agency in a nuanced and critically reflective manner. Relational social theories locate agency within interdependent social relationships viewing agency as relational and contextual (Sutterlüty and Tisdall 2019). With these concepts in mind, the paper explores two aspects of the research process: the consent/assent process and the use of participatory methods (tours, photo voice, draw and tell) influenced by the Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2011). With regards to consent/assent, the paper explores the process of "informed assent" for each child via the use of "narrative non-fiction" (Mayne et al., 2016) and the ongoing negotiation of informed assent. Regarding the methodological approach, Burkett's (2016) concept of "emotional relatedness" is used to explore the realities and practicalities of engaging with the agentic capacity of young children. The strategies that children adopted to enhance their agentic potential within the research encounter are highlighted and implications for similar research explored.

children's agency, participatory research methods, children's voice, relational social theory, ethics

B 1

SELF-REGULATION AND ADVERSE CHILD EXPERIENCES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Rebekah Grace, Western Sydney University, Australia

Being Planet-positive - How Building Self-regulation in Early Years Supports Understanding of Sustainability Issues

Mine Conkbayir, Mine Conkbayir Consultancy, United Kingdom

The research aims of this small-scale qualitative study was to demonstrate how embedding self-regulation (SR) policies and provision in the Early Years (EY) setting enables children to better manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviour and promote action around global issues. The Relationship to previous research works includes Hirst, N. Boyd, D. and Blatchford-Siraj, J. (2017); O’Sullivan, J. and Corlett, N. (2021); Pascal, C. (2021) The theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in my research include Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1989; 1979); Bandura’s social learning theory (1977); Vygotsky’s co-constructivist and sociocultural theories (1978); Pascal’s 21st century global challenges of Participation, Power, Peace, Planet, Play and Technology. The paradigm, methodology and methods of this small-scale qualitative case study included documentation of practice via photographs, semi-structured interview, testimonials and observations, collated in collaboration with the setting manager. Ethical considerations of this small-scale study included obtaining permission for use of evidence; maintaining confidentiality; participants were free to opt-out at any time, without fear of repercussions; data kept on a password-locked USB key. The main finding is that by embedding SR-informed policies and practice in the setting, this provides the foundation of good mental health and is the best way to teach children about living sustainably.. This setting’s SR-informed provision is having a transformative impact on how practitioners support children’s behaviour and how everyone is equipped to co-construct ways of treating the environment more sustainably. All settings would benefit from making the move to SR-informed policies and provision.

Self-regulation, Sustainability, Early Years, Co-construct, Curriculum

The ‘HOPE’ (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) approach to service delivery

Rebekah Grace (1), Tom McClean (2), Kelly Baird (1), Christine Woodrow (1), Kerry Staples (1), Prathyusha Sanagavarapu (1), Cathy Kaplun (1), Nicole Peel (1), Stacy Blythe (1), (1) Western Sydney University, Australia, (2) Uniting, Australia

This presentation has two aims:

1. To discuss the HOPE approach to developing early childhood policy; and
2. To reflect on the experiences of an organisation that has worked to embed this approach within their own policy, strategic planning, and practice.

Research demonstrates the importance of positive childhood experiences (PCEs) in reducing the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) across the life-span (Narayan et al., 2018). For example, higher exposure to PCEs is associated with reduced mental health problems and academic difficulties (Guo et al., 2021). The HOPE approach challenges a research and practice focus on ACEs, arguing that equal attention and resources should be allocated to identifying and promoting PCEs across 4 domains: relationships; environments; social engagement; and emotional growth (Sege & Browne, 2017). This presentation will focus on the application of the HOPE approach in the delivery of impactful child research and services. It will introduce this approach, and include the reflections of a leader from one organisation who has applied this approach to their policy and practice. This is a framing paper to provide context for the presentations that follow and does not present new research data. Informal reflections, not requiring formal ethics approval, from a service leader will be included to enhance discussion on real-life implementation. Confidentiality of clients will be strictly maintained. The HOPE approach supports a shift in ‘strengths-based’ thinking from a philosophical commitment to an embedded practice strategy. This presentation will encourage critical reflection on practice approaches and policy to support positive childhood experiences.

adverse childhood experiences, positive childhood experiences, vulnerability, policy, conceptual approach

‘HOPE’ (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) for children in out-of-home-care

Dianne Jackson (1), Rebekah Grace (2), (1) Key Assets Australia, Australia, (2) Western Sydney University, Australia

This presentation aims to: examine the application of the HOPE approach to children in out-of-home care (OOHC); discuss children's perspectives on positive life experiences. Most OOHC placements happen during early childhood, ideally providing safe home environments, whilst also causing developmental disruptions that can lead to poor life outcomes (Cashmore, 2016). Research shows a need for systemic reform in order to provide the best chance in life for the most vulnerable children. OOHC policy and practice prioritises risk mitigation, reflected in a deficit discourse. Safety is critical, but not enough to support positive outcomes. The HOPE approach calls for equal investment in strong relationships, opportunities to belong, and experiences that promote emotional growth (Burnstein et al., 2021). Case studies developed from OOHC practice settings demonstrate the impact of a HOPE-based approach on supporting young children in OOHC. We will present preliminary findings from a study in which 30 children in OOHC were interviewed using participatory methods to identify positive life experiences that helped them to 'feel strong'. Best practice in child participatory methods informed the research approach, taking account of age-appropriate informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for child ownership of creative output. Ethics approval was from Western Sydney University. Findings support the importance to children of opportunities to maintain familial and cultural connections, engagement in decision making, and unstructured time to explore and play. Policy and practice must move beyond an exclusive focus on risk to the proactive support of positive life experiences for children in OOHC.

Out-of-home-care, child protection, positive life experiences, culture, connection

B 2

FRAMING PLAY IN THE UK AND HUNGARY: RIGHTS, MULTI-AGE GROUPS AND EMPOWERMENT – NAVIGATING CULTURE PEDAGOGY TO CHAMPION CHILDREN'S VOICE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Natalie Canning, The Open University, United Kingdom

Children's Rights in Hungary

Sándor Pálfi (1), Eleonora Teszenyi (2), Natalie Canning (2), (1) Debrecen University, Hungary, (2) The Open University, United Kingdom

It is 30 years since Hungary signed the UNCRC. This research explores how rights are explored by children, what is important to them and how rights are reflected in Hungarian practice. Children's interest in the world around them and exploring their rights draws on work by Chak, 2010, Clarke and Phethean, 2011 and Dann, 2013). Central is interpretive socio-political understanding; the process by which sense is made of children's play and how generalisations are constructed to interpret their rights (Berger and Lukmann 1991). It is based on an ethnographic study of 23 Kindergartens across Hungary. Data generation included child-centred activities to elicit views through creative play. Pedagogues were asked about children's rights through reflections. Thematic analysis provided a basis to discuss rights from children's perspectives. The British Educational Research Association guidelines (2018) were adhered to alongside Hungarian ethical protocols. Ethics are considered in a different way in Hungary and so ensuring cohesion between the two countries approaches and expectations was important. Themes were identified from the data: freedom, self-expression, environment, power/autonomy, significant people and essentials for life. These were mapped against the UNCRC articles. The findings provided the basis for a puppet show shaped and led by the voices of children in the research. Children's rights are not prioritised in Hungarian practice. Thinking around rights is politically charged rather than acknowledging the implications for children's experiences. This research contributes to changing attitudes in Hungary around the significance of children's voice and rights based experiences.

Hungarian pedagogic practice, Children's voice, Lived experiences, Thematic analysis, Social phenomenology

Types of Adult-Child interactions and Their Affordances for Children's Multi-Age Play

Eleonora Teszenyi, The Open University, United Kingdom

The study aim is to explore the features of adult-child interactions and their affordances for children's multi-age play. Adult-child interactions are widely recognised as salient aspects of ECEC practice, which profoundly influence children's play (Goble et al., 2019; Rose and Rogers, 2012). It is also widely documented that multi-age groups are frequently implemented models of early education worldwide (Ansari and Pianta, 2019; Cozza, 2017; Katz, 1995). Drawing on the bio-ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998, 2006), their Process-Person-Context-Time model has been utilised to interpret the study findings as a fitting theoretical lens and analytical frame through which adult-child interactions can be better understood. Located in the social constructivist paradigm and conducted in Hungary, this study employed a collective case study

methodology with a focus on observing 22 pedagogues' enacted practice. Ethical approval was obtained through the author's institutional Research Committee and was fully aligned with the guidelines of the BERA (2018) and that of HAS (2010). Honest and ethical conduct throughout, internal and external anonymity in the reporting, voluntary informed consent and the right to withdraw ensured participants' protection. The findings offer a typology of adult-child interactions and suggest that inter-subjective-action and trans-action have the potential to support children's mixed-age play, whereas there is a need to evaluate the influence of intra-action and inter-reaction on how children play in multi-age environments. This paper points to imperatives for a widely embedded and nuanced understanding of what type of interactions enable children's play in multi-age ECEC provision.

age-diversity, bio-ecological theory, interaction types, multi-age practice, mixed-age play

Implementing the Empowerment Framework in UK Early Childhood Practice

Natalie Canning, The Open University, United Kingdom

The research presents the results from Early Childhood educators using the empowerment framework (2020) in practice. It is a continuation of a larger study on children's empowerment in play (Canning, 2016). Empowerment is a holistic concept, encompassing social/emotional experiences draws on work by Zimmerman (1984); Gomm, (1993); Rivera and Tharp (2006). The research is underpinned by sociocultural theory founded on the works of Vygotsky, arguing that society is socially constructed by the ideas which are generated through cultural trends. It is based on an interpretive, ethnographic study of 14 early childhood settings with educators using the empowerment framework (Canning, 2020) to observe children. Educators were interviewed before using the framework and afterwards on the accessibility, cross reference to the curriculum and significance of empowerment. The interviews supported a developing understanding of the significance of empowerment in practice. The British Educational Research Association guidelines (2018) were adhered to. Areas of ethical consideration centred on communication with participants, implications for practice and considering different ways of working. The philosophy underpinning the empowerment framework is supported in Early Childhood practice. Children experience empowerment through social interactions and their participation, ownership and voice are central to empowering experiences. Educators recognise the importance of identifying empowering moments and situations for children's learning and development. The research asks Early Childhood educators to examine ways they observe and record learning to acknowledge the significance of children's empowerment. The challenge is to make the framework accessible for recording observations.

Children's play, Empowerment, Sociocultural theory, Observation, Curriculum

B 3

IMPROVING QUALITY: PRACTICUM NETWORK, REFLECTIONS AND EXPERT TEACHERS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Kari Anne Jørgensen-Vittersø, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Practicum network as a quality-enhancing factor in early childhood education

Anna Buss, Faculty of Education and Welfare Studies at Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The purpose of this qualitative study is to analyze the leaders' views on how a coordinated practicum network can raise the quality of early childhood education. The research question is: What quality aspects do the leaders in early childhood education describe of a coordinated practicum network? At Åbo Akademi University, a coordinated practicum network was developed during the years 2019–2021. The practicum network consists of 95 preschools. The purpose of the coordinated network is to provide practicum for teacher students within in early childhood education. Collaboration between universities and preschools can also involve professional development for both teacher students and staff, good relations are prerequisite (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Hastings & Squires, 2002; Niklasson, 2015; Sigurdardóttir, 2010). To understand partnership a theory about "the third space" has been developed to explain the meeting between university and the place of practicum (Daza, 2021; Pajchel, 2021; Zeichner, 2010). In the spring of 2021, 21 leaders in early childhood education were interviewed within the practicum network. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed in the academic year of 2021-2022

using thematic content analysis. Studies follow good scientific practice, the respondents' gave consent and by using recognized research methods the study is defensible.

The results are expected to contribute to an increased understanding of how participation in practicum network contributes to quality in early childhood education. Similar partnerships are developed in the Nordic countries. This study will contribute to understand the value of a working partnership in developing early childhood education.

practicum network, partnership, quality, teacher education, professional development

Learning From the Best: The Practices and Reflections of Expert Preschool Teachers in Denmark

Anders Skriver Jensen, Henriette Jæger, University College Copenhagen, Denmark

This one-year study aims to identify key components in high quality interactions between preschool teachers and toddlers (12-36 months). Research shows that the quality of teacher-child interactions is an important driver of gains in children's development through preschool (Christoffersen, et al., 2014; OECD, 2018). Preschool teachers typically view quality in terms of contextual, bodily embedded relations, while administrators and policymakers view quality as something decontextualized and universally measurable (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; Kampmann et al., 2019). The study engages with the concept of *educare* (Broström, 2006; Jensen, 2018), where care, teaching and upbringing is unified in play-based practices for children's well-being, learning, development and *Bildung*. Furthermore, the study draws on insights regarding sustained shared thinking (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). The study is located within the qualitative research paradigm (Denzin, 2008). Two preschool teachers (sampled by reputation) were observed for 4 half days each, with semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) before and after the observation period. The participating teachers gave informed consent, and parents were informed of the study's aims and methods. The researchers (sometimes together with a participating teacher) informed the children during the visits. The study finds that the core of the professional competence to engage in high quality interaction with toddlers consists of 4 key components: 1) Attunement, 2) Physicality, 3) Exploration and 4) Initiative. The findings show promise with regards to preschool teacher training, where a middle ground between context-sensitiveness and universal standards needs to be explored.

teacher-child interactions, process quality, toddlers, professional competence, promising practice

ECE teachers observe and reflect upon children's play as a process of educational change

Kyriaki Velkou (1), Sofia Avgitidou (2), (1) University of Western Macedonia, Greece, (2) Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

This study explores changes in ECE teachers' beliefs and practices after their involvement in collaborative action research in which they employed systematic observation of children's play and subsequent reflection. Observation of children's thoughts and actions is an important source of information for teachers' reflection about their priorities and their practices to foster children's learning (McDonald, 2018; Forman & Hall, 2005). However, the support of ECE teachers' observation and reflection processes is necessary to enhance their professional learning (Avgitidou, 2014). Enhancing ECE teachers' knowledge of play and their role in it through research and reflection assists in their critical understanding of the importance of children's actions and interactions and influences their pedagogical decisions (Chesworth, 2016; Bennett, Wood & Rogers, 2001). Five ECE teachers participated in an action research project (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) facilitated by the first author and having as a critical friend the second author. Qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of their observation field notes and of reflective dialogues is used to describe changes in their thinking and practice regarding play. Anonymity and confidentiality was secured after teachers' voluntary and informed consent. Evidence based knowledge of children's play through teachers' observations and reflections enhanced awareness of children's initiatives and abilities which then encouraged children's participation in problem-solving and co-operative decision making processes about the content and process of play but also during other organised activities by the teacher. Teachers' critical awareness through research and reflection can alter their beliefs and practices regarding children's play supporting their professional learning.

children's play, observation of play, teacher's reflection, action research, professional learning

B 4

STORYING DRAMA AS A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Melissa Derby, University of Waikato, New Zealand

Exploring traditional Maori pedagogy as a tool to promote early literacy success

Melissa Derby, University of Waikato, New Zealand

This presentation reports on a study that explored the effects of a culturally-responsive literacy intervention on the early literacy skills and home literacy environments of Māori preschool children in Christchurch, New Zealand. Studies exploring early literacy development found that interactive storytelling, playing games, reminiscing, and conversations about children's experiences contributed to strong oral language skills and greater connections with their world (Reese, 2013). Additionally, traditional tribal stories foster a sense of belonging (Derby, 2016). An ecological lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) considered the effect of culture and the home environment on children's development. The He Awa Whiria framework (Macfarlane, 2011) was used to combine theories of early literacy development (Gillon, 2018) with Māori pedagogy (Metge, 2015). The mixed methods study employed a single case design (N=8). Through game-based assessment, children's literacy skills in English and Māori were analysed using the two-standard deviation band method. Family interviews and questionnaires provided insight into changes in home literacy environments. Participants received an information sheet in English and Māori. Informed consent was granted by the families and was re-negotiated with children during data collection. Participants were given pseudonyms, and all participants, including children, were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The intervention had a substantial effect on the children's foundational literacy skills, and generated positive shifts in home literacy environments. The findings illustrate that Māori pedagogy can be utilised in contemporary settings to support foundational literacy skills. The findings, drawing from play and storytelling, informed the Ministry of Education resource, Talking Together.

Early literacy, Maori/Indigenous, Family, Storytelling, Culture

The pedagogical puppet and the playfulness of the drama support the toddler in the development of compassion

Jaana Keränen, University of Oulu, Finland

This article focuses on the potential of play, the playfulness of the drama and a pedagogical puppet to support the development of compassion with toddlers in early childhood education (ECE). The play creates a zone of close development for the child. In the play, the child is able to perform what they are unable to do outside of play (Vygotsky, 1933, 2002). Through stories, play and drama, human can learn to interpret and show compassion for others (Nussbaum, 2014; Rajala et al, 2017). The research is ethnographic (Kananen, 2014), its methodological approach focuses on childhood research (Alanen, 2009) and qualitative action research (Viikka & Ylöstalo, 2016). In research, play, drama and the pedagogical puppet are seen as playing an important role in supporting a child's development. The toddlers can express themselves through play, drama and the pedagogical puppet even when they are not talking (Heikkinen, 2002; Majaron, 2012; Vygotsky, 1933, 2002). The research group consists children from three toddler groups in a northern Finnish daycare center. The data is collected in practice, by attending and observing. The analysis is data-driven. The research follows the GDPR and ethical guidelines (EECERA, 2015; TENK, 2019); permits from guardians and the willingness of toddlers were observed. Research shows that the use of play, drama and the pedagogical puppet supports a child in developing compassion and strengthens toddler interaction, learning and well-being. The research also raises questions about the operating culture of early childhood education (cf. Rajala et al., 2017) and the importance of education curriculum.

toddlers, pedagogical puppet, playfulness of drama, play, compassion

"A screen's a screen... right?" Researching Online Theatre for Early Years

Charlotte Allan, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

This presentation draws on a 2021 study with audience members at an online Theatre for Early Years performance. The aims were to explore the lived experience of audiences (parents with children 12-36m), and offer reflection on the impact of conducting this work on and with digital technologies. Informed by literature that places the arts as an essential aspect of early development, (Malloch & Trevarthen 2010, Crossick 2016, Marinopoulos 2019) this research explores the place of an online performance. Studies on how video calling is used by families with young children supported an interactive, imaginative approach (McClure et al 2015, Busch 2018). The significance of attunement in early childhood (Stern 2010) and intersubjective pedagogies that foreground relationships (Vygotsky 1987, Rogoff 1991) provide a conceptual frame for exploring interaction. A qualitative, case study methodology was used. Three parent-child dyads were observed attending a Zoom performance, followed by interviews with the adults. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to thematically analyse 3 hours of transcribed interview, and 1.5 hours of detailed video observations. Ethical approval was obtained and EECERA ethical code followed. Prioritising good researcher-participant rapport mitigated concerns around recording in the home, and ongoing

assent of child participants. The findings show that performer-audience interaction was the key element in enabling an online theatre experience with the potential to support attuned, affectionate relationships within audience families. This understanding of how video technology can be used well will improve online content designed for the very young, and empower parents to make positive choices.

Digital Family Relationships Arts, Intersubjectivity

B 5

ASPECTS OF RESEARCHING CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Margaret Kernan, Hibernia College, Ireland

Embracing Changes Outdoors for Children Under 3

Margaret Kernan (1), Marianne Casey (2), Marie Dowdall (2), (1) Hibernia College, Ireland, (2) South Dublin County Childcare Committee

Outdoor play and learning provision for under 3s is an underdeveloped dimension of ECEC practice and research (Kemp & Josephidou, 2021). The aim of this pilot action research project is to empower a group of early years educators working in Dublin to improve their outdoor play and learning provision for under 3s. It is informed by principles of community-based participatory research (Tandon et al. 2016), and lessons from other practitioner enquiry projects (e.g. SEED, 2019). It is hypothesised that the research process and desired change will be propelled by valuing the participants' lived experiences and outdoor practice-based knowledge (Jones et al. 2017; Tajik & Singer, 2019), and their wish to improve their practice outdoors. To evaluate the efficacy of the approach, participants will complete a baseline questionnaire about current outdoor practice with babies and toddlers before the community of practice meetings begin and an end line questionnaire. Mid-way they will engage in an evaluation interactive activity about the research process. The project is guided by the EECERA ethical code for early childhood researchers. Participation in the pilot project is based on voluntary, informed consent. Preliminary findings include participants' desire to increase natural materials and sensory play outdoors; increase parental engagement; enhance indoor-outdoor connections and provide outdoor play for under 3s in all weathers. The study will provide important data about the impact of action research in professional growth and learning in improving outdoor practice with under3s and will inform the upscaling of the approach to other contexts.

outdoor play, babies and toddlers, action research, practitioner enquiry, professional growth

An exploration of two-year-old children's play and friendship in ECEC in England and Finland: A phenomenological and child rights perspective

Aline Cole-Albaeck, United Kingdom

This study theorises child rights pedagogy by exploring early-verbal two-year-old children's everyday experiences in ECEC. The volume of research into children's rights has been growing since the adoption of the UNCRC (1989); however, much rights-based research on children's experiences in ECEC has been in relation to verbal children (Covell and Howe, 2011; Dockett et al., 2019; Mayne et al., 2018; Quennerstedt, 2016). Human rights theory and childhood sociology underpin this research (Freeman, 2012; 2015; Mayall, 2013; 2015). Drawing on observations, conversations with children, interviews with staff and parents, this study is a multi-site interpretivist case study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Stake, 1995; 2005). The thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Gremler, 2004) is inspired by a phenomenological perspective (van Manen, 1997; 2014). A four-stage rights-based framework linking ethical considerations to the UNCRC was created for this research, especially taking potential harm, assent/consent and confidentiality into consideration, congruent with the EECERA ethical code for early childhood researchers (Bertram et al., 2015). Data suggest friendship bond between two-year-old children can be very profound and significant. This is relevant to Article 31 of the UNCRC and children's right to play, but not just 'play' as a concept, but playing with one's important friend (Dunn, 2004), within the notion of a "pedagogy of friendship" (Carter and Nutbrown, 2016: 410; Ridgeway et al., 2015). Children and parents value early friendship bonds but educators do not always seem to recognise this. This has implications for practice for supporting children in developing friendship bonds in their play.

Two-year-olds, Friendship, Play, Children's rights (UNCRC), Phenomenology

B 6

REFLECTIONS FROM THE FROEBEL PARTNERSHIP ON CHILDREN'S NARRATIVES OUTDOORS: THE CREATION OF NATURE-LED ENVIRONMENTS IN ENGLAND AND NEW ZEALAND THROUGH PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Self-organised symposium

The Froebel Partnership has been set up to enable a group of Froebel-inspired practitioners and researchers in England and New Zealand to collaborate in an exploration of pedagogic principles and practices. This symposium set will provide an overview of the latest research project in which practitioners in both countries have documented the children's connections with their outdoor space. The partnership is a developing community of practice (Wenger, 1991) between Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre, Severn Stars Kindergarten and the Centre for Research in Early Childhood; through this participatory project the agency and competency of children provides the catalyst for pedagogic developments and also provides the basis for connections with wider family and community.

Chair: Helen Lyndon, CREC, United Kingdom

Engaging with Nature: Reflections from the Froebel Partnership on supporting children's narratives in outdoor spaces

Chris Pascal, Tony Bertram, CREC, United Kingdom

This cross national participatory project explores the nature of the outdoor spaces, and the 'affordances' to children's learning and agency they offer. This paper sets out the research intentions, the theoretical underpinnings of the project, and its methodology. This focus builds on our collaborative project that explored young voices on the COVID pandemic (Pascal et al, 2021). It builds upon participatory research projects using Froebelian principles and ethics (Bruce et al, 2019). It employs a number of concepts and theories to frame our research including: Affordances: Gibson (1977); Mediation: Vygotsky (1978); Activity Theory: Rubenstein (1989); Place-based education: Wally Penetito (2013). The research adopts a praxeological, action research methodology, compiling case studies of: 1. Outdoor places/spaces, 2. Children and families access and impact, 3. Practitioner outdoor pedagogic strategies, using a range of multi-media methods. All settings ensured informed consent and ongoing assent, anonymity and confidentiality and contribution to the settings social and cultural commitments, taking particular care to ensure children's rights and agency. Early findings indicate that the affordances offered in outdoor places are multiple, diverse and unexpected. It suggests enhancing practitioner's awareness of the outdoors as a space for creating open learning environments which facilitate children's agency in their learning.

Outdoor spaces, Pedagogy, Froebel, Agency, Affordances

An exploration of the adult role in support of Froebelian principles in the natural outdoor environment

Sally Cave, Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre, United Kingdom

This project provides the opportunity for Froebelians to consider how their philosophy and associated pedagogic approaches in the outdoor environment might adapt and respond to children's needs for expression of voice and emotion. This focus arises from our previous collaborative project (Pascal et al, 2021) which highlighted the importance of the outdoor environment in contributing to child and adult wellbeing; this aspect of Froebelian pedagogy required further investigation. This research sits within Froebelian practice (Lilley, 1967) and is specifically explores the notion of unity supporting place-based education (Wally Penetito, 2013). It documents the affordance of the outdoor space as it is unique to each child (Gibson, 1977). This participatory research is underpinned by action research principles and is embedded within praxis. Through careful documentation case studies are developing around the use of the spaces and the practitioners evolving pedagogy. Practitioners are utilising observations and mapping methods to document each case. The study sits within EECERA ethical guidelines; consent is sought from parents and informed consent negotiated with children along with ongoing assent. The use of pseudonyms supports anonymity and all participants have the right to withdraw from the study with no detriment. The findings demonstrate that a Froebelian approach in natural outdoor spaces affords children and adults solace, opportunity to become deeply engaged, confidence to communicate and a greater knowledge about the world they inhabit. These findings suggest implications for the adult role in natural outdoor environments might effectively promote wellbeing and communication in children, their families and practitioners.

Outdoor spaces, Adult role, Wellbeing, Froebel, Communication and language

Engaging with Nature: An exploration of Froebelian principles in the outdoor environment supporting children's emotional well-being

Helen Lyndon (1), Tony Bertram (1), Anne Denham (2), (1) CREC, United Kingdom, (2) Seven Stars Kindergarten Aotearoa, New Zealand

Children's emotional well-being and social development are at the heart of Te Whariki. At Seven Stars we strive to provide a Froebelian curriculum (Tovey, 2020) and a learning environment that enhances children's social and emotional competence and engagement. This project explores the outdoor space needed to promote wellbeing and social/emotional competence. Previous research indicates that post-pandemic children have been exploring the outside differently and prefer to be with others, highlighting the need for social connection and attention to overall wellbeing (Pascal et al, 2021). We have drawn on pedagogical approaches from He Mapuna te Tamaiti (Ministry of Education, 2019) and find links between Te Whariki, the Froebelian concept of unity (Lilley, 1967) and place-based education (Wally Penetito, 2013) emphasising connection to the land. This qualitative, participatory study follows action research principles and documents children's developing Kaitiakitanga (guardianship of outdoor spaces). The children's interactions with their outdoor space are documented through images, written observations and reflections (Ortlipp, 2008). Teacher-led games, guided by ENGAGE (Healy & Helperin, 2015), support pedagogical developments. EECERA ethical principles have been adhered to; consent is sought from participants and the assent of children monitored; data is anonymised; non-maleficence ensures no obligation to participate and the study seeks to bring value. Participants have developed open-ended, risk-aware outdoor play which supports the children in making connections and developing their Kaitiakitanga. The agency of children and practitioners within the outdoor space has the potential to provide connections to the wider community and impact on those beyond the setting.

Te Whariki, outdoor spaces, Wellbeing, Social and emotional competence, Self-regulation

B 7

RESEARCH ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY—TEACHER AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Self-organised Symposium

This self-symposia research on early childhood education for sustainability—Teacher and teacher education, is organized by sustainability SIG members. Its primary focus is on early childhood teacher education in education for sustainability in terms of three different countries' contexts. For instance, using participatory action research, O'Sullivan examines how a CPD program influences ECEC practitioners' becoming sustainability change agents across the English ECEC sector. What's more, Årlemalm-Hagsér, Pramling Samuelsson, and Engdahl target to investigate Swedish preschool teachers' motives about teaching ECEfS from the critical paradigm perspective. On the other hand, by utilizing phenomenology, Alici and Alan research Village Institutes' curricula and their graduates' lived experiences as learners (and teachers) in terms of EfS.

Chair: Sule ALICI, Kirsehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey

Can a CPD programme build a community of Sustainability Informed ECEC teacher/practitioner in England?

June O'Sullivan, London Early Years Foundation, United Kingdom

This research study investigates how a CPD programme can build a Community of Sustainability Informed ECEC Practitioners in England to become agents of change across the wider ECEC sector. Despite increasing narratives about the sustainability crisis, research shows the concept remains misunderstood among ECEC practitioners (Davis, 2015; Siraj-Blatchford 2015). However, studies of initial teacher education shows it provides a strategic opportunity for teachers to teach sustainability, but this was predicated on their levels of interest (Ferreira et al. 2007). Similar evidence is limited about how CPD programmes for ECEC practitioners' can build interest and ability to share and embed sustainability across the sector (Boyd, 2019). Research is framed within participative praxeological paradigm enabling the construction of practical knowledge about sustainability in ECEC settings (Pascal et al. 2012; Formosinho et al. 2012). Action research is the methodology with participatory action research as the method. Data will be collected through questionnaires shared across ECEC PVI sector using social media. Semi structured interviews conducted with 40 participants, who have completed the CPD programme and a focus group with participants' managers. To mitigate the researcher/manager position, consent forms and information sheet were provided to all participants. Pseudonyms replaced participants' names and they could withdraw from the study any time. Early findings point to the importance of building a change model and coaching into the CPD to support practitioners' ability to influence and disseminate. Evidence from the study is timely as English national policy for sustainability in EY and schools is being developed.

Sustainability Development Goals, Sustainability - Informed, Disseminating Learning, Coaching for Change, Community of Practice

Teaching in transformation – preschool teachers' multifaceted motives about educating for sustainability in Swedish early childhood settings

Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér (1), Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson (2), Ingrid Engdahl (3), (1) Mälardalen University, Sweden, (2) University of Gothenburg, Sweden, (3) Sweden

The purpose of the study was to explore what motives preschool teachers describe about teaching education for sustainability (TEFS) in early childhood education (ECE) in Sweden. This in light of the new formulations about sustainability in the National Preschool Curriculum (Skolverket, 2018). This research builds on previous research on ECEfs (Davis, 2009, 2014) and the need to deepening the knowledge of teachers different understandings (Hedefalk et al., 2015) such as motives for TEfs. The study has a critical theoretical base where ECE can be described as a place of specific historical, ideological and theoretical traditions and contemporary understanding of children, childhood and children's learning. A place that meets and is influenced by the prevailing political discourses in society and the prevailing education policy. This study within a critical paradigm and methodology presents a survey with 153 Swedish ECE teachers within a research and development program describing the most important motives for TEfs. Ethical guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (2016) and EECERA (2014) were followed in the design. Information as a consent form were provided to all participants. Approved 2021 by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. The study shows that in the ECE teachers' descriptions, a wide range of motives emerges regarding why it is important to TEfs from being guided to doing this through the curriculum to the importance of taking responsibility for change towards a more sustainable world. This study is part of a research and development program, deepening knowledge on both practice and policy.

education for sustainability in early childhood education, Swedish early childhood teachers, critical theory, teaching education for sustainability, research and development program

A Phenomenological Study of Turkish Teacher Education concerning Education for Sustainability: Village Institutes

Sule ALICI (1), Havva Ayca ALAN (2), (1) Kirsehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey, (2) Middle East Technical University, Turkey

This study aims to scrutinize Village Institutes' (VI) curricula, a former, locally relevant Turkish teacher education (TE) program based on daily life challenges, community collaboration, and democracy, and their graduates' lived experiences as learners (and teachers) in terms of Education for Sustainability (Efs). The works of graduates are still influential in education as pedagogy and teaching material. Increasing TE quality is one of the first concerns of Efs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNESCO, 2020). However, TE research is still not at the desired level in national and international settings (Alici, 2020; Davis & Davis, 2020). The theoretical background of this study comes from critical theory, Biesta (2011), and Aspelin's (2015)'s educational institutions' four functions. These are (a) qualification, (b) socialization, (c) subjectification and (d) existentialisation. This study utilizes phenomenology within the interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2007). The participants are selected via purposeful and snowballing sampling. Documents, artifacts, and interviews are utilized as data sources. Data

analysis is conducted via content analysis and open-coding. Based on Turkish Higher Education councils' ethical research guidelines, required permissions from the ethical board and participants' informed consent were obtained. The data analysis process continues. The preliminary analysis of documents and artifacts indicated that the curricula and pedagogy of VI promoted SDGs 4 and 11 effectively by providing quality education for disadvantaged children, supporting the agency of graduates for society's transformation. Results of this study may give insights into developing qualified TE for transformation towards responsible citizenship and peaceful living as emphasized by Giroux (2008).

teacher education, education for sustainability, village institutes, sustainable development goals, phenomenology

B 8

MATHEMATICS AND PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: CHILDREN, TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

Self-organised Symposium

Play is a fundamental part of young children's learning of mathematics. It provides opportunities for them to explore mathematics, the language and symbols of mathematics, and the relationships between cultural knowledge and mathematical thinking. The first presentation in this symposium considers a systematic literature review of young children's mathematics learning in the context of their families. This review resulted in a set of principles, including the importance of play, to guide the revision of an Australian early years mathematics intervention. The second focuses on English early childhood teachers' pedagogies of play and mathematics and how these are enacted in their classrooms. Concepts such as child-led play and teachers' noticing of children's mathematics are considered. The third presentation utilises teachers' written observations of young children's pretend play and mathematical signs to consider the importance of democracy within an English nursery classroom as children make and demonstrate mathematical meaning.

Chair: Robert (Bob) Perry, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education Pty Ltd, Australia

Let's Count: Revision and Redevelopment

Robert (Bob) Perry, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education Pty Ltd, Australia

This presentation explores the research and social bases for the revision of the Let's Count preschool mathematics program in Australia. From an extensive and comprehensive literature review and input from Indigenous partners, key principles for the revision were developed. Let's Count was designed in 2009, based on research available at the time (Gervasoni & Perry, 2017). Early childhood mathematics education research and practice has developed since then, requiring a revision of the program. Although Let's Count is a very successful program, reflection on current research identified areas that could be enriched, such as cultural relevance (Morrison et al., 2019), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge (Bobongie & Jackson, 2019), and family engagement (Rouse & O'Brien, 2017). A systematic, comprehensive literature review (MacDonald & Murphy, 2019) was undertaken, resulting in over 350 refereed journal articles, chapters, presentations, and reports being reviewed. Principles for the revised program were developed. This research involves a systematic literature review. Ethical considerations - diverse, comprehensive and documented search and selection processes; inclusion and exclusion criteria; quality assessment; and synthesis of existing evidence - guided selection, analysis, and reporting. The main finding from this study is a set of principles driving the revision of Let's Count. These emphasise the importance of respectful and trusting relationships; powerful partnerships; informed ethical involvement; culturally responsive pedagogies; strengths-based approaches; high expectations relationships; family engagement; sustained shared thinking; and maths talk. The principles will be applied across all program aspects and will support positive and inclusive interactions among educators, families, and children.

mathematics, families, Let's Count, principles, young children

Early Years Teachers Perspectives on their Pedagogies of Play and Mathematics

Elizabeth Carruthers, Bristol University, UK, United Kingdom

The aim of this study was to listen to early years teachers' pedagogies of play as they reflect on play and mathematics within their classrooms. This research was part of my doctoral thesis which was to uncover pedagogies that support children's mathematical graphics (Carruthers, 2013, 2020). Previous works on this theme are Carruthers, 2012 and 2015. It was a longitudinal, qualitative study within a conceptual socio-cultural framework (Vygotsky, 1978). The participants were 15 early years teachers teaching in 14 inner city schools in England. Data were gathered from questionnaires, interviews, and teachers' written reflections of their classroom practice, analysed from an interpretative socio-cultural paradigm using case study methodology. This study was approved by Bristol University Ethics Committee. The participants completed consent forms and

reflected on their changing positions, giving them opportunities to withdraw if necessary. The findings of this study revealed that eight of the teachers advocated mathematical play that is child-led and their classrooms and space were mostly shaped for child-led play. Seven teachers wrote about having difficulty with affording children play opportunities and understanding and engaging in children's play interests. These teachers felt pressurised with time which was dominated by phonics and government expectations of assessments and targets. It was highlighted that following children's play agendas, where children lead, needs a shift in conceptualising teaching to accommodate child-led play and noticing children's own mathematics and cultural knowledge. This has implications for professional development where there is a focus on understanding children's play and their mathematical play.

children's play, pedagogy, mathematics, teacher perspectives, teacher agency

Play, agency and young children's mathematics

Maulfry Worthington, Children's Mathematics Network, United Kingdom

The objective of this research is to identify children's agentic strategies in their free pretend play, and their influence on the mathematics they spontaneously explored in their play. Pretend play is beneficial for children's learning (Vygotsky 1978). Investigating children's mathematics in their play in recent doctoral research (Worthington, 2021). The emergence and development of young children's personal mathematical inscriptions), identified diverse mathematical interests, talk and semiosis. This genetic study draws on cultural-historical and social-semiotic theories (Vygotsky, 1978) in order to illuminate the cultural influences (Moll et al., 1992) on their play. The prevailing paradigm is of emergent mathematics in free pretend play. Documentation of seven nursery children's play provided case-studies. To ensure systematic analysis, qualitative data (written documentation and children's graphics) were analysed with the help of computer-assisted-qualitative-data-software (CAQDAS), supported by interpretive methods. Ethical concerns focused on voluntary informed consent, openness and the right to withdraw. In addition to consulting the parents, the research was explained to the children using everyday language and their agreement sought. One family withdrew their child from the study early in the period of data collection. In contrast to previous studies (Gifford, 2005) the findings showed that the play was rich in mathematics, differences attributed to the children's agentic behaviours in self-initiating and leading their play. This research can impact practice by opening play to children's cultural knowledge and spontaneous mathematical ideas. It indicates a need for policy documents to reflect this, and for schools to consider the importance of democratic values in pretend play.

early childhood mathematics, democracy, agency, social pretend play, cultural knowledge

B 9

FEATURES OF YOUNG CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN EARLY YEARS CLASSROOMS IN WALES

Self-organised Symposium

There is a dominant rhetoric around children's rights in Wales; this is exemplified in the emancipatory purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum (Donaldson, 2015). The three papers in this self organised symposium reflect ongoing exploration of the enactment of children's participation rights in early years classrooms in Wales. Each paper explores empirical data pertaining to children aged 3-7 years and draws out features of learning spaces that appear to shape the enactment of children's right to participate. These features include the teachers' construction of the child and their own role in early years pedagogy, temporal and spatial aspects of children's participation, and the agency of children in negotiating possible barriers to their own participation in what can be highly bounded spaces. Discussion will be moderated by Dr Anna Robb, (Dundee University), an expert from the Scottish context to ensure deep consideration of the issues arising from these papers.

Chair: Jane Waters-Davies, UWTSO, United Kingdom

The bounded child: early educators' constructions of the child and child participation in their education contexts.

Jane Waters-Davies, UWTSO, United Kingdom

We explore early educators' construction(s) of the children they teach, whether, and in what ways, this construction bounds the opportunities for participation that they report. Applying the concepts of agency and the construction of the child (Corsaro 2018) to educative spaces, this paper explores the relationship between these concepts and teacher reports of child participation. The UNCRC (1989) has been fervently adopted in Welsh policy and law. Children's participation includes the right to be heard, to be respected as persons in their own right, able to make choices and communicate their feelings, ideas, and wishes in numerous ways (CRC/C/GC/7 and 12) including through non-verbal means. This paper explores the practical enactment of young children's participation rights in educative contexts. An interpretivist epistemological frame is adopted;

data is collected through a qualitative online bilingual (English / Welsh) survey completed by teachers of children aged 3-7 years. Informed consent was sought before starting the survey; all responses are anonymous and identifiers removed from the dataset prior to analysis. Early findings indicate teachers construct children variously in their responses; young children are generally constructed as capable of choice, though the type of choice available is bounded by the reported need to protect and guide, support or lead children in their learning. More nuanced discussion will be reported at conference. We consider the extent to which the conceptual construction of the capable child maybe a threshold concept (Mayer and Land 2003) in shaping the realisation of children's participation rights in educative contexts.

Participation, Early education, Construction of the child, Wales, Threshold concept.

Constructing young children's participation as a spatial and temporal endeavour.

Jennifer Clement, Cardiff Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

This research aims to make visible the inherent spatial and temporal nature of young children's participation within early education settings. It builds on existing literature that emphasises the spatial (Bollig & Millei, 2018) and temporal (Clark, 2020) nature of young children's learning; also extending the work of Murphy et al (2022). Drawing on Low's (2014) 'spatializing culture' it further demonstrates how participatory practices in early childhood could and should be re-imagined through spatial and temporal frames to uncover where, when and how young children participate. This paper draws on qualitative survey data that aimed to investigate how teachers of young children in Wales understood and enacted the notion of participation. All participants gave voluntary, informed consent and all identifiers were removed prior to data analysis. The findings suggest that young children's participation is often allotted specific time within and across specific spaces, with space and time acting as mediators in the construction and enactment of participation. Further, the data indicate that children do not construct the spatial or temporal nature of these participatory practices; they are bounded to, and by, the constructions given to them by the adults around them. Moving forward, explicit recognition needs to be given to the spatial and temporal aspects of children's participation to uncover existing practices that can exclude young children from authentically and independently participating across their settings.

children's participation, early years education, Wales, spatial, temporal

Exploring the Enactment of UNCRC Article 12 in Welsh Early Years Classrooms in relation to curriculum decisions

Sarah Chicken (1), Jacky Tyrie (2), (1) UWE, Bristol, United Kingdom, (2) Swansea University, United Kingdom

This research explores teacher enactment of UNCRC, Article 12, a child's right to navigate the direction of their own learning within Welsh Foundation Phase settings (children aged 3-7). The paper draws on the previous work of Lyle (2014) and Murphy et al. (2022). A rights-based perspective is adopted in which children are positioned as agentic and active meaning-makers (Rinaldi, 2005). Drawing on a socio-constructionist position, qualitative data was collected via observations, interviews, and documentary analysis in an iterative process of meaning-making. In line with ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018) voluntary informed consent was obtained; issues related to power interrogated throughout with participants, and a familiarisation period built in to establish relationships and participant anonymity was protected through the use of pseudonyms. Findings suggest that practitioner enactment of a children's rights agenda was shaped by particular constructions of children and associated understandings of the role of the teacher; children's voice and agency were also bounded by place, time and teacher expectations. Whilst some practices were constraining, it was also noted that children often subtly took back control from teachers, thus demonstrating children as agentic beings despite potential barriers. Given the emphasis upon children's right at the level of Welsh policy and the current paucity of research within Welsh settings at the level of practice (Lewis et al., 2017), this study is deemed as significant. In order to fully actualise a children's right agenda within Welsh settings, we call for a reconceptualisation of constructions of children and subsequent constructions of teachers.

UNCRC Article 12, Wales, Early Years, Agency, Curriculum

B 10

QUALITY EC ENVIRONMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Andrea Otero-Mayer, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Spain

What's hanging on the wall?

Lisbeth Skreland, Randi Engtrø, Trine Dale, University of Agder, Norway

This research project aims to highlight how posters and placards in kindergartens become a co constructor and a carrier of educational values. In preschools or kindergarten in Norway posters, placards and notes abound on walls and note boards (Gjervan, Andersen, Beleka, 2012; Nordtømme, 2015). Posters play a significant role in educational settings and teachers often select carefully what to display as a part of creating both a workplace for teachers and a learning environment for children (Osa & Musser, 2004). Inspired by the American philosopher Jane Bennett the project highlights how the material perspective gives understanding of educational values and how early childhood practice is constructed as a complex and historical phenomenon. According to her, things, as well as people, act and are part of a reality where both people and things mutually influence the perception of the world (Bennett 2010, Skreland & Steen-Johnsen, 2020). Using photography and semi structured interviews (Holm, 2014; Bryman, 2004) we have registered posters, placards and notes, and we have interviewed teachers on the justifications and reflections on the posters. The project follows the ethical standards of the Norwegian Center for Data Management (NSD), which means that consent and anonymity was ensured for the participants. We explore values found in the concrete meeting between humans and objects Posters become powerful because they participate in stimulating, emotional energy, determining our expectations. The posters becomes a co-constructor of educational values. Posters occupy space, they are often colourful, attractive and demand attention.

Materiality, Values, Early childhood education, Preschool teachers, Practice

Analysis of the quality of the environment in Early Childhood Education in Spain

Andrea Otero-Mayer, Consuelo Vélaz de Medrano Ureta, Eva Expósito Casas, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Spain

This observational study has analyzed the quality of learning environment, considering Space/Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language/Books, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, in ECE in Spain through ITERS-3. Numerous studies analyze quality of the environment in ECE in other countries, e.g. Scotland (Bradshaw et al., 2020), Norway (Bjørnstad & Os, 2018) or Australia (Torr, 2019) with very different results. Theoretical/empirical evidence shows that quality ECE has an impact on positive development of children under 6 years of age, while a low-quality education may have no effects or even be harmful (Heckman & Mossos, 2014; Melhuish et al., 2015). This is non-experimental quantitative research, with a descriptive approach to the data collected through the ITERS-3. An incidental non-probabilistic sampling (62 classrooms) has been carried out for the selection of the centers, motivated by their accessibility. For data analysis, frequencies were analyzed by items and different mean contrasts, using Pearson's Chi-square test. Ethics Committee of the University was informed (March 2020), receiving its approval (May 2020). Every effort was made to follow a strict protocol to maintain, starting with an informative meeting with the Management Team and the teachers involved, in which they expressed their express consent. No identifying information was requested of the minors. Quality of the environment in classrooms observed is low. Educational policies and teacher training should take this into account. It is necessary to offer sufficient tools to the next teacher promotions and equip them with the necessary skills to achieve quality ECE, without forgetting that practicing teachers need adequate ongoing training.

Early childhood education, Educational research, ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale), Quality of education, Spain

B 11

DEVELOPING CHILD-CENTERED PRACTICE IN ECE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Julia Manning-Morton, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

'To the child our hands are who we are' (Pikler in Roche, 1994): Exploring physical interactions between educators and young children in care events, through video enhanced reflective practice.

Julia Manning-Morton, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

This session presents ongoing research that explores educators' approaches to physical caregiving practices with children aged 0-3 years old. The research aims to understand how educators might adopt an approach that has respectful caregiving at its centre and to reposition care events as a central focus of pedagogy. Physical interactions in ECEC settings has been researched in relation to issues of touch in contemporary socio-cultural contexts by Tobin (1997) and Burke and Duncan (2015) and gradually there are more studies emerging that focuses on care events, such as Dalli and Kibble (2010) and Svinth (2018). This research is interested in the interrelatedness of different perspectives on the body-self and draws principally on ideas of

embodiment (Ellingson 2017) and intersubjectivity (Trevarthen 2001) in order to consider children's lived experience of educators' physical interactions. It is a qualitative study that explores multiple discourses, with research methods that are collaborative and participatory (Reason and Bradbury 2006). Eight educators are participating in a work-based discussion group (Elfer et al 2018; Louis 2021), which is centred around reflective interpretations of video observations, using Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) (Strathie et al 2011). This presentation discusses the experience of focusing on the embodied aspects of practice in the VERP process and the practical and ethical issues arising from doing research in the C19 pandemic. In particular, issues of trust and physical consideration in the group; reflecting the care observed. And the benefit of adopting a strengths-based approach to reflective practice.

Physical, Care, Embodiment, Intersubjectivity, VERP

Supporting Child Centred Competences for Early Childhood Education and Care through online resources recognising play as a pedagogical tool

Kathleen Tuite, Fiona Kelleher, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

This research aims to develop a child centred competences framework, that is cross referenced against existing ECEC competency profiles, offering resources for enhancing the quality of ECEC pedagogical practice. Research demonstrates varying ways in which those working in ECEC negotiate the different concepts of child-centredness (Campbell-Barr et al., 2018; Georgeson et al., 2015), but less is known about the role of HE initial ECEC training for supporting students in developing their child-centred competences. This study draws upon current theories of child centredness in ECEC settings. The concept of child centredness is highlighted as important for underpinning effective, quality pedagogy (Georgeson et al., 2015, Wood, 2007, Chung and Walsh, 2000), but existing research demonstrates that it is a term that is variably interpreted, and students struggle to know what it looks like in practice (Campbell-Barr, 2017) The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Questionnaires were completed by 238 ECEC students across the participating countries. Thematic content analysis of the results was conducted within a phenomenological approach. Information and informed consent were highlighted to participants. Data protection issues were addressed, and permission was received for use of the data in the final report. The survey was anonymous. The main findings demonstrate that the eBook developed from this project informed ECEC work with children, encouraged critical reflective practices and enhanced knowledge of child centredness. Findings suggest that knowledge between the theoretical and the practical can be achieved through comprehensive online resources that encourage reflective practice.

child centredness, competences, framework, pedagogy, reflective practices

Implementing flow in preschool setting and promoting professional practice: an action research study in one Icelandic preschool

Ingibjorg Sigurdardottir (1), Emilía Lilja Rakelar Gilbertsdóttir (2), Sigríður Þorbjörnsdóttir (2), (1) University of Iceland, Iceland, (2) Kerhólsskóli, Iceland

The aim of this research is to shed light on how professionalism in preschool practice can be promoted by implementing and focusing on flow and how this influences children's social skills. Studies have shown that action research is an effective approach to develop professionalism (Koshy, 2010). Moreover, preschool children should learn through play where their interest and initiative are valued (Wood, 2013) and flow gives children more authority over their own learning which supports their well-being (Ólafsdóttir & Garðardóttir, 2016). The study builds on Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) theory about flow where the main focus is on children's initiative and interest. Scholars about educational leadership also guide the study (Leithwood et al., 2017). The leader's role is to guide colleagues through the process of implementation and changes. The study is action research conducted in one Icelandic preschool and lasted over two years. Data was gathered through group interviews, observations, photos from the setting and journal writings. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants was emphasized. Participants signed informed consent and they could opt out anytime during the process (EECERA 2015). The findings indicate that implementation of flow influenced children's communication. They were happier and conflicts reduced. The educators experienced less stress with more flexibility. Regular reflections and discussions among the educators supported them to understand and become active in the new practice. The study is an important contribution to the field of preschool practice and supports the knowledge about how action research can be useful to improve practice.

Flow, Social skills, Preschool practice, Professional development, Action Research

Chair: Lars Dahl Pedersen, Aarhus University, Denmark

Transformative practices of singing in early childhood education

Elisabeth Anvik, Nina Engesnes, Liv Anna Hagen, Siri Haukenes, Ingrid Danbolt, Tove Lafton, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

This study aims at investigating how an accessible-to-all, non-commercial, interactive song-application named TRALL, can contribute to increased diversity in aesthetic music practices taking place in kindergarten. Students and children interact with music in diverse ways. Music contributes to the sense of belonging in both kindergarten and society (Barrett et al, 2009; Burton & Pearsall, 2016). Hagen and Haukenes (2017) also question whether cultural diversity is reflected in kindergarten singing-practices. The study is based on the concept immaterial cultural heritage, examined through Kemmis og Grootenboers (2008) practice-architecture, focusing on how cultural and material arrangements can contribute to diversity in singing practice. The study is conducted within a qualitative action-oriented research paradigm (MacDonald, 2012). Students from work-based education are informants, implementing TRALL in their workplace. Focus group interviews will be supplemented by analyses of questionnaires. The questionnaires were anonymous and do not contain personal data. Ethical approval regarding the focus group interview was obtained from National Commission for Data Protection, following Ethical guidelines for Research at the University and students' written consent. All data were coded and anonymized. The discussion will address whether such an app can contribute to increasing diversity in early childhood singing practices and how students' interactions with music with and through the digital platform can support their musical identity as kindergarten teachers. The study can contribute to knowledge about repertoire and singing practices in kindergarten, in the wake of a new, digital knowledge resource. This has further impact to practices in early childhood music education.

Singing practises, Song repertoire, Music in kindergarten, Digital song book, Children song

The role of traditional music and movement activities as a pedagogical tool in early childhood settings: Teacher's beliefs and practices in Greek early childhood settings.

Styliani Retsiou, Christina Sotiriou, Zoi Hadzidaki, Eleni Mousena, University of West Attica, Greece

The article aims to examine the extent to which early childhood educators include in their education program and exceptionally in festivity periods, a variety of traditional activities related to music and movement. It also explores educators' beliefs on the importance of using traditional activities as a pedagogical tool and the benefits derived from them. According to Gordon (2003), young children should begin their movement and music education with activities of their own culture. In previous researches it is evident that educators involve such activities in early childhood programs because they believe in the importance of these activities in the optimal development of children (Kim & Kemple 2011; Sharpe, Harris & Mckeen, 2005). However, there is scarce research on the use of traditional music and dance activities, time allocated and educators' beliefs on the benefits of these activities (Lykesas 2018; Venetsanou & Kampas 2004). In order to investigate the above objectives, the paradigm of qualitative research is selected. A questionnaire will be distributed to early childhood educators in ECEC centers in Athens. All parameters regarding personal data and ethical issues of the research will be taken into consideration and a consent form will be distributed prior to the research conduct. The results will shed light on the type of traditional activities involved, the time allocated, the educators' beliefs and practices, as well as on the pedagogical benefits that young children gain from participating in these activities. Findings will clarify the consonance between beliefs and practices and will inform about best practices.

Early childhood education, Tradition, Music and Movement activities, teacher's beliefs, teacher's practices

Playful choreographies and choreographies of play - Towards a fruitful area of research within the interdisciplinary fields of dance studies and play studies

Lars Dahl Pedersen, Aarhus University, Denmark

The aim of this paper is to explore and expand the relationship between two phenomena: play and choreography. Choreography is broadly understood as the rules that guide our movements: from the minute aspects of movement to the broad contours of action determined by the social and cultural environment. Several play scholars (Winther-Lindqvist 2018; Hughes 1999; Piaget 1976; Tulloch 2014; Sutton-Smith 1997; Huizinga 1950) argue that play and games follow certain rules, and that there are different kinds of rules present in play situations. The term choreography is commonly used to denote highly strategic, thoroughly planned, positioned, and controlled actions. By contrast, play signals freedom and spontaneity. However, when choreographer and scholar Susan Leigh Foster states that choreography sometimes can be described as a "set of principles that guide spontaneous invention" (Foster 2011, 3), the contrast between play and choreography diminishes.

Building on a discussion addressing the different kinds of rules when playing and their physical consequences, I conduct a literature review through a process inspired by the five-stage model presented by Randolph (Randolph 2009, 5). The review seeks to find literature studying the inter-relationship between choreography and play. Ethical consideration has been given especially in terms of representing young scholars. The findings reveal a gap in the literature in the form of scholarship focused on spontaneous choreographies of play. Exploring play through a choreographic lens can describe and understand how players physically communicate and create meaningful co-action in various play situations.

Choreography, Play, Rules, Participatory sense-making, Review

B 13

CHILDREN AS POST-DIGITAL ECO-CITIZENS AND GIFTED

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Dagmar Bergs-Winkels, Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany

Being and becoming eco-citizens – Preliminary research results to promote more sustainable practices in kindergartens

Barbara Maria Sageidet (1), Veronica Bergan (2), Anne Myklebust Lynngård (3), Marianne Presthus Heggen (3), Tove Aagne Utsi (4), Carola B Kleemann (4), Liv Torunn Grindheim (3), Nina Goga (3), Yngvild Bjørlykke (3), Kari W Bøe (3), Maritha Berger Nylund(3), Inger W Krempig (4), Ida Lervig Midtbø (3), (1) University of Stavanger, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway, (2) Norges Arktiske Universitet, Norway, (3) Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway, (4) The Arctic university of Norway, Norway,

This paper presents the study, “Being and becoming eco-citizens”, with fieldwork in four Norwegian kindergartens since 2019, exploring the research question: How do children experience, act and reconstruct their rights as eco-citizens, and how do they live or ‘act’ as being and becoming eco-citizens in kindergartens? A special focus is set on activities related to food production. Research on practices within early childhood education for sustainability is increasing (Elliott, Årlemalm-Hagsér & Davis, 2020). This empirical study uses theory about children’s participation, environmental citizenship, foraging and garden learning (Heggen et al., 2019). Adopting a sociocultural learning paradigm, this interdisciplinary qualitative study explores activities related to sustainability in four kindergartens, through regular (ca. monthly) observations, conversations, and interviews over three years, in collaboration with kindergarten teachers and children, within a participatory design (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016). Notes, audio and video recording are used to document the data. Listening, transcription, and qualitative coding is used to analyse the dataset, related to the research question. Equality, and respect for children’s and staff’s verbal and non-verbal expressions are crucial, and all participants can withdraw their contributions at any time (Clark et al., 2017). Preliminary results: Children’s curiosity in nature; Kindergarten teachers’ role in foraging and gardening activities; ‘Disgusting meetings’ between children and nature; Co-developing social and environmental learning; Children’s natureliterature; and Children’s participation in traditions, connected to sustainable food from local meat. This study contributes with practice-relevant research to promote children’s identity as eco-citizens, and their understanding that humans, including children, are active parts of the environment.

Early childhood education for sustainability, eco-citizens, children's participation and agency, nature, foraging and gardening, Norway

Individual advancement and transitions of gifted/able children in early childhood education in Germany

Dagmar Bergs-Winkels, Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany

Individual advancement of gifted children is part of the curriculum in Germany, more empirical research is needed. We shows results of a qualitative study on educators’ beliefs (Zehbe 2021). According to the educational programmes in Germany, attention, accompaniment and advancement are compulsory for ECEC. Studies show that educators feels unsure, insecure and not prepared for those tasks in gifted education (Cloos/Mähler 2022). We understand giftedness as a higher note of cognitive intelligence, and higher abilities in understanding and exploring the world. This implies different strategies for ECEC contexts (Bergs-Winkels/Schmitz 2018). The project uses a qualitative study design. 15 interviews of educators on how to promote the individual development. Do educators beliefs on giftedness effect the way they interact with children? Analysis by documentary method (Bohnsack 2017). All signed a informed consent. The findings point out three ways educators promote the individual development of gifted children. Their believes seems to effect the way they interact with children. Educators make a difference in offers for gifted children . A brochure was created that can be used in the practice of ECEC to reflect on the practice of conceptualizing pedagogical work. Apart from that implications for early gifted educations are

described for the use in Kindergarten. This is mainly based on the transfer of studies in gifted education in schools and is designed to work in an inclusive setting for all kids in a group.

inclusive transition, giftedness, individual advancement, empirical research, qualitative approach

“It’s hard to climb a tree whilst holding an iPad”: Folkloric Play in the Post-digital World

Elizabeth Nelson, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

This paper draws on findings from my doctoral project, “Understanding Childhood and Play in the Post-Digital Age” which used creative methods of filmmaking to examine digital and non-digital play in playgrounds today. Research has demonstrated that children are agentive, networked players in online game environments (Bailey, 2016) and that this new form of play is performed in the playground (Marsh and Bishop, 2014). Examining this play from a post-digital literacies perspective positions the children as agentive authors of their own texts (Wargo, 2018). The paper builds upon Bernstein's (2011) literary concept of "a scriptive thing" to examine performances of folkloric play in the playground. Central to the project is the examination of children's play and their part in "producing" (Bruno, 2009) their own experiences of childhood. This qualitative study draws on new materialist perspectives using creative methods of filmmaking focusing on videos produced by participants aged 6-8 years old to examine how children perform and produce their experiences of childhood in play. My analysis draws on historical and literary descriptions of play and childhood to read the children's performances as folkloric play. Following BERA guidelines, permission was granted by all participants, their parent and the research sites. The study followed an 'opt in', informed consent approach. In the post-digital age, children continue to be creative, agentive performers of their literacies and everyday knowledge through folkloric play. Findings suggest that free play with digital and non-digital materials allows children to express their diverse and expert literacies of the everyday.

digital, post-digital, folkloric play, agentive, everyday literacies

B 14

DISCOURSES, POLITICS AND A DIDACTIC ON SCIENCE AND THE OUTDOORS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Stig Broström, Aarhus University, Denmark

Discourses of outdoor play at new modern preschools

Annika Manni (1), Håkan Löfgren (2), Johanna Annerbäck (2), Fredrika Mårtensson (3), Andreas Fröberg (4), (1) Umeå University, Sweden, (2) Linköping University, Sweden, (3) SLU, Sweden, (4) University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This study is part of a larger research project with the aim with to study how the outdoor environment and playgrounds affects children's physical activities and relational encounters with nature and peers. Previous research has shown the benefits of children's outdoor play in domains like; health, environmental engagement and care, as well as learning and meaning making. Preschool policy and practice is constantly balancing and combining school-like concepts and play (Pramling Samuelsson & Johansson, 2007). This study uses John Dewey's holistic and pragmatic perspective to study and analyse different notions of relational and experiential learning activities outdoors. In this particular study we have analyzed the interviews with teachers from 21 new and old preschools. A discourse analysis was carried out to uncover the different notions within different domains of outdoor play. The study is ethically motivated since it contributes knowledge about children's conditions in preschool in a time of change. The project has ethical approval for all steps of research. The findings show how the new preschool playgrounds has changed the use of the outdoor environments, the view on the preschool practice, and children in itself. There are more regulations on what children can or cannot do, as well as a strengthened focus on targeted learning in programmed areas. Potential risky-play are eliminated, and natural green areas are replaced either with artificial material or garden-like plants. The analyses open up for a critical discussion on what these changes in the modern preschools might mean for children of today.

preschool, outdoor environment, playgrounds, learning, risk

A playbased Didaktik on science and sustainability in Preschool

Thorleif Frøkjær (1), Stig Broström (2), (1) Copenhagen University College, Denmark, (2) Aarhus University, Denmark

The aim is to outline a play-based preschool Didaktik on science and sustainability. Research on science in preschool has been increased (Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; Thulin, 2011; Fleer, 2017; Fleer & Pramling, 2005; Broström & Frøkjær, 2018, 2021), and also an education for sustainable development have prioritized (Pramling Samuelsson & Park, 2017; Lysgaard et al., 2012; Frøkjær

& Husted, 2019). The development of children's emergent science and sustainability is based on play with a general refers to Vygotsky (1978, 2004) and the model of organizing play is in accordance with the Scandinavian approach known as playworlds (Lindqvist, 1995; Broström, 1999; Hakkarainen et al., 2013). Science, sustainability and play are united with use of Fleer's concept scientific playworld (Fleer, 2017), an imaginary play situation (Elkonin, 1980). Data is collected via observations, and the project is located within the qualitative research paradigm (Denzin, 2008), and according to action research it is interpreted and discussed with the practitioners in order to change practice (Clark, 1992; Lewin, 1958). The participating teachers gave informed consent and were involved in ongoing discussions and decisions, and the parents were informed of the study's aims and methods. The findings is a practice using a scientific playworld where children in meaningful activities investigate dimensions of sustainability based on children curiosity, wonder and exploration (Broström & Frøkjær, 2019, 2021). The findings influence both policy, educational practice and preschool teacher training.

Play, Playworld, Science, Sustainability, Didaktik

"Do I have to wear mud pants?" - Mud pants as political subject in early childhood education

Virve Keränen, Susanna Kinnunen, University of Oulu, Finland

When entering to day care centre in Finland, children's mud pants are there first to welcome you. The essential message of Finnish early childhood education (ECE) is condensed into mud pants: outdoor plays are valued regardless of weather conditions. We turn the mud pants up side down and study what else mud pants do. Our aim is to explore how mud pants and practices around them can enable and limit children's agency. Relating to earlier studies, we consider the materials as political subjects in ECE (Millei et al. 2018; Lenz Taguchi, 2009). We take part in theoretical dialogues with the entanglements of materiality and childhood and we apply relational and social-material theories (Millei et al., 2018; Lenz Taguchi, 2009; Osgood, 2019). Methodologically we are inspired of MacLure's (2013) idea: the wonder of objects. The (post)qualitative data, which consists of our memories, experiences and public discussions concerning mud pants, is conducted through a nomadic analysis (Braidotti, 2014; Brunila, 2016). In this study ethics relates to continuous responsibility to bring up matters that influence children's lives in ECE (Lenz Taguchi, 2011). Our wondering shows that mud pants as political subject seems to construct the practices in which children are expected to follow the rules that are being created by adults during the long mud pants' history. Therefore, we argue that it is crucial to come aware and to reflect how do the political subjects, like mud pants, define and produce the practices in ECE over the children's own agency.

Early childhood education, ECE Practices, Children's agency, Materiality, Political subject

B 15

ISSUES OF DIVERSITY INCLUSION AND CITIZENSHIP

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Andrea Khalfaoui Larrañaga, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

The 4Cs Curriculum for Citizenship in Early Years– Educational Practices

Eleni Mousena (1), Vassilis Pantazis (2), (1) University of West Attica, Greece, (2) University of Thessaly, Greece

The 4Cs curriculum incorporates the following main components: Civic values, Critical pedagogy, Civil society, and Competent professionals. The purpose of this research is to investigate the educational practices that promote the democratic citizenship in preschool settings. Citizenship education is an experiential and intellectual process that starts early and can be cultivated in preschool frameworks when they are operating as civil society forums (Moss 2013, 2011, Millei & Kallio 2016, Cockburn 2013). The theoretical framework of this study draws upon theories of Philosophy of Education (Dewey 1916, Dworkin 1988), Critical Pedagogy (Giroux 1989), Participatory Pedagogy and of Praxeological Research (Pascal & Bertram 2012). It is sited in an interpretative example, using a qualitative data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten years experienced preschool educators. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured of confidentiality. They took part voluntarily and had the opportunity to withdraw at any time, without consequence. The findings show that educators develop social studies activities and promote civic values and citizenship. On the other hand, they find it difficult to implement pedagogical practice in some cases where religious and ethnic issues are challenging. Implementing democratic citizenship curriculum in today's pluralistic society is a demanding endeavor and educators should be supported by continuing education and good working conditions. At the same time participatory pedagogical praxis benefits children, families and teachers themselves.

Citizenship, 4Cs Curriculum, Critical Pedagogy, Civil Society, Sustainability

Professional support for teachers and children in diverse classrooms.

Our research aim was to identify professional support for teachers and children in diverse pre and primary school classrooms. Previous relevant research include; Micropolitics in public education (Blase and Blase 2002, Cooper, Ehrensall, and Bromme 2005), Teacher-principal relationship with regard to professional leadership (Thorsteinsson and Bjornsdottir 2016) and culturally responsive education (Gay 2014). A micropolitical perspective was helpful to identify different roles and interactions of those involved in the education of CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) children in Iceland (Blase 1991; Blase and Blase 2002) as well as the perspective of multilingual education (Gay 2014; García and Lin 2017). Our research was qualitative, interviews were used as a research method and thematic analysis to analyze the data. Participants were two preschool teachers, two primary school teachers, two principals and ten municipality professionals. We made use of Lichtman (2010) principles of ethical conduct in research as well as the European Early Childhood Education Research Association ethical codes (Bertram et al. 2016). Findings indicate that teachers seldom sought assistance or guidance from the municipality regarding professional development. Standardized reading tests seemed influential in the primary school, contradicting the characteristics of the official inclusive school policy in Iceland. The findings draw attention to certain contradictions in terms of support for teachers and CALD children. Those include; services offered by the municipality versus services accepted by the teachers, the emphasis of the inclusive school policy in Iceland versus special needs' education and the responsibility of the school support services versus teacher responsibility.

Teacher support, Preschool teachers, Primary school teachers, Support for CALD children, Micropolitics in education

Pedagogical Actions, Child's Play And Inclusion

Simone Breit (1), Johanna Bruckner (2), Theresa Hauck (3), (1) University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria, (2) University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems, Austria, (3) University College of Teacher Training, Austria

This presentation focuses on Austrian early childhood teachers fostering inclusion of a child through play. The study is based on a model for (action) competence of ECEC teachers (Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al., 2014) and research in the field of professionalism for inclusion (Kron, 2019; Heimlich & Ueffing, 2021). Play is considered as the central form of learning in ECEC institutions in Austria (CBI, 2009). An inclusive educational system aims for prevention of exclusion (Albers et al., 2020; Booth et al., 2006). Therefore, one can assume that teachers should actively foster inclusion through play. Within a qualitative research paradigm a field vignette (Rosenberger, 2013; Friesen et al., 2020) was constructed. It focused on ECEC and a child not expressing verbally. In a written form Austrian ECEC teachers reported their considerations and anticipated handling. A coding system was developed in an iterative process of discourse and concretisation, combining induction and deduction (Mayring, 2015), using data from a pretest. Independent double-coding of the answers from the sample (N = 91) regarding the category "options for pedagogical actions" finally resulted in substantial agreement (K = .68, p < .05). Participation wasn't associated with any reward, was voluntary, anonymous and could be cancelled at any time. Information sheet/consent form were provided. Eighty-eight percent considered pedagogical actions. In depth analyzes revealed interactional accompaniment of child's play in 21 cases. Results are discussed regarding the importance of ECEC teachers accompanying play. Furthermore implications for an inclusive educational system can be derived for initial and continuing teacher training.

paedagogical action, inclusion, accompaniment of play, field vignette, ECEC teachers

B 16

MUSIC, LULLABIES AND EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Nikolaos Christodoulakis, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Quality in Norwegian Early Childhood Music Education – a discussion on structural and processual factors for musical practice.

Ørjan Kines, Tone Rove Nilsen, Magnus Sivertsen Sørvig, Nord University, Norway

This article aims to discuss quality criteria of musical practice in Norwegian ECEC. By affiliation, we present and analyse material from two quantitative studies on quality in Norwegian ECEC; the European Quality Seal (EQS) and the Better Provision for Norway's children (BePro). Policy demands has led to multiple large-scale quantitative studies on quality in Norwegian ECEC (Tuastad et al., 2020), which often include music as a subject-specific area of quality (Vist & Os, 2019). An ecological framework drawing from theories of affordances (Gibson, 2014), children's play (Sutton-Smith, 2009), and teacher agency

(Priestley et.al., 2016), lays a foundation for the complex structure of relations between teachers, children, and the environment and materials they share. We implement hermeneutical methods within an interpretive paradigm (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). By isolating music and movement from both studies, we make a descriptive and comparative analysis. Even though data materials are quantitative and analysed only as numbers, value issues of quality can lead to ethical dilemmas for participants. To avoid such issues, steps were taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity for everyone involved. Our in-depth analysis shows quality in music practice in Norwegian ECEC is shaped between structural and processual factors. Findings include methodological issues with survey tools in studying factors in music practice. Results show ECEC-teachers perceive music as important but fails to facilitate for a well-equipped environment with materials promoting music and children`s play. These findings suggest implications for studies on music practice quality in ECEC and developing sound and professional teaching practices.

Quality, Music, Affordances, ECERS-R, EQS

Colouring the music. Children`s reflective experience and emotional self-awareness

Michele Cagol, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano - Faculty of Education, Italy

The research has two objectives: to implement an educational project—based on colours and music—to promote emotional self-awareness in children aged 6 to 8; to investigate the connections which children spontaneously trace between music and colours (assuming that these connections are mediated by emotions). A growing number of projects have been developed in the field of social-emotional education (Wigsworth et al., 2016). Since the promotion of self-awareness is unlikely to be achieved within “traditional settings” (Goleman & Senge, 2014), the challenge is to adopt a nature-based approach (Carter, 2016). The research relies on two assumptions. The first concerns the connection between experiential activity and reflective thought: experiences are generative when accompanied by reflection (Dewey, 1938). The second assumption concerns the adoption of the emotional mediation hypothesis: music and colours are connected through emotional associations (Whiteford et al., 2018). The study is placed within an interpretive paradigm and utilizes the research with children methodology. The field research—a multiple case study—involved two Grade 2 classes. Data collection included video-recordings of the workshops and children`s drawings. Parental consent and child assent were obtained. Confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntariness were respected. Ethical approval was granted by Unibz Faculty of Education; ethical code was followed. Results show that creative experiences that connect outdoor spaces within indoor lessons, regularly followed by personal and group reflections, contribute to the building of emotional competence. This research suggests that the main educational interest for the associations between music and colour is that these are potentially generative for emotional self-awareness.

early childhood education, emotional education, emotional self-awareness, research with children, music-to-colour associations

Conceptual approach of Greek lullabies: their importance in the mother-child relationship

Vasiliki Karavida (1), Eleni Tympa (2), Eleni Kanellopoulou (1), (1) University of Ioannina, Greece, (2) International Hellenic University, Greece

The aim of the study was to collect, study and evaluate the Greek lullabies and to highlight the meanings that emerge through them and shape the mother-child relationship. Infants` lullabies have been a part of mothers` everyday routines throughout different cultures (Brisola & Cury, 2018). Their content refers to the anxieties, fears and thoughts of the mother about the care and education of the baby and often this content affects the relationship between them (Fancourt & Perkins, 2018). The lullabies were sought in the Greek bibliography and discography. For the research approach, the method of content analysis was used to determine the characteristics of the songs` content and the characteristics of the transmitter and the receiver. There are no ethical considerations because the study is based on literature review. The sample of lullabies submitted to the content analysis consists of 87 items, most of which are heard in many parts of the country. The material was categorized according to Maslow`s hierarchical needs in an attempt at a sociological and educational approach to lullabies (Navy, 2020). The categories that emerged depending on the content were those aimed at meeting the physical / biological needs of the child, the need for safety and protection, for love and affection, for recognition and approval and for self-realization (achieving higher). Future research could shed light on the transmission of those meanings to the younger generations and their impact on the mother-child relationship.

lullabies, children, mothers, relationship, everyday routine

Educational systems are in need of reform (Fullan 2007; Tytler 2007). One problem is the artificial distinction between learning in school and real-life learning, which often creates unwanted obstacles for re-instituting learning as a powerful motivator of innovation and problem-solving capacity. Many preschool teachers describe an uncertainty concerning science content (Kallery, 2004; Greenfield et al., 2009;). Fleer et al. (2014) argue for a 'sciencing attitude', and teachers who embrace both children's perspectives and links to content enact fruitful science activities (Areljung, et al., 2017; Convertini, 2021). In this symposium, innovative approaches to science activities in preschool are presented and discussed: experimental work scaffolded by computer tablets and children's playful movie-making to support learning about abstract science phenomenon, approaches focusing on connectedness to nature for children's sustainable education and care, and thematic approaches to science encompassing other contents in the national curriculum accentuating transdisciplinary learning in preschool.

Chair: Marie Fridberg, Kristianstad University, Sweden

Early Years Physics teaching of abstract phenomena in preschool – supported by digital technologies

Andreas Redfors, Marie Fridberg, Agneta Jonsson, Susanne Thulin, Kristianstad University, Sweden

The aim is to, through three-year professional development (PD), develop knowledge about computer tablets use during teaching sequences to scaffold children's (3-5 years old) experiences of abstract objects of learning in physics. The role of multiple representations has been given attention during the last decades (Ainsworth, 1999; Prain & Tytler, 2013), and use of digital tools in early years education (Hoban, 2007; Fleer, 2017; 2019; Fridberg, Thulin, & Redfors, 2018). The research and PD (where science teaching activities were jointly developed in design-groups) were based on design research, variation theory (Marton & Booth, 1997) and developmental pedagogy (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2008). Three workteams video recorded while enacting science activities encompassing video-documented experiments and Slowmation production. Qualitative analysis, founded in critical realism, of children's collaborative meaning making of physics phenomenon was performed. Specific attention was given to informed consent from parents and collaborative consent from the participating children for video recording, children could abandon participation at any time (Farrell 2016; Swedish Research Council 2017). With abstract phenomena it was hard for children to transform between the real world and representations. However, a sequence of teaching instances scaffolded by videos and slowmations with persistent focus on both the object of learning and the children's perspectives gave opportunities for sophisticated reasoning to develop. We would highlight the importance of teachers using specific decontextualised language and that a professional development program of several years can established sustainable model-based science teaching, even of content initially viewed as difficult and challenging by preschool teachers.

preschool, early years physics, digital technologies, communication, teaching

Swedish early childhood educators' views on teaching to promote connectedness to nature

Marie Fridberg, Thomas Beery, Kristianstad University, Sweden

This study investigated whether early childhood (EC) educators perceive connectedness to nature (C2N) as a useful idea in their professional efforts. The relationship between early science learning and C2N was also explored. Despite research and practice using the concept of C2N in EC education (Barrable, 2019), this concept is not widely used in Sweden. The foundation for this study draws on C2N research and practice (Chawla, 2020), along with a tradition of nature experience in Swedish EC settings (Gullestad 1997; Klaar & Öhman, 2014). The C2N perspective (Beery & Wolf-Watz, 2014) highlights related ideas, describing affective, cognitive, and physical relationships with nature. This project is based on C2N research providing a conceptual framework for EC C2N (Beery et al., 2020; Chawla, 2020). The project utilized a pragmatic qualitative methodology; data were collected through a questionnaire and two group discussions and analyzed previously described C2N categories (Beery et al., 2020; Chawla, 2020). The research adheres to the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council in order to protect participants; all participants were informed and agreed to voluntary and anonymous participation with the right to abandon participation. Results indicate that teachers are favorable to the idea of C2N. Specific results indicate that educators perceive their role as someone exploring nature with children. There is great potential in using C2N to provide preschool educators with a useful concept to consider how nature experience supports children's development. Further, the concept has the potential to be a valuable part of education for sustainability.

connectedness to nature, early childhood, educators, science education, sustainability

Science and thematic teaching in preschool – students' expressions of child perspective and children's perspective

Marie Fridberg, Andreas Redfors, Agneta Jonsson, Kristianstad University, Sweden

In focus of the present study is student preschool teachers' expressions of child perspective and children's perspectives in thematic teaching involving science, before and after their exam works. Research shows how preschool teachers' science knowledge is linked to their competence to teach science (Fleer, 2009) and a report points to science in preschool being treated as single 'happenings', not part of thematic teaching (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2018). Research also highlights student teachers questioning the weak connection between their exam theses and their teacher profession (Arneback et al. 2016, Erixon Arreman & Erixon 2015). The theoretical framework is developmental pedagogy (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2008) and the concepts 'child perspective' and 'children's perspectives' (Sommer, Pramling Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2013). Student teachers' views have been collected through questionnaires, recorded pre-/post interviews, and planning meetings. A mixed methods approach is used, including qualitative content analysis (Bryman, 2018). Participants were informed and agreed to voluntary participation. Specific attention was given to anonymity and secure use and storage of data, the data is only used for research purposes. (Swedish Research Council, 2017). A more pronounced reflection on child perspective and children's perspectives are seen after completion of the exam thesis, indicating the value of student preschool teachers analysing thematic science teaching in their exam work. Studies of student preschool teachers' science teaching are still lacking (Fridberg et al 2019, Fleer et al 2014). This is addressed here through focus on exam-work in preschool teacher education, where experience of thematic teaching including science is analysed.

science, thematic teaching, preschool teacher education, student preschool teachers, exam work

B 18

PHYSICAL, MOTOR AND 'CHILDHOOD NATURE' DEVELOPMENT OUTDOORS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Mariana Moreira, Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Human Performance (CIPER), Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

Integrating sustainable development in Physical education in Early childhood teacher education

Ingunn Berrefjord Ugelstad, Synnøve Eikeland, Reidun Johanne Alstveit, University of Stavanger, Norway

The purpose of this study is to explore Physical Education (PE) teachers' perception of integrating sustainable development in their subject area in Norwegian Early Childhood Teacher Education (ECTE). Due to the rapid and unpredictable nature of the global challenges that the world faces today, there is a need for change in education systems, both with regards to content and approaches to teaching (Wolff et al., 2020). PE is both a practical and theoretical subject in ECTE, and body, health and movement are important topics. Little research has been conducted on links between PE and sustainability (Sageidet et al., 2019), and there is a need to explore how PE can contribute to developing and realizing education for sustainability. The theoretical framework is inspired by Merleau-Ponty (1962) who describes all human understanding as deeply rooted in the body and considers bodily experiences to play an essential role in the process of grasping the meaning of the world. The study is conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), and is based on data obtained through a survey among 50 PE-teachers in ECTE-institutions across the country. The survey contains both open-ended and closed questions, and data will be analysed using qualitative content analyses (Schreier, 2012). Confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent from the participants will be ensured. Our study will provide insight into how PE can contribute to innovation and change in education for sustainability within ECTE. Implications for future educational practices linking sustainability to PE in ECTE will be discussed.

early childhood teacher education, sustainable development, physical education, bodily experiences, teachers' perceptions

Understanding preschoolers' motor competence and their use of kindergarten outdoor environments

Mariana Moreira (1), Brenda M.S. Da Silva (2), Guida Veiga (3), Frederico Lopes (4), Rita Cordovil (4), (1) Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Human Performance (CIPER), Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, (2) Department of Educational and Developmental Psychology, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands, (3) Departamento de Desporto e Saúde, Escola de Saúde e Desenvolvimento Humano, Universidade de Évora, Portugal, (4) Laboratory of Motor Behavior, Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

This study aimed to understand the relationship between children's motor competence levels and the use of outdoor play areas. Kindergarten outdoor environments are an arena for promoting children's motor competence (Bjørn, 2016). Different physical characteristics of outdoor play areas (e.g., surfaces, objects) offer different affordances, that is, different opportunities for children to act and move (Clevenger et al., 2021; Gibson, 1979). Those affordances are related to the physical environment and each child's motor competence (Flôres et al., 2019). However, limited research has explored how motor

competence may influence playground behavior (Lim, 2019). A quantitative research paradigm was followed. Motor competence of 36 preschoolers was obtained through the MCA standardized battery (Luz et al. 2016), which assesses gross stability, locomotor, and manipulative skills. The outdoors of 2 kindergartens, with different physical attributes (e.g., size, equipment, play areas) were assessed through an observation scale, filled in-*loco*. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) sensors were used to track the children's exploration of play areas (Elmer et al., 2019). Parents signed a consent form. Children gave verbal permission. Both were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms protected their identity. Children with lower motor competence used mostly the play areas with features associated with fine motor skills (e.g., land tank). Play areas with attributes that stimulate/require gross motor skills (e.g., hopscotch game) were mainly used by children with better motor competence. These findings intend to help educational agents to understand and guide children's play behavior as a way to track and promote motor development.

Kindergarten, outdoor physical environments, affordances, preschoolers', motor competence

Emergent, embodied and relational play: exploring play during childhoodnature encounters in an urban forest school.

Hannah Hogarth, University of Bath, United Kingdom

This ongoing doctoral inquiry explores play and learning during 'childhoodnature' encounters in an urban forest school in London, U.K. 'Childhoodnature' is a concept that identifies children (and all humans) as part of nature and research into children's relationships with non-humans has highlighted the significance of relational approaches to research and practice (Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles et.al. 2020). Posthuman and new materialist theories in early childhood education suggest that through de-centering the child (Moss, 2021) we can explore entangled relations, challenging the positioning of children as epistemically and ontologically inferior (Murriss, 2016). This inquiry uses a post-qualitative approach to explore not 'what is but what is not yet, to come' (St Pierre, 2021). Identifying play as something that emerges during relational encounters with humans (eg. children, researcher, volunteers, practitioners) and more-than-humans (eg. plants, animals, objects), this inquiry seeks to explore the immanent process and the relations that make and are made by play. The co-creation and co-analysis of data is ongoing over several months and the children, practitioners and I use videos, collages, sculptures and writings to share our stories. Barad's (2007) 'ethic-onto-epistemology' acknowledges that ethics is intertwined with knowing and being and ethical considerations were involved during every stage of the research. Ongoing, informed consent from the child co-researchers was continually sought. The discussion will focus on the challenge of thinking with the complexities of play due to its emergent, embodied and relational nature. This suggests that collective, creative practices may lead to new understandings.

Childhoodnature, Relational, Posthuman, Post-qualitative, New materialist

B 19

QUALITIES OF PLAY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Lars Geer Hammershøj, School of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark

Quality in the interactions between children and staff in the context of play

Lillian Pedersen, Merete Nornes-Nymark, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

The purpose is to investigate what interaction factors preschool staff in Norway seems to emphasize in their relations with the children, and to discuss how this can affect children's play. Previous Norwegian research show that staff score adequate-to-good for basic interactions (sensitivity responsiveness, respect for autonomy, structuring and limit setting) and inadequate for educational interactions (verbal communication, developmental stimulation, fostering positive peer interactions) during free play (Baustad & Bjørnstad, 2020). Interactions between the preschool staff and the children is considered essential for children's play, development and learning, and several studies highlight such interactions as crucial for the preschool quality (Evertsen et al., 2015; Helmerhorst et al., 2014; 2015; Sommersel et al., 2013). The method is observations using the standardized Early Childhood Education Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R) (Cryer et al. 2003; Harms et al., 2005). The selection is 29 (n = 29) Norwegian preschool departments. This study was approved by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) and received the written consent of the children's parents and the preschool staff. The municipalities and preschools are anonymized. Our findings indicate that most staff prioritize supervision, children's participation, freedom in play and a warm and caring interaction. Few emphasized involving and guidance in children's play and conversations to expand children's understanding and knowledge. We argue that in what seems to be of good quality; free play and a warm and caring interaction, it may be an undiscovered potential to expand explorative, logical, and philosophizing conversations.

Friendship through imaginary play: How different kinds of play cultivate different types of relationship

Lars Geer Hammershøj, School of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark

This study aims to understand how different kinds of play cultivate different types of relation between those playing together. In the literature, there is consensus of the nature of friendship in early childhood: Friends are those people you play with and those people with whom you play are your friends (Ahn 2011; Bagwell & Schmidt 2011). However, few studies explore how friendship is cultivated through play. The theoretical framework for this study draws on theories of friendship and play (Corsaro 2003) and theories of Bildung or formation of character (Hammershøj 2014). The study was conducted within the co-creation research paradigm and through analysis within the design-based research approach (Barab & Squire 2004). The researcher participated in interventions in three daycare centers aimed at promoting play in children through play-sessions facilitated by artists using music, storytelling and performance. Consent forms was provided to participants and participants have been made anonymous in order to protect their privacy and ensure that participants feel confident to discuss the interventions and share their views and experiences. The main finding demonstrates that friendship is primarily cultivated through imaginary play. Building on this and additional findings, it is discussed whether other types of human relationship, such as family, acquaintance and love, are cultivated through other kinds of play, such as physical play, games with rules and storytelling. These findings point to the importance of play for the cultivation of basic social relationships in children and suggest implications for how different kinds of play facilitate these relationships.

Play, Friendship, Relationship, Bildung, Design-based research

Different Cultures of Play at Play in the Transition from ECEC to School

Kristine Warhuus Smeby (1), Else Johansen Lyngseth (1), Norway, Ingrid Torgersen Rotli (2), Ingvild Olsen Olausen (1), Maria Øksnes (2), (1) Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway, (2) Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

This research is part of a larger innovation project exploring the transition from ECEC to school in a Norwegian municipality. This paper aims to explore different cultures of play and how these are practiced and transformed between ECEC and school. Play has a vital role in ECEC-institutions in Norway. After a school-reform in 1997, children had to enroll in mandatory school one year earlier. Politicians promised that play should be an essential part of the pedagogical practice the first year of school, but this intention is not established (Haug, 2021). Even though researchers and practitioners seem to recognize the value of play, play has become controversial. Despite this, there is little research on play in first grade (Hølland et al. 2021). Theoretically, this study is inspired by discussions related to different perspectives on play and learning and the distinction between play and learning (Sundsøl & Øksnes, 2021), The research is based on qualitative individual interviews with ECEC- and schoolteachers involved in children's transition. The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008) departs from a phenomenological perspective (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). Ethical guidelines in research including informed consent, the right to withdraw, anonymization and transparency, are followed. Findings suggest that teachers' curiosity and expanding knowledge of each other's perspectives and practice on play, and institutional collaboration between ECEC and school might change the way teachers think about and facilitate play. The findings will systemize and activate knowledge of ECEC- and schoolteachers' cultures of play that might improve children's transition.

Transition from ECEC to school, different cultures of play, facilitating play, teachers' perspectives, teachers' practice

B 20

THE PLACE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN ECEC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Svava Mörk, University of Akureyri, Iceland

Professional reading and promoting play

Jackie Brien, Department of Education and Training, Australia

This research aims to explore perceptions and experiences of early childhood professionals regarding ways that professional reading supports them to engage with evidence-based practice including play-based pedagogy. There is limited literature on professional reading, yet educators and policy makers are expected to engage in evidence-informed professional practice (DET, 2016; ECA, 2016; COAG, 2009, UNCRC, 1989). The research is underpinned by ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and professional learning theories, particularly Watkins et al. (2017) and Hollingsworth and Clarke

(2007), informed analysis of themes. The research reflects an appreciative inquiry research paradigm (Cooperrider, 1987; Bushe, 2012), aiming to engage participants in seeking positive meaning and co-creation. Qualitative research methodology was used, including questionnaires and personal interviews about professional reading for early childhood professionals who work directly with children and for early childhood leaders. Thus research methodology reflected the 'arenas' in which the research was undertaken. Principal ethical concerns related to the researcher's involvement in the professional context, potential privacy concerns related to participant voice, and respect for confidentiality. To mitigate these, the researcher clearly identified her own 'voice', and informed consent was gained from participants, with use of pseudonyms. Participants perceived that regular engagement in professional reading was critical to their professionalism, contributing to positive learning, development and wellbeing outcomes for young children. Participants provided many examples of ways that their reading led to practice supporting children's right to play and agency in play. Participants' professional reading impacted on play-based pedagogical practice. Professional reading provided motivation, inspiration and transformative professionalism, promoting children's play.

professional reading, professionalism, play, children's rights, children's agency

Students' professional development: practical training in ECEC teacher education.

Ingunn Sell, Heidi Østland Vala, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

This study aims for quality development in ECEC teacher education and explores students' experiences of professional development in practical training. The ECEC field is an important arena for students' professional development (Eik, Steinnes & Ødegård, 2016), and it is argued that professionalism in the ECEC field needs reconceptualization (Lazzari, 2012). The ECEC teachers' ownership of professional tasks in kindergarten can be questioned (Løvgren, 2012) and research indicates that the professional knowledge in Norwegian kindergartens is challenged (Vala & Sell, 2020). Theory of professional knowledge and development in the ECEC field (Grimen, 2008; Heggen, 2008; Eik et al., 2016) and theory of community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998) frames the study. The study draws on multiple methods with ECEC teacher students' assignments and evaluation of practical training. The approach is phenomenological hermeneutical. Data was abductively analyzed and concepts and theoretical ideas were tested against the analysis (Tjora, 2021). Being two researchers has brought wider perspectives into the ethical reflections. The participants were anonymized and we have been highly conscious of ethical justifiability in how third parts, as partnership kindergartens and ECEC teachers, are presented in this study. Preliminary findings indicates that the complexity in the community of practice in partner kindergartens affects the preconditions of students' professional development in practical training. Implications can be that the education institution and the ECEC field must work with quality development in the education in a holistic perspective and addressing the complexity of the practice arena in particular.

Professional development, Professional knowledge, Quality in ECEC teacher education, Practical training in ECEC teacher education, Partner kindergarten

Locating partnership in the third space in ECE teacher education

Svava Mörk, University of Akureyri, Iceland

The aim of the project was to generate knowledge on the university-preschool partnership in Iceland. And reflect on whether a third space could be a solution to strengthen partnerships in preschool teacher education. Research on the disconnection between universities and the practice field has addressed different solutions, including creating a third space, and has indicated that interventions could impact teacher education (Jónsdóttir, 2015; Smith, 2016; Zeichner, 2010). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon theories of partnership in teacher education (Halvorsen, 2014; Smith, 2016; Zeichner, 2010) and Engeströms's (2015) expansive learning theory. The research is an empirical qualitative study using a multimethod approach. Historical document analysis, focus groups, and individual interviews with semi-structured questions were used to gather data (Bender, 2013). Research permits were collected from Iceland's Office of Data Protection and the participants' work and study municipalities. All participants gave their informed consent and used pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The findings showed that partnership in preschool teacher education in Iceland is separated. The findings also showed that most stakeholders felt they had little to say in the partnership. The stakeholders seemed genuinely interested in improving collaboration and establishing a stronger university-preschool partnership.

In Iceland, most professionals in the field know each other; since the country is small in population, studying a profession short of preschool teachers. Making it difficult to conceal the identity of the participants completely.

Partnership, ECE teacher education, Third space, Professionalism, Field practice

DESIGNING CONTEMPORARY LEARNING ECOLOGIES: MEANING MAKING AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING IN AUTHENTIC INQUIRIES

Self-organised Symposium

In this symposium we share three different perspectives on learning ecologies that support young children to make meaning and build knowledge. We discuss the use of authentic inquiries that are based in the environment and in dynamic maker spaces. The three learning ecologies engage young learners in exploring their environment and continuing their work when they come back to their preschool and primary school classrooms. The use of new technologies are incorporated into the three cases that we present and support the notion of making learning visible with pedagogical documentation. We endorse Rinaldi's (2008) view that "young children are capable citizens of the now" who are interested in contemporary phenomena and that their inquiries form the basis of deep learning in authentic scenarios that support meaning making and knowledge building.

Chair: Nicola Yelland, The University of Melbourne, Australia

Multimodal lives and learning: Embracing STEM ecologies to support knowledge building and meaning making.

Nicola Yelland, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This paper focuses on multimodal learning and digital technologies. The project was initiated by the Department for Education in South Australia to create contexts for collaborations between preschool and reception teachers and children. Using STEM learning as the context, the project reveals what authentic learning looks like. The work is grounded in existing work (Yelland, 2020,2021) as well as inspired by others (Simoncini & Laden, 2018; Tippett & Milford, 2016) that explore play based inquiry in STEM. Social constructivism was used to frame the project since it supports children as active and competent. The work is naturalistic collaborative action research using participatory methods. Case studies using empirical data; field notes, educators' reflections, work samples, photographs/video generated documentation; analysed using thematic analysis. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University to ensure that all participants were aware of the nature of their participation and the contribution it would make to early childhood education policy. The findings focus on our preschool and primary teachers collaborating on STEM inquiry based learning. Results show that digital explorations and documentation, extended the possibilities for multimodal learning incorporating linguistic, visual, oral, aural and kinesthetic modes. The study makes visible the pedagogies and practices that can support successful transitions from preschool to school. The data has informed policy on transitions to school. The data in the form of videos, notes and documentation panels makes explicit the type of collaborations and pedagogical interments that can support deep learning in multimodal learning ecologies.

pedagogies, STEM, play, learning, multimodality

Learning to use iPads as part of a new technology-enhanced outdoor expeditions learning ecology

Fiona Mayne, Gerardine Neylon, University of Western Australia, Australia

This presentation explores how iPads can be used to shape outdoor play and learning. An innovative outdoor learning expeditions (Veletsianos et al., 2015) pedagogy was extended to include interactive mobile technologies (iPads) in an early education and care setting. The project employed a qualitative interpretive case study research design focusing on educators' and children's perspectives of the value of technology in outdoor learning. Adults and children (aged 4 years) were included as active participants, with the inclusive approach to the children's participation being based on Mayne and Howitt's (2022) Narrative Approach. Data were collected from six educators and twelve children and included audio-recorded conversations with children and semi-structured interviews with adults on three occasions, together with digital photographs, child-generated digital and analogue artefacts, and researcher observations. Researchers were mindful to facilitate a respectful research culture where the value of child voices and agency were acknowledged (Mayne & Howitt, 2015). Analysis revealed that educators initially found integration of iPads into their outdoor learning expeditions to be unsuccessful, although children responded positively. The findings illustrate how the skills and dispositions of both educators and children evolved as they co-developed strategies to normalise and manage technology as a learning tool. These findings suggest implications for how effective learning ecologies that take account of technological affordances and contextual arenas, can be jointly sculpted by adults and children. It also has implications for research practice in relation to how rights-based participatory research methodologies with young children and educators can be implemented in early years settings.

Technology-enhanced outdoor expeditions, Digital learning ecology, Narrative Approach, Rights-based participatory research, Informing Story

Play qualities in science education

Helle Hovgaard Jørgensen (1), Helle MarieSkovbjerg (2), (1) UCL professionshøjskole og erhvervsakademi, Denmark, (2) Design school Kolding, Denmark

The aim of the this study is to include playful approaches to science education among young children. Research has shown that science education in early childhood often builds on models from school-based settings. (Barenthien, Lindner; Steffensky, 2020; Metz, 2004; Fleer, 2022). Drawing on data from research on pre-school children's play practices in science activities, the paper builds on a concept of play grounded in practice theory, considering play as children's primary practice form (Skovbjerg, 2021; Jørgensen, 2018; Sutton-Smith, 1997). The theoretical framework is based on the concept of play qualities (Skovbjerg, 2021; Skovbjerg & Jørgensen, 2021) with focusing on play qualities which exceed common cultural norms about how children act in science contexts. Focusing on the emergent play qualities within this framing raises a close attention to engage the children's initiatives, however small they are. The study has a design-based-research approach (Barab og Squire, 2004, Ejsing-duun & Skovbjerg, 2018) where ethnographic participatory observation studies were carried out in two Danish kindergartens (Corsaro, 2003; Gulløv & Skreland, 2016). Situational analysis of field notes and photo notes were made to point out emergent categories and themes (Clarke, 2003). The professional's appreciative and guiding attitudes assured continually consents of the children, why close and respectful collaboration with all participants was crucial. The parents gave informed consent. The findings demonstrate that by including play qualities in science education in preschool, the children's possibilities of participation, engagement and exploration are enhanced. In addition the focus on actions create a tool for a more reflective practice.

play, science education, children's perspectives, participation, participatory method

Symposium Set C

09:00 – 10:20, Thursday 25th August 2022

C 1

GENDER AND PLAY: PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN, PRACTITIONERS AND RESEARCHERS

Self-organised Symposium

There is a call for more research on the gendered practices in ECEC. This includes the relationship between gender and play. Questions are raised on how to approach gendered practices among staff and children methodologically. The contributions presented in this self-organised symposium discuss the relationship between gender, play, and research. Themes represented in the papers range from innovative and inclusive research methods to analysis of the gendered practices of play.

Chair: Birgitte Ljunggren, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC), Norway

Gender play: co-creating gender research methods with practitioners and children

Kari Emilsen (1), Elin Birgitte Ljunggren (1), Siv Ellen Lilleng (2), (1) Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC), Norway, (2) Solbakken barnehage/ Solbakken early childhood center, Norway

The study aims to explore the co-construction of a gender sensitive research method with children and practitioners. It describes the incremental and participatory-based development process of the research method. The research builds on the well-established research field of participatory oriented methodology that enables children a voice by using the mosaic approach, theorized by Clark (2017). It is important to facilitate for, and enable children's voices to co-construct meaning (Clark 2017). An extended methodological toolbox is needed (Brown and Perkins 2019), to grasp how children experience ECEC teachers in terms of gender. This requires innovative methods (Brown and Perkins 2019), and notions from user-based innovation inspire the development process. An international gender study with a standardized protocol frames the study. The dataset is from the project "Young Children's Perspectives on their Male and Female Teachers". The development process became a step-wise process where one practitioner, two researchers and 19 children actively developed the research method - using interview/dialogue about images. The children used different languages, and play became central in the method aiming to grasp young children's voices in studying gender. Adhered ethical codes are approved consent, opportunity to withdraw, and pseudonyms. The important role of staff and children in the co-construction process is highlighted and analysed. The interaction between children and researchers in collecting data and producing knowledge and "truth" about teacher's genders through the applied and developed method is discussed. Impact will be an improved gender-reflective understanding of children's and practitioner's voices as co-creators of research methods.

Innovative research, Childrens voice, Co-construction, Interaction between children and researchers, Gender-reflective understanding

The rigid/flexible gender in children's play?! Doing gender practices in child day care centres between binarity and flexibility

Melanie Kubandt, University of Vechta, Germany

Two ethnographic studies in day care centres in Germany focused on doing gender by children in everyday life. One aim was to show when and how gender becomes a topic in children's play and which ideas of gender are contained in it. Research has shown that educators tend to encourage sex segregation and limiting gender stereotypes in children's play (Edward, Knoche, Kumru 2001). But the meta-analysis by Davis and Hines (2020) show far more differentiated references to sex and gender by children. The theoretical framework is based on ethnomethodological Perspectives on Gender (Gildemeister 2017) and refer to social-constructivist Theories according to Kelle (2009) and Knorr-Cetina (1989). Both studies followed a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin/Lincoln 2018) based on ethnographic fieldnotes and videographic data in two child day care centres. The Data was coded according to Grounded Theory by Strauss and Corbin (1996). The EECERA Ethical Code for early childhood Researchers (2015) was followed with voluntary, informed consent sought from children and parents. All names of the participants have been replaced by pseudonyms. The results show different non-binary doing gender practices by children while playing games in large groups, but also point to the high relevance of binary gender logics in role play. Depending on different forms of play, references to gender are sometimes more flexible. Based on the results, recommendations can be derived for both parents and educators on how the identification with gender can be supported without confining children to strict gender role concepts.

doing gender, ethnography, children's play, child day care, gender flexibility

Touch in interaction between male practitioners and children: a tool for supporting children's care, play and learning and challenging gender norms in ECEC

Ricardo Goncalves, Örebro university, Sweden

In an ongoing research project, I examine touch as a pedagogical practice in interactions between male practitioners and children. The aim of the study is to get more knowledge about for what purpose male practitioners touch children and the pedagogical implications of touch for children's care and learning. In research on men in ECEC questions about touch between male practitioners and children are very recurrent (Eidevald et. al, 2018; Pruit, 2015). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon critical studies on men and masculinities (Hearn, 1997) as well as theory of learning from a pragmatic perspective (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). In this paper I present preliminary results based on a qualitative study using participant observation as method in a group of 15 children and three practitioners (two female and one male) in a Swedish preschool. Fieldnotes and video recordings were used as data collection and the analysis was conducted through a content analysis. This research project was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Agency and ethical principles as confidentiality, anonymization, informed and negotiated consent have been taken. The findings indicate that male practitioners use touch to help and guide children in care and play situations. Touch is applied as a tool for communication and participation by reorienting children's body towards activities. Touch practices are also regulated based on a policy of children's body integrity. The findings suggest implications for how touch provided by all practitioners can support children's care, play and learning and challenge gender norms in ECEC.

male practitioner, children, touch, care, learning

C 2

PROMOTING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN ECE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Sivanes Phillipson, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

Posthuman inspirations for parental collaborations: The old days, local history and the past engaging and entangling the parents in the ECEC

Alicja Sadownik, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

This paper shows how the posthuman theoretical toolkit enables new understandings of the phenomenon and practice of parental involvement, and thus gives value and empowers practices that are commonly seen as unimportant or unserious. Parental engagement in ECE is internationally assumed to be a human-human phenomenon facilitated by particular policies mirrored in institutional practices that involve (or not) particular individuals (Garvies et al. 2022). This research by proposing another theoretical lens (posthumanism) offers a new perception of parental engagement (as a more-than-human phenomenon enabled in intra-action between the human and nonhuman) and thus inspires to new caregiver-involving practices. The empirical base for this paper comprises over a interview with adult participants and a video material of one preschool group in a 140 year old kindergarten in Bergen that was involved in "playing old days" project coordinated by two of the parents and the ECEC staff. The project was approved as a one in line with Norwegian and international guidelines for research ethics. All the participants or their caregivers gave informative consent for participating in research, however children's voices of "don't film me now"-kind were respected during the film making. The posthuman theorisation of the data shows the activity of "playing old days" as a travel in time encouraged by intra-actions with material objects from another SpaceTime. Being TOGETHER in another SpaceTime gave the parents, professionals and children a common experience "from the past" (eventhough their histories are different) mediated by materiality and NON-human objects.

playful togetherness, posthumanism, intra-action, enabling new understandings, travel in time

Realising parental engagement in children's early learning

Sivanes Phillipson (1), Gerarda Richards (1), Shane N Phillipson (2), (1) Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, (2) Monash University, Australia

This study explored parental beliefs on learning and access to resources in supporting their children early learning. Differences in parental engagement with children's learning could be influenced by parental educational attitudes and expectation (Cahoon, et al. 2017). The Actiotope Model (Ziegler & Phillipson, 2012) situates individuals to excel when they have access to resources known as learning and educational capitals. The learning capitals include individual's internal capacity such as goal setting, whilst educational capitals include physical and social resources such as toys and a supportive family. Fifteen Australian parents of young children were interviewed at two stages – before and after they participated in journaling learning activities

that took place at home with their children. Using an interpretivist paradigm, Leximancer content analysis was used to compare the themes of the pre and post data, as framed by the Actiotope Model. Participants informed and voluntary consents with the option to withdraw at any point of time were obtained in written forms. All data of participants were non-identified and confidential. The themes highlighted the concept of awareness as a key finding. Parents' differing awareness of their beliefs, practices and access to resources in supporting their children's learning influenced their confidence and actions. This study confirms that for parents to effectively engage with their young children, they must be cognisant of their own knowledge and skills, as well as their children's abilities. This awareness empowers parents to support their children's learning in ways that position them as effective first educators of children.

Family actiotopes, Learning at home, Awareness, Self beliefs, Parent-child engagement

Family factors of early language development: Children's books and media exposure

Urška Fekonja, Ljubica Marjanovič-Umek, Kaja Hacin-Beyazoglu, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

The aim of this study was to analyse various aspects of language development in the period between 30 and 48 months, as well as to explore the relations between children's language and several factors of family environment. Research has shown that family plays an important role in early language development, emphasizing mostly the role of shared reading between parents and children (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). However, the findings about the effect of media exposure on early language development are not consistent (e.g. Linebarger & Vaala, 2010; Zimmerman et al., 2007). The study is based on the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987), which emphasises the importance of symbolically rich environment and the role of adults in child's early language development. This quantitative study includes a sample of 109 children, aged from 30 to 48 months. Various aspects of children's language (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, metalanguage) were assessed by their parents using the Slovenian adaptation of CDI-III. Several family factors (e.g. family literacy, child's media use) were also assessed. An informed written consent was gained for all the participants. The findings show that the assessed aspects of language competence are related to children's age, indicating significant developmental changes in this age period. Family factors, including the number of children's books at home, the frequency and parental restriction of child's media use were also related to several aspects of child's language. The findings suggest implications for how children's books and media use in the family can effect and support early language development.

language development, family literacy, children books, shared reading, media exposure

C 3

DEVELOPING TEACHER'S PLAYFULNESS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Sofia Avgitidou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

An educational case study; developing early childhood teachers' pretend play skills

Anthia Michaelides, Eleni Loizou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

This study investigates the impact of a drama-based professional development program (PDP) on early childhood teachers' (ECTs) sociodramatic play skills. It is part of a doctoral thesis. Drama and play have an undeniable connection (Dunn & Stinson, 2012) and research suggests drama as a means to support children's and teachers' play skills (Lobman, 2005; Loizou & Michaelides, 2020). Teachers' involvement in children's play falls in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, since their involvement can enhance children's play (Bodrova, 2008). Professional development programs use drama in supporting teachers' developing their knowledge and skills (Cawthon & Dawson, 2009; Lobman, 2005). Thirteen in-service ECTs attended a 9-session drama PDP which aimed at developing sociodramatic play skills. Participants conducted, four to five videos of sociodramatic play with children and reflected on each one. Additionally, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant pre and post the PDP. Consent forms were given to all participants (teachers, children, staff), with the option to leave at any given time. For the video-recordings permissions were provided by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The findings focus on the case of one participant, Christina. Christina presented development in all of her sociodramatic play skills. Specifically, while in her initial involvements in children's play she did not use any sociodramatic play skills, throughout the PDP she exemplified development and usage of all sociodramatic play skills. She also used different drama techniques during her involvement in children's play. It is proposed that, ECTs professional development programs and university courses employ drama, as an approach in developing teachers play skills.

Drama techniques, Professional development, Teacher Play skills, Drama program, Role and Scenario play skills

VOICE: An evidence-based teacher reflection tool for participatory pedagogies in ECE

Sofia Avgitidou (1), Kyriaki Velkou (2), Christina Sidiropoulou (3), Vassiliki Alexiou (3), Sonia Likomitrou (2), Maria Birbili (1), (1) Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, (2) Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece, (3) University of Western Macedonia, Greece

This study aims to present the process and outcome of constructing an evidence-based reflection tool for teachers in the context of a professional learning (PL) program regarding participatory practices in ECE (VOICE). Participatory practices have been long studied as critical in ECE (Clark & Moss, 2011; Correia, Aguiar & Amaro, 2021; Shier, 2001). However, recent studies in Greece show that this knowledge has not systematically affected ECE practice and more targeted teacher support is necessary (Alexiou, 2018; Avgitidou, 2014; Likomitrou, 2015; Velkou, 2015). Teachers' PL is closely related to their role as researchers and reflective practitioners (Avgitidou, 2019). Relating theory, research, praxis, and reflection is a prerequisite to enhance participatory pedagogies (Formosinho & Formosinho, 2012). This is a qualitative secondary data analysis of four action research projects' findings. It focuses on the factors related to teachers' beliefs and practices hindering or enhancing participatory practices. Results formed an interpretative framework to construct a reflection tool for ECE teachers. The ethical considerations of the original projects were reviewed and all participants' consent in these projects was obtained. We detected four recurring themes of teachers' thinking that related to participatory pedagogies (beliefs about children, ECE aims and priorities, teacher's role and theories of learning) and five areas of practice that were related to these beliefs (planning and design, free play, structured activities, dialogue and child assessment). A reflection tool was developed accordingly. Reflection tools are important to be closely related to teachers' belief systems and practice to enhance critical awareness.

Children's Participation, Voicing Children, Teachers' professional learning, Reflective tool, Critical awareness

Exploring educators role in daycare children's play with art

Martin Hoffmann, Thomas Thorsen, Johan Bundgaard Nielsen, University College Absalon, Denmark

The research study "Playart", investigates educators' role in children's play with art, in different arenas e.g. museums, music schools or daycare playgrounds to support learning and development. The relationship between educators and their significant role in children's play has been investigated in recent international and Scandinavian research (Fleer, 2015; Løndal & Greve 2015). This research draws upon a Vygotsky inspired cultural-historical perspective where play is the creation of imaginary situations (Vygotsky, 1967). In play educators can use art to bring children into dialogue with the world, and through this dialogue the children can make the world understandable (Biesta 2020; Klafki 1995). The study was conducted as pragmatic action research (Bradbury, 2015) based on appreciative inquiry (Mejlvig, 2012) and involved experimental art-based practices, participatory observations and qualitative interviews with children, artists and pedagogues. Our ethical consideration were that the children were free to participate and that all the participants were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time. The consent was negotiated with the children and a consent form was signed by their parents. The study shows that educators need to be open, attentive, energetic, and brave to participate in and sculpt children's play with art. Utilizing art in play makes it possible to create imaginary situations that make the world understandable to children. We recommend that educators and children in playful activities together explore various aesthetic arenas that support and encourage children's self-determination. This will give them the opportunity to be active democratic participants in the world.

Educators role in children's play, PlayArt, Imaginary situation, Appreciative inquiry, Pragmatic action research

C 4

INCLUSIONARY PRACTICE FOR MIGRANT NEWCOMERS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Ingmarie Bengtsson, Kristianstad University, Sweden

Playing interactions of newcomer children in Sweden

Nadezda Lebedeva, Dalarna University, Sweden

The paper presents the results of the study which explores how play of newcomer children from immigrant and refugee background emerges and how to understand its dynamics. Dynamic Systems (DS) approach previously applied in research on non-linear processes and phenomenon of play (Bergen, 2010, 2014, 2015; Fromberg, 2006) and playing interactions' modelling (Steenbeek and van Geert, 2005) is used in this study for discovering the process of play in details. State Space Grid method (Hollenstain, 2006) applied for analysis of observations helps to capture play's peaks and valleys while a methodological tool developed for analysis of interviews with young children (Lebedeva, 2021) helps to deepen understanding of children's

perspective on their play. The study is approved by Swedish Ethical Board and follows special requirement for conducting research with young children. Results of the study shows that play seen as a dynamic system of interactions among newcomer children gets its' shape from relational, embodiment, activities and locational categories (REAL) including multiple patterns within and between each of the categories. Emotional category appears to be a pattern, which both triggers the dynamics and change of play as well as remains the main outcome of it. The results of the study are useful for practitioners interested in a new perspective on play and in possibilities which such a perspective provides. Knowledge about emergence and development of play as well as about various factors affecting and sustaining playing interactions can be used by practitioners to help newcomer children's socialization and integration via play.

play, newcomers, Dynamic Systems, methods, children's perspective

Home-based childcare in Japan as a community asset to support young children with migrant background

Mikiko Tabu, Masayo Yabunaka, Seitoku University, Japan

The purpose of this study is to enhance home-based childcare as a local family-support resource for young children with migrant backgrounds. It is also intended to explore the measures that home-based childcare can contribute to the children's well-being. The number of children with such background is increasing in conjunction with the new system that accepts foreign workers. Home-based childcare in Japan is a newly introduced state-maintained ECEC provisions for children under three legislated in 2008. However, its utilization has been small and decreasing due to the rapid expansion of center-based provisions in the past decade. Little is known about the current state of multiculturalism in the ECEC in Japan, and almost no recognition of the special role home-based childcare can play in supporting minority children and their families. Inspired by Cummings's theory of second language acquisition, a questionnaire survey was conducted in 2021 for two groups of home-based childcare providers in Tokyo to clarify their progress of multiculturalization. The free descriptions of the 141 responses (59% response rate) are being analyzed by text mining methodology. This investigation was approved by the Ethics Committee of Seitoku University and carried out with the utmost ethical consideration. Home-based childcare providers are struggling with the language communication and aware of their short of knowledge of different cultures. By organizing training that enables them to develop skills in communication and understanding of the importance of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, it is expected to raise public awareness of their existence.

home-based childcare, Japan, national ECEC system, children with migrant backgrounds, second language acquisition

Everything is for the children's best – Life stories about the importance of meetings

Ingmarie Bengtsson, Kristianstad University, Sweden

Aim of this study is to examine how immigrant parents experience their first meeting with the Swedish preschool, with no or little access to the Swedish language. Previous research focus on teachers' opinions about cooperating with parents (Crozier 1999; Joshi, Eberly & Konzal 2005; Phoon, Abdullah & Abdullah 2013). The importance of good relations with parents is highlighted (Fakir 2010; Vuorinen 2018) and the inequality in these relations, due to language and culture, is discussed (Björk-Willén 2013). The study is based in Social Construction (Burr 2015). The researcher is seen as a part of creating stories in social construction narrative research. The study has a qualitative approach and data consists life stories told by six mothers, with 2-4 children each, aged between 2-8 years. The stories were transcribed and interpreted in order to find dominating patterns. Prevailing ethical principles have been considered as they are put in Swedish research council guidelines (Gustavsson, Hermerén & Pettersson 2011). The respondents were guaranteed confidentiality and possibility to stop participating at any time. Dominating finding is the wellbeing and comfort for the children. To be met with interest and curiosity as parents seem to be more important than the ability to speak the same language. The curriculum for Swedish preschools emphasizes the importance of giving parents possibility to be involved in preschool. This was not anything that was mentioned by the parents in the study, and this result can be useful in discussions among preschool teachers and students in preschool teacher education.

participation, social construction, interculturality, life story, preschool

C 5

PLAY: TOYS, NO TOYS AND SHOPPING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Merja Koivula, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Children's perspectives on play without toys

Merja Koivula (1), Marita Neitola (2), (1) University of Jyväskylä, Finland, (2) University of Turku, Finland

The aim of the present study is to find out what kind of perspectives do the children have on playing without toys on "Toys on holiday" (ToH). ToH is a measure from social-emotional learning program Papilio, developed in Germany (Mayer et al., 2016; Scheithauer et al., 2016). The theoretical background of ToH is to enhance children's social-emotional competence, interaction, play skills and creativity, as toys are left on shelves and children have variety of materials available to use in their play (Mayer et al., 2016). Drawing on socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), children are seen as active agents constructing and transforming their interactions with children, teachers and material environment (Sairanen et al., 2022). Therefore, exploring children's own perspectives on their play (Theobald et al., 2015) during ToH is important. The data of this qualitative case study were collected by interviewing 59 children, aged 6-years. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in pairs. The data were analysed by using qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ethical considerations followed included gaining research consents from parents and children, respecting children's rights to anonymity, and confidentiality, and assessing continuously children's voluntary participation (Morrow, 2008). The results suggest girls appreciated the use of different materials, developing their imagination and constructing role play during ToH. Some boys, however, found ToH challenging due to lack of toys, difficulty of engaging in play and finding play opportunities. Acknowledging this diversity in children's perspectives on ToH is important, so teachers can support children's agency and facilitate engagement in play.

children's perspectives, peer play, toys, social-emotional competence, imagination

Play communication as a universal language for young visitors in cultural heritage institution: case study of Vilnius Toy museum

Indrė Jovaišaitė-Blaževičienė, Vilnius University, Lithuania

This three-month qualitative observation aims to map early learning strategies in a cultural heritage exhibition providing free-choice engagement for families. Previous research analyses forms of early learning in children's museums, science centres, natural history museums (Mayfield, 2005; Henderson and Atencio, 2007; Luke et al., 2017). Research in cultural heritage and art museums is mostly based on the evaluation of educational programmes (Sirinides et al., 2017). Free-choice learning (Falk and Dierking, 1998) in cultural heritage exhibitions requires new research to understand how play communication can integrate early learning. This study is based on Bandura's social learning theory framework (Bandura, 1977), which assumes that children learn through imitation and observation. Identification of play strategies is based on the four types of play by Brown (2009). The study is constructed on an ethnographic paradigm that has been effectively applied in museology (Nomikou, 2015). A qualitative observation approach was chosen as a non-intrusive way to collect data for content analysis. Although the study was based on nonintrusive observation, ethical considerations include a commitment to anonymise the data whilst ensuring representative and fair research. The results show that early learning in cultural heritage exhibitions manifests itself through four types of play, accompanied by the social learning pattern of imitation. The findings suggest a further need for research into play by engaging visitors of different ages and the impact of free-choice learning by example.

play communication, early learning in museum, free-choice learning, social learning in museum, family in museum

Exploring social justice awareness in young children's shopping pretend play at ECEC settings and museums

Despina Kalessopoulou, Foteini Psatha, Tryfaini Sidiropoulou, Eleni Sotiropoulou, University of West Attica, Greece

This research project aims to provide insights into instances of social justice awareness in children's play during shopping pretend activities. Two different settings, the nursery and a children's museum, are considered. Food store exhibits in children's museums and relevant learning centres in ECEC settings provide diverse affordances for young children that would be interesting to compare. Previous literature acknowledges the importance of these popular play areas in the development of children's socio-cultural, linguistic and mathematical skills, but rarely addresses broader social justice issues e.g. consumerism or control (Braham, Libertus, & McCrink, 2018; Drenten, Peters & Thomas, 2008). In this study, we will be guided by the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999) to examine how children's play experiences relate to the ten central human functional capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000). A qualitative interpretive paradigm is adopted. Educators' narratives will be collected by completing daily journals and by conducting semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis will be completed based on the aforementioned theoretical framework. Choosing to focus on educators in this exploratory study acknowledges their mediating role in constructing responsive environments and serving as critical actors that can promote social justice awareness during co-construction of play scenarios. Ethical procedures will include informed consent, the right to withdraw, anonymization and access to findings, according to institutional guidelines. Findings will indicate the most commonly observed social justice capabilities in children's pretend play, the context that enables their emergence, and the role of the educator in promoting or not social justice awareness. The study connects with discussions on active citizenship.

Capability Approach, Social Justice, Pretend play, Children's museum, Educators

Chair: Zinnia Mevawalla, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

How can bumblebees broaden children's understanding for sustainability?

Kristin Grøsvik, University of Stavanger, Norway

The purpose was to explore how children can learn interactions in nature, using bumblebees. According, the Norwegian Framework Plan for kindergartens (2017), the children shall be given nature experiences and discover the diversity of the natural world. Biological diversity is affected by urbanization and knowledge of the impacts is very important (Mell & Lemes de Oliveira, 2019). Insects are an ecologically important group and their decline is one of the biggest environmental challenges (Hallmann et al., 2017), which require specific knowledge. Researchers are concerned and claim that knowledge of nature in early childhood can be of great importance (Chawla, 1999). Our study takes a closer look at children's exploration of bumblebees and children's drawing. The participants in the study included three children aged five to six years. The data was collected based on conversations and group interview (Kvale, 2007) about nature experiences and children's drawings. The children were orally informed, while their parents signed a consent form. The children's participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time. The findings indicate that exploration of bumblebees captured the children's attention, interest and empathy for the insects. The preschool teacher highlighted that time and knowledge about sustainability and bumblebees was important for facilitating good pedagogical interactions. Hands-on experiences may also contribute to increase love and a desire to take care of and protect the nature in the future (Chawla, 2007). The study may contribute children's understanding for interaction to nature and sustainable development.

children, environment, bumblebees, sustainable development, kindergarten

Nurture through nature: fostering early childhood students' understanding of outdoor learning spaces through a Froebelian lens

Marcella Towler, Alison Moore, University College Cork, Ireland

This small-scale research pilot project investigates Early Years and Childhood Studies students' developing understanding of outdoor learning spaces. The project is funded by the Froebel Trust and will foster a reimagination of the indoor/ outdoor learning environment. The Educator's understanding of outdoor spaces has a positive impact on the quality of outdoor spaces and children's learning therein (Murphy, 2018). Combining college gained knowledge to placement acquired knowledge (Holman and Richardson, 2021) is implicit in this two-phased study as is connecting practice to Froebel's principles through pedagogical documentation (Quinn and Parker, 2019). This research draws on Critical Reflective Practice Models (Schon 1983, 1987; Hallet 2016). Froebelian principles will be the lens through which we examine the data. Within a qualitative and interpretivist paradigm, student participants documented their outdoor workshop experiences and constructed a reflective portfolio. Focus groups supported students' identification of and reflection on Froebelian principles from their workshop activities. The EECERA Ethical Code (Bertram et al., 2015) and UCC ethical guidelines will be adhered to including informed consent, right to withdraw from participation in the study and maintaining confidentiality. The researchers' positionality has been considered to reduce research bias. Initial findings from phase one indicate that students have developed an understanding of the potential of outdoor provision with indications of applying a Froebelian lens to their reflections. The implications for professional practice in phase two will be evaluated. This 'seed corn' project (Froebel Trust, 2021) will potentially influence approaches to teaching on the BA EYCS and/or Early Childhood and Education Programmes.

Froebelian Lens, Early Childhood, Outdoor Learning Spaces, Higher Education, Professional Practice Placements

Playing in the Junkyard: a model for agency in times of routine and crisis in Israeli Kindergartens

Shulamit Hoshen (Manzura), Oranim College of Education, Israel, Sigal Aчитuv, Oranim college of education, Israel

This study presents the contribution of play in the Israeli kindergarten "Junkyard" to developing children's agency in times of routine and crisis. The "Junkyard" is a unique environment consisting of adult world's artifacts no longer in use and encouraging children's free play according to DAP approach (Aviezer et al., 2021). Agency is defined as the ability to make choices and decisions impacting one's world (ACECQA, 2018). Strengthening agency throughout childhood influences wellbeing and improves capability of using agency throughout life (Hilpo et al., 2016; Scott et al., 2020). Children exercise agency through play in co-creating their world (Ho, 2017). During COVID-19 pandemic which damaged many families'

wellbeing, children expressed a desire to have extended time for routine play, especially outdoors (Pascal & Bertman, 2021). This qualitative study involved 26 interviews with children and teachers, and ten observations in "junkyards". Participants were notified of the research aims and procedures and asked to sign an informed consent agreement. No conflicts of interest were found between researchers and research subjects. The findings indicate a high level of children's initiatives in the "Junkyard" which is perceived by the teachers as a means to support agency, enhancing children's self-efficacy and enabling their independent decision-making processes. In a period characterized by social isolation, the "Junkyard" is a significant source for agency in young children. Given the "Junkyard's" contribution to children's agency, it can be seen as a resource for improving wellbeing and reducing inequality. The research highlights the need to implement "Junkyard pedagogy" to enhance children's agency.

"Junkyard", Agency, COVID-19 pandemic, children's wellbeing, outdoor free play

C 7

MODELS OF LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF CHANGE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Paola Pedrelli, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

What is the status of Early Childhood centre leaders? A comparison between England and Finland

Krishan Sood (1), Leena Halttunen (2), Malini Mistry (3), (1) Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom, (2) University of Jyväskylä, Finland, (3) University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom

This research examines the positionality of EC centre leaders (which include nursery/reception class leaders) in two countries. Research objectives are: To see if and how their status has changed in line with Early Years reforms in each country. Detail: The preparation and development opportunities offered to Early Childhood (EC) leaders have changed little in comparison to the primary school leaders in England. This is timely opportunity to investigate now. The literature suggests leadership in EC sector is crucial for enhancing pedagogical quality in education (Strehmel et al, 2016, p. 1). However, much of the EC workforce do not see themselves as leaders supporting outcomes for children, let alone, others in education seeing them as pedagogical leaders (Nutbrown and Clough, 2014), thus leading to disempowerment of the sector (Tickell Review, 2011). The research design uses discourse analysis to examine some of the assumptions through distributed leadership (Harris, 2008) and teacher leadership (Fairman and MacKenzie, 2012). This comparative qualitative research paradigm involves up to 20 EC/Early Years leaders in English settings and up to 10 EC leaders in Finnish settings. Finland has better track record than England in this sector, hence its involvement. All the ethics guidelines (BERA, 2018) were followed, including voluntary involvement and withdrawing at any time. Data was kept in locked safe on encrypted file. Leadership concept varied with participants reflecting their experience and role. In terms of implications, we anticipate benefits for EC leaders to be better trained and have improved status leading to reduced turnover.

peer interaction, Early childhood research, distributed leadership, policy enactment, pedagogical quality

Leadership and how the Hybridisation Model of Leadership can support professional development

Paola Pedrelli, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

Understanding complexity of leadership life. The research is from my PhD which focused on complexity in leadership life. The complexity and turbulence in which early years' leaders operate in often overlooked (Aubrey, 2011); early years leadership is complex (Whalley, 2019). Leadership is examined across disciplines, linked with leadership narratives, career journey (Pascal and Ribbins, 1998); leaders involvement (Campbell-Barr and Leeson, 2016) professional identities (Mancini et al, 2015) partnership working (Whitaker, 2015; Goleman, 1995), hybridisation (Pederson, 2016); Complexity Leadership Theory (Arena and Uhl-bien, 2016; Lichtenstein et al, 2006). A social constructionist approach, operating within an interpretivist construct (Hammersley, 2002; Denscombe, 2010). My positionality was transparent throughout (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). A case study approach was used (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Yin, 2014). The research was biographical, it focused on 20 leaders with interviews and observations (Crowe et al, 2017; Kramp, 2004 and Miller, 2012). I found Flinder's Framework (1992) particularly useful. To help with trustworthiness, I created an Informant Group of Early Years Experts. Leadership is not static; skills need to be developed so Heads of Settings can lead more effectively in a changing environment. Leaders need to be able to deal with theoretical and practical application of tasks and issues, be self-aware (Crevani et al, 2015, Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012; Mancini et al, 2015), This detailed model supports government and related organisations to develop appropriate training which recognises the diverse range of skills needed for leaders in a turbulent environment (Crevani et al, 2015, Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012)

Levels of practice - Leadership for Quality and Development of Playful Teaching and Learning

Catarina Arvidson, Maria Styf, Mid Sweden University, Sweden

The aim of this study is to describe and discuss levels of leadership practice for a systematic quality work as a didactic tool to create prerequisites for playful learning and teaching. This study builds on a project that combine research and development in systematic quality work in preschools. Several previous studies have a focus on both practice-based projects and systematic quality work but our focus on the two theoretical concepts combined contributed to a uniqueness. The theoretical framework draws upon theoretical concepts of didactic theory and leadership practice. In this study the aim is to intertwine concepts of Didactic theory (Wahlström, 2019) and leadership practice (Spillane, Halverson & Diamon, 2004). Leadership practice as a social and contextual process is combined with the concepts in the didactic triangle. The study was conducted within participatory and practice-based research paradigm and covers analysis from letters and recorded meetings with groups of municipal preschool leaders. All letters were sent in anonymously and participants in the recorded meetings were informed of their rights regarding ethical guidelines. The result is presented with fictional names of persons and places. A tentative conclusion is that consensus at different levels (in leadership practice) creates conditions for carrying out, delimiting, and conducting systematic quality work for the development of teaching practice, in this study with the example of play. These findings give an example of implications for leadership practice at different levels can conduct their systematic quality work for development of a playful teaching and learning settings.

Didactic tools, leadership practice, playful learning, systematic quality work, teaching

C 8

INCLUSIONARY PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Simon Archard, Te Rito Maioha, New Zealand

Finnish early childhood special education teachers' views on implementation of support provision for children with speech language and communication needs.

Eva Staffans, Kristina Ström, Siv Björklund Åbo Akademi, Finland

This study aims to explore teachers support provision to children with speech language and communication needs (SLCN) participating in regular early childhood education and care (ECEC). Research has shown that teachers have great possibilities to support children with SLCN in daily activities (Holmes et al., 2019: 251-252) as long as they have knowledge, interest and motivation for supporting children with SLCN (Dockrell et al., 2017:8). The theoretical framework for present study draws upon children's language development and especially challenges related to language acquisition (Bishop, 2013; Dockrell et al., 2017; Lindsay and Strand, 2016). Teachers' interpersonal skills (Cunningham et al., 2020) and creating supportive activities and learning environments for children with SLCN is highlighted (Justice et al., 2019). A qualitative interpretive research guided present study. Four focus group interviews were conducted with 14 early childhood special education teachers (ECSET). Data is analyzed with thematic analysis with an abductive approach. The research ethics principles in Finland (TENK, 2019) have been followed in each part of this research. Information about the informants' rights was given to the focus group before starting each interview. Respondents gave their consent to participate in the study after receiving information about the study's aim and respondents rights; such as opportunity to withdraw and how confidentiality is guaranteed. Findings indicate an inequality in support provision for children with SLCN. Personnel's interest and motivation can either be supportive or a pitfall for children in need of support. Indicated inequalities arise the importance of appropriate working conditions for personnel supporting children.

Special education, Needs, Support, Early childhood special education teacher, Language

Wheelchairs, buggies and cousins. Young children's thinking and communication strategies in sharing their Working theories of disability.

Simon Archard, Te Rito Maioha, New Zealand

Young children construct and co-construct meaning about the world through participation and interactions with it (Rogoff, 2003). Working theories consider how children's thinking is shaped by their lived realities including their social and cultural behaviours, actions and identities (Hedges & Cooper, 2017) This PhD based research aims to contribute to the understanding of children's Working Theories of disability and how they make sense of, and explain, this complex and important topic.

Disability studies includes a social justice perspective and discusses the challenge inclusive practices face in fairness and equity issues in education settings (Grey, 2013; Thomas, 2004). My study captures young children's voices about disability reflecting discourses, fairness and participation. The theoretical approaches of socio-cultural theory and social constructionism (Burr, 2015; Rogoff, 1990) sit this study within an interpretivist constructivist paradigm providing a focus on understanding how people construct meaning through their interactions with others. Ten child participants (aged 3-4 years) took part in the study. The children participated in conversations (e.g., story creation, drawing) using the mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2001). The University of Waikato ethics committee approval included consent and confidentiality protocols. Guardian consent was obtained for participants. The ethics in this study recognises young children being empowered to claim views about sensitive topics and experiences (Smith, 2011). The mosaic approach activities (Clark & Moss, 2001) capture children's theorising and meaning making of disability through sustained dialogue. Capturing children's voices about disability rightly informs the ongoing agenda for inclusive early childhood education.

Disability, Working theories, Mosaic approach, children's voices, Equity

Supporting learning and play of children with developmental difficulties in Croatian ECEC institutions

Dejana Bouillet (1), Sandra Antulić Majcen (2), (1) Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Croatia, (2) National Centre for External Evaluation of Education, Croatia

The objective of this presentation is to discuss how ECEC teachers support learning and play of children with developmental difficulties in comparison to their typically developed peers, according to the results of the project "Models of response to educational needs of children at risk of social exclusion in ECEC institutions", which is funded by the Croatian Scientific Foundation. Research confirms that ECEC institutions still aren't managing to respond appropriately to educational needs of those children (e.g. Chen et al., 2020; Kuutti et al., 2021). In order to be successful in the implementation of inclusive practice (Booth et al., 2006), ECEC teachers should understand and appropriately respond to educational needs of all children, despite their individual differences. The data was collected using the questionnaire "Assessment of Etiological and Phenomenological Aspects of Risks of Social Exclusion of Children - version for ECEC teachers". They assessed learning and play of 3500 children aged between 5 and 7 years from 10% of all Croatian ECEC institutions. The research has the Approval of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb and complies with ethical standards outlined in the Ethical Code of University of Zagreb. The results indicate that ECEC teachers in Croatia are not managing to respond appropriately to the needs of children with developmental difficulties because those children are faced with different obstacles in their learning and play experience within the ECEC setting. These findings suggest the need for improvement of inclusive practice competencies of ECEC teachers in Croatia.

inclusive education, learning and play, children with developmental difficulties, typically developed children, assessment of ECEC teachers

C 13

THE PLAYFUL THREADS BETWEEN PEDAGOGY AND ARTS-BASED PROCESSES WITH CHILDREN/ARTISTS/PEDAGOGUES AS ACTORS?

Self-organised Symposium

This panel discusses subtle aesthetic relationships between pedagogy, art-based processes, and play, emerging from a Danish development and research project in cultural and pedagogical settings with 0-6-year-old children called LegeKunst / PlayArt (2019-2023). The project involves a group of researchers from Danish university colleges and universities. The project involves a group of researchers from Danish university colleges and universities and the studies are conducted within an action research inspired methodology. With and through the metaphor 'playful threads', we jointly seek answers to the questions: Which impact on aesthetic issues spring from using a new materialistic approach to art and play? Could the approach be useful for rethinking art-based processes in the kindergarten? How can co-creative drama processes strengthen children's social interactions and empathy through make-believe play? How can aesthetic encounters be framed with attention to small children's being in the world? In what ways are children/artists/pedagogues, and actors' contributors to the processes?

Chair: Henriette Blomgren, VIA University College, Denmark

The Magic of Make-believe

Merete Sørensen, University College Absalon, Denmark

This study follows a co-creative dramaprocess involving artists, pedagogues and children in a Danish kindergarten. The aim of the project was to strengthen the children's social interactions and empathy through make-believe play. This study examines the extent to which these potentials were realized. The relation between make-believe play and drama and the learning potentials of both has been examined in recent Scandinavian dramapedagogical research (Sæbø, 2020; Sørensen 2019) The theoretical framework is sociocultural playtheory (Vygotsky, 1978) and dramatheory (Bolton, 2008). The study was conducted as appreciative inquiry and involved experimental practices, participatory observations and qualitative interviews with all participants . The study was carried out with consents from parents, artist and pedagogues. The findings show that the dramaprocess had potentials to engage the children in joyful playsituations where the children's social competencies were supported. Moreover, the dramaprocess involved a row of immanent learning potentials and playsituations where the children became familiar with the language of make-believe. However, these potentials were found to be dependent on skilled facilitation by the involved artist and pedagogues. The findings lead to recommendations for using make-believe play and drama as pedagogical tools in kindergarten. As skilled professionals were found important for the quality of the playfull dramaprocesses, this study suggest to incorporate drama into the education for kindergarten pedagogues.

Make-believe play, Drama, Social interaction and empathy, Appreciative inquiry, Skilled facilitation

Sound of cracking fabric -an action-based study of fragile threads between art, play, material, and atmosphere in art-based processes in kindergartens.

Hanne Kusk, Aarhus University, Denmark

Art-based processes in the kindergarten are moved outside to the playground, the forest, and the fjord, where the brought, found and self-made materials are explored. The research aim, is to investigate how sympoiesis emerge in these outdoor arenas, and create space for site-specific intra-active encounter connected to play and art. The investigation is related to research in art-based processes in kindergartens (Kaplan, 2017, Hovik, 2019, Waterhouse, 2021). The theoretically framework is research in art-education (Biesta, 2017), Playart (Wilson, 2005, Kaplan, 2017), Sympoiesis (Harraway, 2016), and material-poetic moments (Waterhouse, 2021). The research is critical-utopian action-based research, inspired by arts-based and new-materialistic research. It involves experimental practice, playful intra-action, participatory observation and interviews with artists and pedagogues. It also involves video and sound recordings. The study is carried out with consents from parents, artists, and pedagogues. The main findings are that sympoiesis, material-poetic moments and intra-active encounter might lead to more open-ended art-based processes in the kindergarten. These findings lead to reflections about how to find the time, space, and courage in the kindergarten, to open for more poetic, playful and inclusive art-based processes.

Playful aesthetic processes, Sympoiesis, Material-poetic moments, Intra-active encounter, Sitespecific processes

Follow the red ribbon – a critical perspective on small children as actors and participants in encounters with arts-based processes in a day care context

Henriette Blomgren, VIA University College, Denmark

This study aims to investigate the small children's encounters with and participation in art-based processes taking place in a Danish day care institution context. In the wood next to, the artist (a dramaturge) frames a fantasy journey, and the children and pedagogues are to follow the red ribbon. The study focuses attention to in what ways the framing takes account of and is sensitive towards small children's ways of experiencing and being in the world. Art-based processes, aesthetics, play, and pedagogy are rooted in the Danish day care tradition and by law. However, research shows that children's participation in adults' facilitated activities mainly value the adults' perspectives (Svinth, 2013). The theoretical framework approaches art-based processes as play, mood and interaction (Hovik, 2019; Skovbjerg, 2021). The study draws on theories and premises understanding small children as toddlers (Løkken, 2009) and aesthetic actors (Blomgren, 2019). The study is conducted within an action research inspired methodology and involves video recordings, reflections and interviews with artist and pedagogues. The analysis turns to phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches. The study is carried out with consents from artist, pedagogues, and parents and required the researcher as a sensitive and sensing subject (Albon & Rosen, 2014). The findings show how the framing supports focus on the planned stuff – to follow, to listen, to see and with less focus on small childrens interactions and interests. The findings lead to reflections about professionals' abilities to lose control and how to frame aesthetic encounters for the small children.

Toddlers, Action research, Participation, Arts-based processes, Aesthetic encounters

C 14

CHALLENGES OF ADULT PARTICIPATION IN CHILDREN'S PLAY FROM A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL (VYGOTSKIAN) PERSPECTIVE

Self-organised Symposium

In cultural-historical psychology, it is emphasised that only a child's activity produces developmental changes. On the other hand, the adult is the mediator of cultural forms of activity, especially when talking about young children. High-quality play hardly appears without adult mediation (Hakkarainen, Bredikyte 2020). There is a growing body of playworlds research starting from Linqvist (1995), Hakkarainen and Bredikyte (2010), Fleer (2015) that positions the adult inside of children's play. This symposium continues this line of research and explores adult participation in children's play from the teacher's perspective. We will also discuss the terms used to define a teacher's relationship to a child's play and the nature of their involvement.

Chair: Milda Bredikyte, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Adult participation in the creation of narrative playworlds: challenges and contradictions

Milda Bredikyte, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

The study aims to contribute to understanding the process of adult mediation when teachers move into play and change teacher positioning as an 'outsider' of children's play to a position as an 'insider' in play. We analyse teachers' experiences through their journey into narrative playworlds. All our research is grounded in cultural-historical theory. The play has among cultural-historical researchers a status of activity having a decisive impact on psychological development and learning in preschool age. But opinions are divided about the level of adult involvement in children's play, high-quality play hardly appears without adult mediation (Hakkarainen, Bredikyte 2020). Creating narrative playworlds requires special abilities including adult involvement and participation in the play with children. The teachers should preserve two different perspectives simultaneously (Kravtsova, 2010, 2014): they must be children's play partners and, at the same time, play guiders. This is a qualitative study, focus group interviews were conducted with 26 project teachers. The thematic analysis was chosen to elucidate the teachers' authentic experiences from the interview. All participants provided informed consent, in line with the University's ethical committee requirements. It was essential to ensure the anonymity of all participants. During the interview transcription, all clues that allowed the participants or their schools to be identified were eliminated. The thematic analysis process identified four major themes: video camera as a change 'driving' tool; changes in behaviour; changes in relationships; changes in the attitudes. The project implementation model proved to be productive and could be used in other in-service teacher training programs.

narrative playworlds, joint play of adults and children, teacher's experiences, double subjectivity, independent collaborative play activity

Helping Young Children Join Playworld: Microanalysis

Giedrė Sujetaitė-Volungevičienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

The study aimed to analyze whether joint emotional regulation may be at the heart of collective participation in the playworld.

Playworld as the space of self-regulation development has been in the spotlight theoretically and practically in early years of educational research for a while (Hakkarainen et al., 2015; Fleer, Veresov, Walker, 2020; Colliver, Veraksa, 2021). However, in a cultural-historical framework, the pedagogical adult play strategies that help young children join collective make-believe play based on emotional self-regulation are still in question. The research project of 10 playworld sessions took place in the Play Research Laboratory, in Lithuania. The study used a qualitative case study design. The microanalysis of over 120 hours of ethnographic digital visual data, has captured important changes in adult and child behaviour during the critical entry to the playworld. The study has ensured all participants provide parental / student informed consent, in line with University ethical processes; children were aware of camera recordings and withdrawal at any time. Specific episodes were confirmed by parents. Results from a single case revealed the microsteps and strategies that helped young players join and actively participate in the playworld. These findings outline that participation in play, as a cultural practice, is the key mediating activity that helps children develop their emotional self-regulation. However, young children need an actively playing adult as a model of emotional regulation strategies in early childhood educational settings because the peer play culture in neighbourhoods is in decline.

Early childhood education (ECE) practice, Playworld, Participation, Emotional regulation, So-perezhivanie

Preschool teacher's views on play support in relation to the quality of conditions for play in the classrooms

Anna Lakshina, Tatiana Le-van, Moscow City University, Russia

The aim is to study preschool teacher's views on play support and analyze their interrelations with the quality of conditions for play in everyday practice. Responsive play support is an important aspect of high-quality preschool practice (Siraj et al., 2019; Hakkarainen et al., 2013; Smirnova, 2017; Singer, deHaan, 2019). Directive teacher's intervention ruins child's play (Oers,

2014). The level of preschoolers' play is low, play is often replaced by school-like activities or teachers position themselves as outsiders of children's play (Smirnova, Ryabkova, 2018; Fler, 2021). Theoretical framework is Vygotskian theory: the imaginary situation is criterion of play and double subjectivity is its main characteristic (Vygotsky, 2016; Kravtsov, Kravtsova, 2017; Hedegaard, Fler, 2013). Interpretative paradigm, qualitative and quantitative analysis of survey results and structured observation scores were used. The sample includes 181 preschool teachers. The quality of conditions for play was assessed in 24 classrooms with "Play support rating scale" (Lakshina et al., 2021). Participant's consent is obtained after providing written information. Participants had opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Data were anonymized. EECERA ethical code was followed. Ethical approval was obtained from MCU committee on research ethics. Preschool teachers understand play variously: valuable itself for child's development, form for teaching, recess-time and context for assessment. Play support in everyday practice differs: minimal quality level but wide dispersion (mean= 3.68, sd=1.12, min=1.57, max=6.00). The strongest deficiencies are adult's participation in play and mixed-age play and interaction. The results may impact teacher's training programs on play support.

play support, conditions for play, Vygotskian theory, teacher's views, professional development

C 15

RESEARCH ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY – NATURE CONTACT AND NATURE CONNECTIONS

Self-organised Symposium

Research shows that nature contact and nature connectedness are highly beneficial for our health and wellbeing, as well as for our capacity to develop pro-environmental behaviors (Chawla, 2021). In this symposium we explore the meaning of human connectedness to the environment from an early childhood education for sustainability (ECEfS) perspective. We address perspectives of Nature among young children and staff, the importance of access to places for play, and encounters with more than human life in green and blue spaces. Further, we ask if and how nature contact promotes sustainability among children and staff in ECEC? What is the role of nature connectedness when it comes to fostering worldviews and values that enhance education for sustainability in the early years? The symposium strives to enhance critically reflective pedagogies and practices based on a children's rights perspective in ECEC.

Chair: Ann-Christin Furu, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Can we see our voices? A child rights based participatory approach exploring with young children their own perspectives and lived experiences of Nature under Article 29 1 (e)

Muireann Ranta, Institute of Technology, Carlow, Ireland

The research aimed to explore with young children, their own perspectives of Nature under Article 29 1 (e) of the UNCRC, which stipulates that children's education shall be directed to developing a respect for the natural environment. The UNCRC has also been critiqued for its universality and how it can apply at local level (Davies, 2014). Mannion (2007) highlights how children's own connections within their local Nature context can contribute to curricula making. Using a child rights theoretical framework the project sought to understand how young children define their own rights (Lundy and McEvoy, 2011;2012). Grounded in a child rights based, participatory methodological paradigm, methods were designed with the support of a children's research advisory group (CRAG) (n=7) (3-4yrs). They were subsequently used with a second group of participants (n=9) (2-3yrs). The main ethical consideration was how to establish a rights based assent process. This was overcome through collaboration with the CRAG (Huser et al, 2022). The research found that children define their own relationship with Nature. This means children should be partners in creating education curricula aimed at developing respect for environment. It also found that, in claiming their right to education about Nature, they establish their own definitions of participation. The research responded to Robson's (2016) and Lundy and Martinez Sainz's (2018) call for a less 'top down', policy-to-practice approach to children's rights and for greater attention to children's living realities. The research also provides the basis for a child rights education approach for sustainable development in early childhood.

child rights, education, sustainability, participation, early childhood

Building capacities for early childhood education for sustainability through nature contact and nature connectedness

Ann-Christin Furu, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The aim of this study is to explore the nexus of nature contact, nature connectedness, resilience, and sustainable lifestyle among ECEC teachers in Finland and how it contributes to their capacity to conduct ECEfS. Previous research has underlined that nature connectedness is valuable for resilience among children as well as adults (Aerts, Vanlessen & Honnay, 2021; Beery, Chawla & Lewin, 2020; Chawla, 2020; Ernst, Johnson & Burcak, 2019). Further, nature contact and connectedness promote

well-being and pro-environmental behaviours (Martin et al, 2020). However, how these phenomena might contribute to the capacity to conduct transformative ECEFS among ECEC teachers has not yet been studied. The study is situated within the early childhood education for sustainability (ECEFS) research framework (Elliot, Årlemalm-Hagsér & Davis, 2020). The study is positioned within a qualitative, narrative research paradigm (Clandinin et al., 2016) rooted in life-world phenomenology and hermeneutics. The research materials consist of interviews (n=5), written accounts (n=84), and questionnaires (n=84) from which information is triangulated through narrative analysis. The study was conducted according to the guidelines by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK, 2019). The results indicate that nature contact and nature connectedness are linked to physical, mental, and emotional resilience as well as to the capacity to conduct transformative ECEFS. The study implicates that strengthening nature connectedness should be an integral part of ECEC teacher education and continuous professional development.

nature connectedness, resilience, early childhood education and care, early childhood education for sustainability, teacher education

Sustainable chances in cityscapes; waterways and blue and green places as habitats for children's play and exploration.

Kari Anne Jørgensen-Vittersø, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

The paper elucidates how different levels of mapping, geometrical and narrative can reveal changes in access to places for play, and encounters with plants and animals along waterways in cityscape. Waterways hidden under the ground in Oslo are re-opened. The presentation has a point of departure in a study of places near a newly opened waterway as places of importance for children's play, movement, and access to more-than-human life. The theoretical framework is based on a critical approach to existential phenomenology and children's lifeworld (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Bengtsson, 2012) and ecology of perception (Gibson, 1996). The paradigm is humans as embodied and intertwined with the environment. The methodology is descriptive and interpretative. The data are official geographical maps and photos taken in cooperation with staff and children in three kindergartens. Methods include interpretations of digital maps and visual representation of places along the waterways. The official maps contain no personal data. Maps are not identifiable on a personal level, and formally conducted and approved within standards of Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. GEE combined with mapping of biodiversity gives important information of affordances for children's access to places along waterways. These methods can be extended by including children's voices to policy of urban planning. Methods of mapping is a contribution to a shift towards child-friendly, green cities. We need to address the importance of green and blue places for children's play and their encounters with more than human life.

Maps, Phenomenology, Biodiversity, Sustainable play, Wild places

C 16

OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING SIG: CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Self-organised Symposium

The self-organized Symposium Children's Virtual Risk Management is a part of the Outdoor Play and Learning SIG. All presentations in this symposium are from the ViRMA-project: Virtual Risk Management – exploring effects of childhood risk experiences through innovative methods. The three presentations are all methodological oriented, aiming to describe the methods used in the project to explore how children develop risk assessment and risk management skills through risky play and other childhood experiences.

Chair: Ole Johan Sando, Queen Maud University College, Norway

ViRMA: Virtual Risk Management - exploring effects of childhood risk experiences through innovative methods

Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This presentation focuses on the overall design and main results of the project. The aims are; 1) develop methods using new technology to measure children's risk assessment/management, 2) explore associations between risky play experiences and risk assessment/management skills. Studies suggest that through risky play, children learn risk assessment/management (Sandseter & Kennair, 2011; Lavrysen et al., 2015; Brussoni et al., 2015). However, most studies consist of small samples and/or lack the robustness of larger quantitative designs. There are ethical issues with studies where children take real risk, while restricting children from playing freely to assess negative effects would be equally problematic. Virtual Reality (VR) (Morrongiello et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020) is a promising ethical method for studies of risk. Risky VR-scenarios, eye-tracking, and motion capturing technologies, and questionnaires for children/parents around earlier risk experiences have been

developed. Data collection/analysis will be carried out with 60 children, 7-8 year-olds, and their parents in spring 2022. Children's and guardians' informed consent are obtained. Researchers will secure participants' right to withdraw at any point. Participants' names are replaced with codes. Based on injury causes among children, three categories of VR-scenarios are developed; 1) Street crossing, 2) River crossing, 3) Balancing high playground equipment. All scenarios include different levels of risk and gross motor challenges. Data from VR-scenarios is analysed together with data from questionnaires and scales on childhood risk experiences. The present project's results may impact how risk is addressed in crucial societal institutions like the family, early childhood education, and schools.

Virtual reality, Risk-taking, Risk assessment, Risk management, Play

Operationalizing and measuring children's risk-taking, risk assessment/management in virtual reality scenarios

Ole Johan Sando, Rasmus Kleppe, Queen Maud University College, Norway

This presentation describes methods developed to measure children's risk taking and risk assessment/management in virtual reality (VR). Research has demonstrated that VR technology is a successful way for studying health and safety behaviour among adults (Gao et al., 2019) and has also been successfully used to explore children's safety skills in street crossing tasks (Luo et al., 2020). Risk is defined as future uncertainties that entail specified negative or positive outcomes (Ball & Ball-King, 2011). Risk decisions can be interpreted as balancing the individual's propensity to take risks, the potential rewards of risk-taking, the perceived danger in the situation and previous experience (Adams, 2001). Quantitative methods are applied to measure 60 children's (7-8 years old) behaviours in risky VR situations like traffic, river crossing and balancing in heights. Data from VR, motion capturing, and eye-tracking will be used to develop measures of children's willingness to take risk, their risk assessment and management. Children's and guardians' informed consent are obtained, and participants' right to withdraw at any point is ensured. The study's methods are piloted in spring 2022, and measures developed alongside preliminary results will be discussed in the presentation. The present study can reveal how children handle risky situations and how children use different senses and competencies to handle such situations. This knowledge may influence education and policy.

Virtual reality, eye-tracking, motion capturing, risk assessment, play

Measuring children's motor skills through motion capturing in virtual reality scenarios

Lise Storli, Queen Maud University College, Norway

This presentation focuses on children's motor skills and the study aims to develop methods to measure children's motor skills in virtual reality. The Xsens MTw Awinda is used successfully in sport, physical activity, and rehabilitation research to capture how participants move their bodies (Al-Amri et al., 2018; Robert-Lachaine et al., 2017). Researchers have established that children with a greater motor competence have a decreased risk of injuries (Myhre et al., 2012) despite the fact that children who have experiences with risky play or sport often take more chances and may overestimate their abilities (Schwebel et al., 2003). This implies that the child's motor competence, reactions, and movement patterns are important factors for risk management. A total of 60 children in age 7-8 years will participate. VR goggles and Xsens MTw Awinda system of motion capturing is used to collect whole-body numerical movement data with animations of the child through seventeen sensors. Children's and guardians' informed consent are obtained. Careful measures will be taken to avoid placing research participants at risk by being sensitive to the specific challenges that arise in connection with involving children in research, as well as securing their right to withdraw from the research at any point. Pilot data will be collected during spring 2022, and results will be discussed in the presentation. The present study may reveal how to measure children's motor skills through motion capturing in virtual reality.

Motor skills, Motion capturing, Virtual reality, Risk, Play

C 17

VARIATION OF PLAY AND LEARNING

Self-organised Symposium

The three papers in this self-organised symposium present research that explored how play and learning experiences develop in offline and online arenas, reinforcing Vygotsky's notion that learning is socially constructed. Despite differences in their research aims, participants and contexts, they illustrate the affordances which can be generated to promote children's participation and agency. In one study, young children used their drawings as a play process. Pictorial representations stimulated child-led play scenarios, resulting in engaging narratives. The second paper identified the attitudes, knowledge and understanding one mother adopted to initiate and develop Serve and Return (SR) interactions with her daughter. This

generated child-led playful interactions, maximising learning. The third paper considers early childhood educators' reflections about online play activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper documents benefits and challenges of online activities illustrating avenues of learning which either offered high levels of involvement or denied access to meaningful learning opportunities.

Chair: Valerie Sollars, University of Malta, Malta

“Now they are firing at each other”: Exploring young children’s drawings as an arena for play.

Josephine Deguara, University of Malta, Malta

This study aims to explore how young children use their drawings as a play process. Considering drawing as a “space for intellectual play”, Wood and Hall (2011, p. 267), claim that children use narratives while “playing at drawing, playing in drawing and playing with drawing”. In this type of playfulness in children’s drawings, play emerges through action, interaction and narrative (Lindqvist, 2001). Drawing on the theory of social semiotics (Kress, 2010), this study considers drawings as signs that children load with metaphorical representations and which are used as playful experiences. A qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) was used. Video-recorded observations were held with three children aged 4 years. Audio-recorded conversations were held with the children and their parents during and post-drawing. Data was analysed through N-Vivo where a thematic approach was used. Ethical consent was sought from the educator and parents while informed assent was negotiated with children. Participants were given the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings show the inter-relationship between drawing and play as children transformed their drawings into an arena for play. Taking the role of actors, children used drawings as play to interact with others and engage in playful narratives where they drew fantasy-based drawings merged with real-life experiences. This research implies that early years’ settings should recognise the importance of drawing as a playful space for children.

play, drawings, playful drawings, interactions, spaces for play

Facilitating Child-led Play Through a Mother’s Intentional Use of Serve and Return Interactions

Charmaine Bonello, Facilitating Child-led Play Through a Mother’s Intentional Use of Serve and Return Interactions, Malta

This paper aims to explore the attitudes, knowledge and understanding one mother adopts to initiate and develop successful Serve and Return (SR) interactions with her daughter (10 to 24 months) and what type of interactions were facilitated over time. Ongoing responsive, sensitive and warm adult-child interactions are a strong predictor of quality early childhood education and care and thriving home learning environments (Bradley, 2019; Pianta et al., 2016; Sylva et al., 2004). SR interactions help build a child’s brain, starting even before babies can talk (Harvard Centre on the Developing Child n.d.). This study unpacks the concept of SR interactions. It is framed within Bowlby’s attachment theory, relevant to the mother-daughter dyad, and Vygotsky’s notion of co-construction of knowledge and thought between people. Positioned within the worldview of constructivism, this work adopts qualitative methodology. This paper draws on two methods from a longitudinal study - the mother’s reflective journal and the monthly video-recorded analytic discussions (principal researcher - mother). Ethical concerns related to vulnerable and identifiable participants were addressed through informed consent, a protocol for the child’s assent, and anonymity in publications. Findings show the mother’s increasing intrinsic motivation to use and gain a deeper understanding of SR interactions. It eventually became second nature for mother and infant. A key result is how an interactive ‘loop’ developed and generated affordances of child-led playful interactions that maximised learning. This paper will discuss implications to address the need for counselling, support and training for parents and educators on high-quality interactions.

Serve and return, play, parent, Adult-child interactions, play, parent, home learning environment

A Kaleidoscope of Play and Learning in Online Spaces: Early Childhood Educators’ Perspectives during COVID-19 in Malta

Charmaine Bonello, Rosienne Camilleri, Josephine Deguara, Josephine Milton, Tania Muscat, University of Malta, Malta

Through the lens of educators working with under-fives, this paper explores how play and learning featured when shifted to online spaces during COVID-19 school closures in Malta. An early childhood educator’s (ECE) role is critical in facilitating and maximising learning through play (Tsai, 2012). In COVID times, lack of guidance for ECEs (OECD, 2021), school closure, physical distancing requirements and families confined at home “dramatically reduced” children’s access to playful learning opportunities (UNESCO, n.d, p. 1). This work builds on Siemen’s (2004) contemporary learning theory, which sees integrating technology and social interactions as a space for the co-construction of knowledge. The advocacy potential of children’s rights is used to raise awareness on facilitating effective play-based distance learning. A pandemic scenario required immediately available data, thus quantitative methodology was adopted. Two hundred sixty-three ECEs completed the first online survey (2020), and seventy nine responses for the second run (2021) were registered. The study is undertaken with the university’s

ethics approval. An information sheet was included, and consent was gained through submission. Anonymity and voluntary participation were assured. Findings indicate how an unsupported and reactive ECEs' response to school closure surfaced: (i) a play and work quandary; and (ii) benefits and challenges shaped by the development of changing patterns, frequencies, modes, interactions, and actors in online arenas – a kaleidoscope of play and learning. Implications for in-service and pre-service ECEs' training, monitoring and support needed to facilitate effective play and learning in online environments are discussed.

play, learning, online spaces, COVID-19, Early Childhood Educators

C 18

CHILDREN'S MEMORIES, VOICE AND PARTICIPATION IN TRANSITIONS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Jie Gao, UCL Institute of Education, United Kingdom

Using playful research methods to explore young children's perspectives on school readiness

Jie Gao (1), Minyi Li (2), Yuwei Xu (3), Siyu Qin (2), Weicheng Guo (2), Zitong Tian (2), Jesmine Lok (2), (1) UCL Institute of Education, United Kingdom, (2) Beijing Normal University, China, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom,

This longitudinal study aims to foreground children's voices in reconstructing school readiness to support transition from preschool to primary education. School readiness is a contestable concept (Dockett & Perry, 2002), on which the current dominant discourses are mainly underpinned by research of adult stakeholders' perspectives (O'Farrelly et al., 2020). The paucity of research that foregrounds children's perspectives has rendered the conceptualisation and operationalisation of school readiness more representative of adults' agenda rather than children's needs (Bingham & Whitebread, 2012). We regard transition as a continuous process instead of an event (Boyle et al., 2018). Drawing on socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1992), we seek to understand how children construct and negotiate meanings with the researchers during playful research process, which is designed to be dialogic, transformative and sensitive to children's agency (Varpanen, 2019) and preschool contexts. Taking a social constructivist perspective, we use playful research methods to engage young children as co-constructors of knowledge. 47 Chinese children (21 boys 26 girls, age range 59 -81 months) participated in a range of playful research activities. The data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2019). Besides parental consents, we obtained children's assents through child-friendly information leaflet and assent form. We empowered children to take lead during research. Pseudonyms were adopted. Children's perspectives have challenged the dominant conceptualisation and operationalisation of school readiness, although they are inevitably influenced by immediate surroundings and significant others. Findings reinforce the importance of foregrounding children's voices in ECEC practices.

playful research methods, children's voices, transition, school readiness, children's agency

Childrens vertical and horizontal transitions in kindergarten

June Berger Storli, Hilde Dehnæs Hogsnes, Liv Torunn Eik, Reidun Larsen, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

The object of this study is to contribute in developing knowledge regarding childrens vertical and horizontal transitions in kindergarten. A central aim is developing knowledge of situational transitions in childrens every day life, and also of transitions from home to kindergarten, within the kindergarten, and from kindergarten to school and after-school care. In Norway there is limited research on both transitions from home to kindergarten, within the kindergarten and from kindergarten to school and after-school care (Hogsnes, Larsen & Storli, 2020). There is also need for research on situational transitions in childrens every day life (Tveitereid, 2019). The study is based on cultural history activity theory (Vygotskij, 1978; Akkerman & Backer, 2011), and perspectives on continuity of experiences (Dewey, 2005; Hogsnes, 2016). The study is placed under the social-constructivist paradigm, with a qualitative design. The material consists of written stories by one kindergartens staff, based on their own experiences with childrens vertical and horizontal transitions (Vogler, Crivello & Woodhead, 2008). We clarified the participants right to withdraw from the project at any time. Also, since the staff wrote stories about children, the parents were informed of their right to redraw their approval of their childrens participation. Our main finding is the importance of staff facilitating childrens active participation in their own transitions, both regarding vertical and horizontal transitions. One implication is the importance of staff supporting children's contributions in each other's transitions. Another implication is the possibilities in the terms of "boundary objects" and "crossworkers" for experiencing continuity.

Vertical transitions, Horizontal transitions, Boundary objects, Crossworkers, Childrens participation

Children's memories of starting school: Building and sharing transitions capital

Sue Dockett (1), Maja Højslet Schurer (2), Bob Perry (1), (1) Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia, (2) Aalborg University, Denmark

This study explored how children's experiences and memories of starting school contributed to building transitions capital and influenced strategies employed in later educational transitions. Research has identified the importance of transitions capital (Dunlop, 2015) and how children utilise this in managing new educational contexts (Boyle, Greishaber & Petriwskyj, 2018). Children's ongoing relationship with school owes much to their transitions capital (Dunlop, 2021). This study draws on the significance of transition to school (OECD, 2017), respect for children's perspectives of their expectations and experiences (Dockett, Einarsdóttir, & Perry, 2019) and children's memories of transition experiences (Turunen, Dockett, & Perry, 2015). The study utilised a qualitative interpretive paradigm. Eleven Australian Year 4/5 children (10-11 years) participated in 2 conversational interviews (3 months apart) exploring memories of starting school, management strategies, and contributions to further educational transitions. Data analysis involved grounded theory and content analysis. University, system, and school permissions were obtained, as was parental consent for children's involvement. Informed consent was negotiated with children before each conversation, using specifically designed information booklets which outlined procedures for both participation and withdrawal from the study. Results identified the importance of relationships in building transitions capital and identified several effective transitions activities. Children reported that their transitions expertise was not often recognised or utilised. There are many potential opportunities to recognise, utilise, and enhance the transitions capital of older children in supporting the transition of new school entrants.

transitions, transitions capital, memories, children's perspectives, relationships

C 19

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Ioanna Palaologou, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Virtually Froebel: can online learning retain integrity to the principles of a Froebelian approach to education?

Sacha Powell (1), Jane Whinnett (1), Stella Louis (1), Carole Bloch (2), (1)The Froebel Trust, United Kingdom, (2) PRAESA, South Africa

Covid-19 restrictions caused online learning to become ubiquitous and indispensable (Kim 2020) and provoked Froebel Trust tutors to ask: can online learning remain faithful to a Froebelian approach to education? We aim to theorise evolving Froebelian pedagogy through analysis of debate occurring before, during and after adjustment from face-to-face to online learning in an established Froebel course for early childhood educators. Boichuk et al (2022) suggest that web-based technologies can advance early childhood educators' understanding of Froebelian concepts. Aliyyah et al's (2020) study of teachers' views about pandemic online learning propose four key areas for consideration: pedagogical strategies, challenges, support and motivation. Froebelian conceptualisations of education framed our study: personalised, active, relational, contextually-meaningful learning with real-life experience and play as an integrating mechanism (Bruce, 2021). Within an interpretive, case study design, we applied retrospective, thematic analysis of data from tutors' emails and online meetings, and a pilot course report (Bloch 2021) that included participants' views. All those whose views were included (anonymously) consented to be involved, aware of the implications and public dimension of reporting. Differing experiences and perspectives were treated with equal weight and respect. Tutors' experience, confidence and spontaneity were important. Pedagogical strategies evolved collaboratively with course participants, accommodating personal theories, mindful of educational principles. Localised constraints challenged the promise of improved accessibility but Froebelian principles became supportive and motivating factors, generating a sense of integrity to the pedagogy's philosophical foundations. Froebelian pedagogy can adapt for online courses if experienced tutors practise reflective, collaborative and conscious transformation.

Froebel, Online, Pedagogy, Principles, CPD

Play with Internet of Toys (IoToys) at home: Perspectives from England

Ioanna Palaologou, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

This paper examines whether the Internet of Toys (IoToys) (de)limits children's make-believe play and whether the functionality and manipulatives offered by the IoToys serve as motivational pleasure for children to engage in make-believe

play. Young children's extensive use of digital technology in households (e.g. Chaudron, 2015, Rideout, 2017), has led to two key lines of discourse: whether children's interactions with technology are play or not. Combining Piagetian and Vygotskian ideas of play as a unity of cognition and social context, we consider IoT toys as a motivational conduit for symbolic actions that leads to make-believe play. Interpretative paradigm and qualitative methodology was employed using non-participant narrative observations at home from 5 families. We complied with EECERA ethics. Considerations were given to the potential intrusive nature of the researcher being present in the lives of the families. Families were given the flexibility on what times they wanted the researcher in their homes, how long to stay and reserved the right to decide spaces the researcher could be during the visits. Observations were shared with the families who gave permission on which ones to be used. Data showed that children's interaction does not limit their play as they engage in imitation schemata and create imaginative situations within and beyond the intended pre-programmed functions of the IoT toy. There is a need to support parents and children to develop not only their learning skills at preschool but also at homes, whilst also maintaining an ethical approach to technology.

technologies, Internet of Toys (IoT), make-believe play, early childhood education, multimodal playscapes

Five years old children in a digital play. Does gender matter?

Anna Elísa Hreiðarsdóttir, University of Akureyri, Iceland

The study aimed to explore how five-year-old children, five boys and four girls participated in six workshops and learned to program robots in a creative and play-based setting in an Icelandic preschool. The research is a part of Horizon 2020 researcher network MakeY, Makerspaces in the early years: Enhancing digital literacy and creativity. The ideology is introduced in Blum-Ross, Kumpulainen, and Marsh (2019). As a theoretical framework, the notion of connected play is used (Marsh, 2017, 2019), that is, play that takes place among children and digital play objects. The paper also draws on Fleer's (2016) analyses of what characteristics digital play from a cultural-historical perspective. The study is a case study (Starman, 2013), a systematic investigation of one group of children (Hancock, Algozzine, and Lim, 2021). I collected data through video and audio recordings, photographs, participant observations notes, and interviews. I gathered informed consent from all concerned authorities, teachers, parents, and children. During each workshop, I discussed informed consent with children who could opt not to participate. Findings indicate that gender difference is not prominent in the children's interests, success, or skills. Children of both sexes showed skills in programming, and both groups had difficulties. However, on the other hand, boys used the space while girls tended to stay where the teacher placed the robots. Therefore, one could conclude that teachers should be alert and notice how gender can influence children's play and learning with the aim to develop equality and gender education in preschools.

Digital play, Creativity, Interactions in play, Digital skill, Gender differences

C 20

LEADERSHIP, DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Carina Hjelmér, Umea University, Sweden

Pedagogical leadership in Norwegian early childhood education – a scoping review

Inger Johanne Riis Tollnes (1), Veronika Sørensen (2), Lise Hannevig (2), Anne Lene Kristiansen (2), (1) Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge, Norway, (2) University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

We aimed to identify how the concept of pedagogical leadership is used and explored in peer-reviewed articles, PhD thesis and books within Norwegian ECEC literature from 2011 to 2021. We explore the types of study, the methods used, results and what the studies add to the concept of pedagogical leadership. Previous research has identified pedagogical leadership as supporting children's teaching and learning, leading staff and creating family and community partnerships (Douglass, 2019; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). In Norway, pedagogical leadership appears unclear, despite it is a common term (Bakken et al., 2021; Ødegård 2011). We build on Gotvassli (2019) who divides pedagogical leadership into: leading pedagogical work in line with holistic pedagogy, leading professional development towards a learning organization and leading the center in line with the educational values. This scoping review method is placed within an interpretive paradigm, using the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) methodological framework. The study was carried out in January-March 2022, and were analysed through a qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study does not contain any personal data, therefore approval by The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) was not needed. To ensure that the results are trustworthy and transparent we

followed the five key phases suggested by Arksey and O`Malley (2005). The preliminary thematic analysis showed various ways of understanding pedagogical leadership, the concept of pedagogical leadership is used with different meanings rather than empirically explored. This literature review will provide beneficial information when training both future and existing ECEC teachers.

Pedagogical leadership, Scoping review, Norway, Early childhood education and care centre, Professionalism

Professionalization of pedagogical leadership in ECEC in Finland

Pia Nordin, Mia Heikkilä, Mikaela Svanbäck-Laaksonen, Åbo Academy, Finland

New professional expectations are placed on leadership in ECEC in Finland. The aim of this on-going study is to analyze and deepen the understanding of how pedagogical leadership is realized, what challenges exist and how the development entails reinforcements in ECEC. The study is done from a perspective where collegial learning is central. Research show that leader's assignments are multifaceted and include both administrative and educational tasks (Siippainen et al., 2021). The areas of responsibility have increased and the framework differs between municipalities (Eskelinen et al., 2017). Few studies have been conducted. Pedagogical leadership can be divided into different interacting sub-factors (Fonsèn, 2014) and into different operational roles, where good ability to interact is central (Parrila, 2011). New knowledge is created in the context of others and collegial learning is an important part of the pedagogical leadership (Åsén Nordström, 2017). The study had a qualitative interpretive research paradigm with a type of on-going evaluation research as an interactive element. A total of 75 leaders have filled in questionnaires and have been interviewed. Participant-oriented research approach was used in the analysis. The data collection is performed by ÅAU and follows international research ethics. Participants are informed about data collection and have given written permission to participate. Research permits are obtained from the municipalities. This on-going study will increase the understanding of the pedagogical leadership and the position of collegial learning. The results aim to show how collegial learning can strengthen pedagogical leadership in Finland.

Pedagogical leadership, Collegial learning, Professionalization, National core curriculum for ECEC, On-going evaluation

Documentation and evaluation in Swedish preschool

Carina Hjelmér, Umea University, Sweden

This paper focuses on systematic documentation and evaluation used in preschool practice. It covers how children's learning and wellbeing are analysed, in relation to evaluation of the teaching. In previous research curricula and evaluation traditions in the Nordic countries are analysed as having goals to work towards for the teaching, and not goals for children to achieve. However, Swedish preschool teachers seem to be unsure about how to carry out what they think is contradictory goals; to analyse children's learning without assessment, in relation to the teaching that should be assessed (Vallberg Roth 2015). The analysis draws on Ball et al.'s (2012) framework about policy enactment. Of importance is how policy about documentation and evaluation is realised in practice by head and teacher's interpretation and translation processes. An interpretative and action research approach was applied to cover the documentation and evaluation processes, with observations and dialogs at teacher team meetings, short lectures from a research view, and interviews with teachers and head (Ronnerman 2012). A consent form and information sheet were provided to all participants. Pseudonyms have replaced their names, and they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The result shows, to work against goals composed as 'preschool should provide each child with conditions to develop...' opened up for both analyses of children's changed learning, and assessment of teaching. These findings suggest implications for how documentation and evaluation could improve the teaching to promote children's learning in correspondence with the goals in the curriculum.

Systematic documentation, Evaluation, Curriculum, Goal-oriented, Assessment

C 21

Negotiating issues in multi-ethnic ECEC settings

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Åsa Delblanc, Childhood Education Society, Malmö University, Sweden

Negotiating conflicts in play in a multi-ethnic early childhood setting: an interactional sociolinguistic analysis of embodied communication

Carmen Dalli (1), Anna Strycharz-Banaś (1), Miriam Meyerhoff (2), (1) Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, (2) All Souls College, United Kingdom

We explore how very young children used embodied communication to manage peer conflict during play in an early childhood (EC) setting. The paper draws on data from a study which investigated the structure of children's naturally occurring conflicts in a multi-ethnic EC setting and their impact on children's sense of belonging and wellbeing (Dalli, Strycharz-Banaś & Meyerhoff, 2020; Strycharz-Banaś, Dalli & Meyerhoff, 2020; 2021). We define conflict as an interactional event that starts when one child overtly opposes or resists the actions of another child (Shantz, 1987). Using Interactional sociolinguistics we analyse how children used embodied actions to negotiate a space, and identity, in their peer group. We probe meanings behind different interactional moves in conflict interactions that have a "stretchy temporality" connecting interactional moves to others in the past, and to existing power positions among peers. Using one hand-held and one stationary go-pro camera and two external microphones we gathered ethnographic, non-participant observations of children's naturally arising conflicts on two mornings a week over an 18-month period. Data were transcribed using ELAN software. Protocols for participant information and consents were translated as necessary into the different home languages of the children. Very young children are remarkably resourceful in dealing with conflict including through embodied communication. The variability of outcome from embodied communication is important and could be pedagogically useful alerting practitioners to the ways that it can play out for different children with different histories of interpersonal relations and power positions in the social order of an EC setting.

embodied communication, early peer conflict, peer interactions, relational power, early childhood education and care

A complex intervention to combat segregation of Roma with inclusive kindergartens – A case study from Budapest

Ivett Judit Kovács (1), Gábor Erőss (2), Éva Deák (3), (1) ELTE PPK, Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Hungary, (2) Józsefváros Municipality, Hungary, (3) Partners Hungary Foundation, Hungary

Discrimination against the Roma in all areas of life is visible in Hungary. The 8th district of Budapest has a very diverse population, but segregational tendencies still exist in public education. Present research follows the unfold of an exceptional innovation that aims to support inclusion in kindergartens. Exploring and disseminating strategies and good practices to combat segregation and support inclusion are of exquisite importance in this field (RECI, 2012; FRA, 2014; FXB Center, 2015). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon the fundamental principles of inclusive early childhood education (European Commission, 2019, UNICEF, 2011) as well as reflections on strategies to support desegregation (Fuller et al., 2015) and achievements in establishing integrated settings (Vancikova et al., 2017; Zabeli & Behluli, 2014). The qualitative exploratory research collects data via document analysis, interviews, and observation from different sources: leaders, teachers, parents, trainers, policymakers. Anonymity is ensured for all teachers and parents. The cooperation of civil organizations and the municipality aims to develop a sustainable model with three main pillars. (1) Based on comprehensive research, the project has created new social indicators (2) to redraw the educational zones to equally distribute the disadvantaged children. (3) Trainers and social workers support the improvement of the quality of services through capacity building of the kindergarten staff and introducing and implementing new services. The analysis of the challenges and solutions during the implementation project contributes to the strategy's effective future adaptation.

inclusive early childhood education, desegregation of Roma in kindergartens, CPD of early childhood educators, multicultural early childhood education, organizational development of kindergartens

Pedagogical Opportunities in a Diverse Early Childhood Education Practice

Åsa Delblanc, Childhood Education Society, Malmö University, Sweden

The aim of the study is to investigate different kind of "pedagogical opportunities" for language development and inclusion in Swedish multilingual and multicultural preschools. Pedagogical opportunities in the context of learning and knowing have been examined by Barab and Roth (2006) and Clarkin-Phillips and Carr (2012), who argue that possibilities to learn can be regarded as available, inviting and personalizing. Gibson's (1986) way of approaching action was used, where actors and the environment interact, and where opportunities (or obstacles), rather than merely the actions themselves, were in focus. Action research was used as a theoretical point of departure. The idea was that academia and the professional practice should come together in a joint knowledge process (Carr, 2006). The Research Circle was used as a method. In total, 8 different preschools participated including children and parents. The teachers have consented to participate and the children's parents have consented to their children's participation. The teachers who best knew the children were also the ones that observed the children as they tried out the different actions. If opportunities are too personalized, the pedagogical practice risks losing its focus on learning. For children who have difficult experiences of war, do not necessarily need more "tranquility". They too need exciting and challenging activities. Parents' experiences can be utilized in a much more organized way than is the case today. For parents' voices can be recorded so that the children can listen to their parents as they speak their first language.

Action Research, Affordances, Diversity, Parental cooperation, Practice

Chair: Chris Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, United Kingdom

Establishing and nurturing professional learning communities in Ireland: bottom-up or top-down, and does it matter?

Liz Kerrins, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

The Irish Government published a Workforce Plan (2022) for ECEC educators. It commits to establishing, supporting and funding professional learning communities (PLCs) nationally. Implementation is enabled by national ECEC systems change. Questions remain: What PLC model will be used?, Who sets PLC's knowledge agenda? And What is the purpose of the national approach? Kennedy's (2005; 2014) CPD framework, which analyses the purpose and potential outcomes of educational CPD along a spectrum of nine models ranging from transmission to transformation, with potentially increasing capacity for professional autonomy, is used to explore these questions. PLCs are pursued given research evidence (Peleman et al, 2018) that sustained interventions that are integrated in practice-pedagogical guidance and coaching in reflection groups-produce positive impacts. Research evidence suggests that collaborative learning in peer communities is effective for process quality development. Evidence to explore the questions is provided by a literature review on effective CPD in ECEC and an evaluation of an Irish community of practice. Bias and power relations were mitigated through externally commissioning the evaluation. Ethical considerations included GDPR compliance, informed consent and guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality. The research suggests that efforts to introduce a national top-down PLC model could have the unintended consequence of communicating to a professionalising sector that their purpose is accountability and sanctioned practice rather than developing educator agency. National policymakers should consider if the proposed national model of PLCs will deliver the large-scale quality improvement desired given Workforce Plan objectives suggest transmissive and transactional approaches to educator development.

CPD, Professional Learning Communities, Community of Practice, Ireland, Workforce

An ontological foundation for governance research

Maiju Paananen (1), Sue Grieshaber (2), (1) Tampere University, Finland, (2) La Trobe University, Australia

The presentation suggests an ontological foundation for examining governance in children's everyday lives. Increased focus on monitoring and steering the daily life of ECE settings can be identified. This has amplified regulation and external evaluation, and increased demands for documenting compliance (Bradbury 2011). Little research has attended to the type of governance that can support the best conditions for children to learn and feel belonging. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of assemblage provides a tool for understanding ECE governance, a social phenomenon that evades clear-cut explanations. By assemblage we mean a bundle of heterogeneous socio-material components such as material and physical entities and discourses which steer individuals and groups in particular directions. The study leaning on critical research paradigm utilizes 'thinking with theory' approach (Jackson & Mazzei 2013). We explore the performative force of governing assemblages by using ethnographic research methodology and data generated in a preschool in Finland and a long day care centre in Australia. Relational ethics approach was used (Ellis 2007). This meant for example situational consent (children) when generating ethnographic data in addition to written consent from the parents and educators. Findings show that an artefact used for governing (e.g., policy) has situationally varying implications depending on who is involved, other governing practices related to the situation, and the kinds of material elements involved. Taking socio-materiality as an ontological foundation helps to see how the density of socio-material elements of situations may intensify the possibility of governing instruments interrupting meaningful interaction between children and adults.

Policy, Governance, Assemblage, Ontology, Situational

Educational policies in response to diversity in Swedish preschools

Maria Papakosma, Department of Applied Educational Science, Sweden

The aim of this study is to examine Swedish policy-making as a response to increased cultural and linguistic diversity in preschools. A revised ECEC curriculum and several inspectorate reviews with a focus on quality and equity in preschools suggest contradictions and ambiguities around strategies and pedagogical approaches that need to be taken into consideration by policymakers (Persson 2020). These concern, among others, the areas of language development and promotion of multilingualism in the preschool (Björk-Willén 2018; Sandell Ring 2021). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon conceptual approaches to diversity and on Carol Bacchi's (2009) 'problem representation' approach. The analysis

draws on a review of policy texts and eight semi-structured interviews that were conducted with high-level policy actors. The data were analyzed through a thematic approach combined with an analysis of discourses (Alexiadou, 2001). Written information about the study was given to the participants. Issues of consent and anonymity of the procedure were communicated in advance according to the Swedish Research Council (SRC, 2017). The policy agenda identifies increased participation at preschools and language support in the Swedish language as core priorities. Yet, policy actors in different state agencies identify challenges in the implementation process that result in a lack of equity in preschools due to; (a) segregation (b) lack of trained teachers and (c) uneven distribution of resources. These findings suggest implications for describing and mapping the contemporary policy formation in relation to culturally and linguistically diverse Swedish preschools.

Educational policy, Preschool, Diversity, Equity, Language support

C 23

Refugee children in ECEC settings

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Elif Karsli-Calamak, University of South Carolina & Middle East Technical University, United States

School readiness and pre-primary learning experiences of children of refugee backgrounds: The mediating role of family socio-economic status

Laurent Gabriel Ndijuye, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

In 2010 about 300,000 refugees of Burundian and Somalian origin were naturalised as Tanzanian citizen. This study aimed at unpacking and document the relationship between learning experiences of children from this group and their family SES. While available empirical evidence has documented the extent to which parental beliefs (Kuch, 2016; Ndijuye, 2020) and home learning environments (Ndijuye & Rao, 2019) influences learning and development of children from this group, little is known about the role of family SES. This study was grounded in socio/historical theory which assumes that human mental processes are essentially linked to their cultural, historical and instructional settings. It used a mixed research design, by recruiting 400 pre-primary children, 100 parents, 16 teachers, and 8 school principals from in-settlement areas and self-settled naturalised citizens, urban and rural majority group. About 8 pre-primary schools were selected based on comparable MELE scores. Data were collected using interviews, parents' questionnaires, and Bracken's Basic Concept Scale-Receptive. Ethical issues and practices - obtained ethical clearance from relevant authorities, anonymity, consent and voluntary participation; were strictly observed. Findings indicated a strong relationship between family SES and children's school preparedness. However, while children of refugee groups were from relatively poor family SES, their school preparedness were comparable to those from richer urban nonrefugee families. Parental beliefs, expectations and levels of involvements impacted the differences in school readiness across groups. These findings broaden our understanding of various factors that influence children's development and learning in a context with limited educational and family resources.

School readiness, Naturalised children, Family socioeconomic status, Parental beliefs, Parental involvements

What Distinguishes Teachers Who Enact Equitable Teaching with Refugee Children?

Elif Karsli-Calamak (1), Feyza Tantekin Erden (2), Elif Naz Altaş (3), (1) University of South Carolina & Middle East Technical University, United States, (2) Middle East Technical University, Turkey, (3) TED University, Turkey

Turkey currently hosts the world's highest number of child refugees (UNICEF, 2018). This research aims to examine practices of a small group of teachers (n=11) teaching refugee children in Turkey. These teachers stood out distinctly as highly engaged in a previous project by voluntarily participating for two years and taking up leadership roles in adopting equitable practices studied in the project that included play-based pedagogies as part of it. We seek to understand what distinguishes these teachers and what practices manifest in their current classrooms with refugee children. While we have more knowledge about the challenges teachers face (Richardson et al., 2018; Solak&Çelik, 2018), we lack asset-based approaches and a nuanced understanding of the strengths and potentials of teachers working with refugee children and families (Alleksaht-Snyder et al., 2020). We draw on Fraser's (2009) social justice theory and utilize Nieto's (2014) redefinition of the dispositions and practices of highly qualified teachers. We locate this research within educational ethnographic traditions (Mills & Morton, 2013). Data collection includes classroom observations, interviews, and the collection of artifacts over a semester. Informed consent was sustained, and the teachers were informed about their right to withdraw at any time. Our emerging findings demonstrate that the teachers convey an openness to deconstruct their stereotypes; altruistic acts which manifest themselves in culturally embedded teaching practices; and an interest in creating space for play. This research further conceptualizes equitable and

play-based pedagogies of teachers working with children with displacement histories and in conditions lacking support and resources.

Refugee education, Equitable teaching, Early Childhood Teacher Education, Refugee Children, Teacher Practices

Methodological and ethical challenges in cross-language qualitative research: the role of interpreters

Björn Egilsson (1), Sue Dockett (2), Jóhanna Einarsdóttir (1), (1) University of Iceland, School of Education, Iceland, (2) Charles Sturt University, Australia

The aim of this study is to examine Swedish policy-making as a response to increased cultural and linguistic diversity in preschools. A revised ECEC curriculum and several inspectorate reviews with a focus on quality and equity in preschools suggest contradictions and ambiguities around strategies and pedagogical approaches that need to be taken into consideration by policymakers (Persson 2020). These concern, among others, the areas of language development and promotion of multilingualism in the preschool (Björk-Willén 2018; Sandell Ring 2021). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon conceptual approaches to diversity and on Carol Bacchi's (2009) 'problem representation' approach. The analysis draws on a review of policy texts and eight semi-structured interviews that were conducted with high-level policy actors. The data were analysed through a thematic approach combined with an analysis of discourses (Alexiadou, 2001). Written information about the study was given to the participants. Issues of consent and anonymity of the procedure were communicated in advance according to the Swedish Research Council (SRC, 2017). The policy agenda identifies increased participation at preschools and language support in the Swedish language as core priorities. Yet, policy actors in different state agencies identify challenges in the implementation process that result in a lack of equity in preschools due to; (a) segregation (b) lack of trained teachers and (c) uneven distribution of resources. These findings suggest implications for describing and mapping the contemporary policy formation in relation to culturally and linguistically diverse Swedish preschools.

Educational policy, Preschool, Diversity, Equity, Language support

C 24

TRANSITIONS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Ane Bjerre Odgaard, University College South Denmark, Denmark

Play hubs for children's nomadic settlements during transition from kindergarten to primary school: A design-based study to enrich transition theory and practice.

Ane Bjerre Odgaard (1), Helle Marie Skovbjerg (2), (1) University College South Denmark, Denmark, (2) Design School Kolding, Denmark

This paper aims at contributing to novel conceptualizations and practices regarding children's transition from kindergarten to primary school. Pedagogical professionals, children and researchers develop and examine play hubs for children's recurrent dwelling whilst traversing heterogeneous institutional settings. Current transition research contests developmental approaches to school-readiness in favor of ecological and sociocultural perspectives (Boyle, Grieshaber, & Petriwskyj, 2018). Studies claim social continuity should be pursued and institutional change less smoothed out (Dockett & Einarsdóttir, 2017; Odgaard, 2018). By approaching play as emergent practice (Skovbjerg, 2021), play hubs are designed to enable children's nomadic (Braidotti, 2011) settling during transitional change. The study asks how strands of play theory and transition research can be merged with sociocultural (Stetsenko, 2016) and new materialist (Braidotti, 2011) perspectives to create new theoretical framework and practices for transitions as nomadic taskscapes (Ingold, 1993). 95 kindergarten children, 20 school children, 20 professionals and 2 researchers participated in five (be-)weekly play hubs at school. Design-based methods and research through co-design (Jørgensen et al., 2021) were employed within childhood sociological and participationist paradigms. Informed consent was obtained from professionals and children's parents/caretakers. Children's in-situ assent (Dockett, 2011) was continuously ensured through dialogue and attentiveness. Findings show how professional learning communities co-design play hubs that constitute entangled taskscapes where play orders (Skovbjerg & Sand, 2022) enable social continuity and exchange, flexible participation, situated child agency. Practical implications arise from this strengthened focus on play as constitutive to transition as entangled taskscapes. This productively challenges infrastructures of institutional alignment and school-readiness.

Play, Transition, New materialism, Sociocultural theory, Design-based research

Manifestations of emotional well-being in infants during the transition from beginning to ECEC attendance

Kaira Neder (1), Natália Costa (2), Marisa Dentz (1), Katia Amorim (1), (1) University of São Paulo, Brazil, (2) Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway,

We investigate how group-oriented interactions may foster and facilitate infants' emotional well-being (Hannikäinen, 2015) and a sense of belonging (Harrison et. al., 2017) upon their transition to two Brazilian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Traditional coupling of bonding processes in ECEC and the dyadic adult-child model may be deemed as insufficient in valuing the rich multiplicity of relations that can arise within such a collective context (Ereky-Stevens et. al., 2018). Therefore, care/education for infants need to be promoted at a collective level (Rossetti-Ferreira et al., 2010; Winther-Lindqvist, 2020). We departed from a cultural-historical approach (Rossetti-Ferreira et. al., 2007). Data comprises video footage (Rossetti-Ferreira et. al., 2007) from case studies regarding initial attendance of two infants (6-10 months). Emotional well-being' manifestations (smiling, hand clapping, attentiveness and engagement) (Hannikäinen, 2015) at collective situations were selected and analyzed microgenetically (Góes, 2000). Approved by local Ethics Committee, all participants consented for use of images and fictional names were used. Infants' emotional well-being were high in collective-circle moments, a common cultural practice in Brazil. Educators employed singing, hand gestures or even puppets directed both to the overall children as well as the individual baby, alongside directioning infants closer to peers. The roles that such moments played out upon the focal-infants transition differed, considering babies' characteristics and trajectories, practices and conceptions from the institution. Institutional structuring of playful situations and culturally marked practices geared towards the group constitutes actions that expand the dyadic model and may function as a promoter of belonging and well-being.

infant, early childhood education and care, childcare, emotional well-being, transition

Why do we use Circle Making Activities? Exploring New Methodology for a Smooth Transition from ECEC to CSE

Yuji Fujimori (1), Yoshiko Shirakawa (2), Hideki Mogami (3), (1) Bunkyo, University, Japan, (2) Kyoritsu Women's University, Japan, (3) ChaCha Children & Co., Japan

In many kindergartens and schools, circle making activities (CMA) such as 'Circle-Time' are organised. It has been pointed out that such activities promote the development of children's social independence, self-expression and listening attitudes, etc. However, there has been few previous researches on why 'Circle' structure has such effects, from the viewpoint of a smooth transition in collaboration with teachers. This study aims to clarify the unique functions embedded in CMAs and to explore effective activities. Fujimori (EECERA 2019) found that CMA is a typical activity of ECEC and CSE, and used Cultural Study to understand its underlying effects. Shirakawa (EECERA 2019) noted that participation in teacher training has been effective in improving ECEC teachers' communication skills. Our study draws on the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin, Mindset (Dweck, 2017) and Play-Based Learning (Shiple, 2008). The study is based on Action Research in collaboration with teachers, including interviews and field observations. Participants were provided with a consent form prior to the start of the study and were also offered the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms were used in all presentations. The following issues are discussed and explored in this study: 1) A comparison of children's behaviour between CMAs and other structures. 2) The unique features of CMAs (e.g. turn-taking patterns of discussion). 3) Effective approaches to child improvement using CMA. This study contributes to the clarification of educational effects of the morphological features of children's activities, and developments of the methodology for a smooth transition from ECEC to CSE.

Smooth Transition from ECEC to CSE, Circle Making Activities, Action Research in collaboration with teachers, Educational effects of the morphological features of children's activities, Play-Based Learning

C 25

VALUES DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTITIONER CPD

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Faye Stanley, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Values in early years practice; the importance of participatory professional development.

Faye Stanley (1), Helen Lyndon (2), (1) University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom, (2) CREC, United Kingdom

Two doctoral research projects are explored with a focus on participatory and reflective professional development. A critical lens on CPD seeks to support practice development through an isomorphic approach. Practitioners' underlying values should be scrutinised through dialogic critical reflection; "for young children to learn and flourish... it is imperative that practitioners make well informed and thoughtful decisions about the experiences they provide (Wild et al., 2018:2). This research is

underpinned by sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978); both children, and the adults leading education, learn through social engagement. Praxeology (Pascal and Bertram, 2012) underpins both studies and combines a theoretical lens with practice development holding ethical considerations central. In the first thesis (Stanley, 2021) polyvocal ethnography was utilised to capture day-in-the-life-of stories of two teachers and their narrative reflections on their own and each other's practice. The second thesis (Lyndon, 2021) utilised pedagogic mediation to work with practitioners in developing ways to better listen to the children. Both focus on natural settings, things as they happen and situations as they are constructed (Woods, 2006). The EECERA ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout with consideration for mitigating researcher power, consent, anonymity and assent for children. Both studies sought to ensure value for both participants and the sector. The studies highlighted the importance of time spent exploring values and the potential for this to impact on practice. A participatory approach ensures the practitioners are invested in setting development and their context is reflected. Both projects question a standardised approach to professional development.

Values, Professional development, Reflective practice, Pedagogic mediation, Role of the adult in early years

Educational Quality in Daycare (EQD): Supporting cultures of reflection within a Danish continuous professional development (CPD) initiative for 0-2 year olds.

Bente Jensen, Aarhus University, Denmark

The project explores learning processes in CPD, aimed at mobilizing professional learning communities (PLC) by working with the Vygotsky-inspired (Vygotsky, 1978) Abecedarian Approach (Ramey, Sparling, & Ramey, 2012) to children's play, well-being and development. Research shows CPD can improve high quality ECEC (Waters & Payler, 2015), influencing children's play, well-being and development (Jensen & Rasmussen, 2018). Abecedarian offers a coherent approach to strengthening adult-child interactions. How adult learning theories can qualify the design of CPD initiatives that support PLC's requires greater attention (Schachter, 2015). The study operationalizes alternatives to expert-driven instruction (Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008). CPD shifts towards involving participants in knowledge construction (Cochran-Smith & Lytie, 1999, Hadley et al, 2015) by investigating their own practices (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2012). The study adopts a constructivist notion of PD studying practitioners' everyday practices, followed through multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) including interview and observation data. The project secured informed consent from participants and written assurances of anonymity were confirmed. Abecedarian is added to standard day-care services, presenting no ethical concerns regarding children involved. Preliminary findings suggest facilitating cultures of reflection can support participants' engagement in CPD, and resources from EQD. A frame is established for renewed considerations of how Abecedarian-inspired practices with interaction deepen children's involvement, learning and well-being. Observations show this encourages experimentation with practices and routine tasks. This shows how CPD can improve ECEC quality and may influence future policy and practices by emphasizing participant-driven approaches. The project is carried out in 8 municipalities with support from TrykFonden 2019-2023.

Cultures of reflection, Practice-based continuous professional development (CPD), Professional learning communities (PLC), Abecedarian interactive approach, Children's learning, play and well-being

Phenomenology of value development through play

Christian Wiesner, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria

This presentation focuses on phenomena of development to enable the promotion of values through pedagogical action and play in early childhood education. The presented is based on previous research (Wiesner, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, Wiesner & Gebauer, 2022) regarding the connection of attachment theory and value aspiration. The presentation provides a framework for clarifying values (Frankl, 1947; Schwartz et al., 2012; Wiesner, 2020) in relation to stages of development (Dunst et al., 2006; Lewis, 2007; Bischof-Köhler, 2010) to show a model for describing and promoting values depending on the levels of development in connection with the attachment theory (Crittenden, 2008). In this context, play is considered the central form of value acquisition, from which the importance of focusing on the child's play is derived. Within the framework of a phenomenological research paradigm (Husserl, 1977; Rombach 1987; Danner, 1994), the phenomena of development in early childhood education were examined and basic phenomena were derived that should be considered in relation to child value development. These basic phenomena are presented and each is linked to essential stages of child development, the formations of attachment theory, and the possibility of promoting values. The phenomenological analysis is based on other author's published data sets in professional publications, which are critically analyzed. The results are discussed in terms of the importance of values education in relation to attachment theory, theory of mind, empathy skills, development of emotions, early literacy-related skills and play. Furthermore, implications for the play and for teacher education and training can be derived.

value education, attachment theory, development of emotions, development of empathy, value of play

Symposium Set D

10:50 - 12:10, Thursday 25th August 2022

D 1

PLAYFUL INTERACTIONS AND DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Caron Carter, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

When children play with their food: Analysing sensory play as a social event during Swedish preschool lunches

Sally Wiggins, Annerose Willemsen, Jakob Cromdal, Linköping University, Sweden

The research aims to explicate the interactional practices of children playing with food during preschool lunches in Sweden. Engaging in sensory play has been shown to encourage young children to taste new food (Coulthard & Sealy, 2017; Reverdy et al, 2008), though little is known about how playing with food during mealtimes in early childhood education is initiated, who is involved, and what are the affordances of these practices. The theoretical framework for this project, grounded in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) and discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter, 1992), conceptualises sensory play as a social event. The combination of these approaches enables an examination of how particular ways of handling food are treated as play by participants and their interactional consequences. The research is situated within a qualitative paradigm using video-recordings from over 50 lunches in four preschools across Sweden. The analytical approaches used are discursive psychology and multimodal interaction analysis. Written informed consent was obtained from preschool teachers and parents, and the project has full ethical approval at national level. Pseudonyms and digital masking have been used to protect participant identities in presentations and publications. Preliminary findings demonstrate that sensory play is a collaborative rather than an individual practice and provides for the enjoyment of food and social participation during lunches. The findings suggest implications for teachers' management of playing with food during preschool meals and offers an empirical grounding for development of best practice in ECE mealtimes.

discursive psychology, food, multimodal interaction, preschool meals, sensory play

Supporting Young Children's friendships: the Facilitating Role of the Lunchtime Welfare Supervisor

Caron Carter, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

The aim of this study was to examine the role of the Lunchtime Welfare Supervisor (LWS) in supporting children's friendships. Friendship is of paramount importance to children's holistic well-being and development (Unicef, 2011; Hedges & Cooper, 2017). Friendship often runs smoothly, but issues can be unsettling particularly after the lunchtime break. Research was carried out in the 1990s into the role of LWS (Sharp, 1994; Fell, 1994). However, there has been no further research on LWS, and nothing specifically on young children's friendship. Over the last thirty years traditional discourses on childhood have been challenged (United Nations, 1989). This research positions children as competent and capable (Lancaster, 2010) of having agency to manage their own friendships (Corsaro, 2015; Alvarez-Miranda, 2019). A case study approach was conducted involving semi-structured interviews with five LWS and a Headteacher (Yin, 2019). The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Consent was sought from participants through a consent form and information sheet. The use of pseudonyms ensured anonymity and confidentiality. All participants were given the right to withdraw at any time. The findings indicate that the LWS were utilising strategies for children to be agentic when managing their friendships and to provide adult bespoke support. This research provides original insights for practice including, a 'friendship toolkit' of strategies used by the LWS and suggestions for 'children's friendship agency'.

Lunchtime welfare supervisors, young children, friendships, friendship toolkit, children's friendship agency

Teaching master students with playful methodologies

Tove Lafton (1), Nina Odegard (2), (1) Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway, (2) University of South Eastern Norway, Norway

The aim of this presentation is to examine what implications playful collaborative practices can have to produce knowledge in the master's program. Teaching at a master level in early childhood education traditionally focuses on abstract, theoretical knowledge and has less focus on playful methodologies. Working with the notion of materiality through intra-acting with recycling materials and digital tools can however produce affects and knowledge that arises in between actors such as humans, materials, digital tools, and various materialities (Barad, 2007). How students' intra-actions produce diffractive breaks are investigated through the concept interference and difference (Barad, 2007, Haraway, 2018). Our theoretical framework draws on posthuman thinking, embodied knowledge that can be translated between different arenas (Latour, 2006) and materiality

(Barad, 2007). The project is a qualitative study, attempting at interweaving bodies, places, and artefacts in narrative research (Tamboukou 2015). Our empirical material is a collection of narratives written by the students participating in the event, pictures from the event, evaluation of the course and didactical plans. Ethical considerations regarding ownership and confidentiality have been addressed, and participation was voluntary. Ethical approval was obtained from National Commission for Data Protection, Ethical guidelines for Research at the University and students' written consent, and all data coded and anonymized. How sharing of memories and embodied knowledge are woven together into knowledge will be discussed in light of how collaborative practices can emerge in ECEC. Playful collaborative practices can have implications for production of knowledge moving beyond traditional understanding of academic knowledge.

embodied knowledge, playful methodologies, higher education, collaborative material practices, recycling materials

D 2

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND MATHEMATICAL LEARNING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Andreas Ebbelind, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Six-year-olds create digital animations to reinforce mathematical problem solving

Andreas Ebbelind (1), Hanna Palmér (1), Marina Wernholm (1), Emelie Patron (1), Kristina Danielsson (2), (1) Linnaeus University, Sweden, (2) Stockholm University, Sweden

The aim is to investigate how digital play with animations may contribute to children's (six-year-olds) learning of combinatorics, in this case how three toy bears can be arranged in a row on a sofa (i.e. permutations for $n = 3$). English (2005) showed that a well-organised and meaningful context facilitates young children's possibilities to explore combinatorial situations. This study builds on Palmér & van Bommel (2020) who investigated the role of and connection between systematization, representation and digital artefacts in children's work with combinatorial tasks. Their study showed that the use of digital artefacts may enhance children's understanding of combinatorial problems. This study builds on designs for learning (Kress & Selander 2010), including multimodal theories. A central model is the Learning Design Sequence (LDS) model. The study is qualitative, combining the LDS model with multimodal analysis. Activities, in three different classrooms, where the children worked in pairs with combinatoric tasks with paper/pens and with creating digital animations were video documented. Video-documentations (150 minutes) from three pairs of children were analysed qualitatively according to the LDS model focusing on the children's understanding of the mathematical content. Swedish ethical regulations were followed. All teachers, children, and guardians consented to participate. Especially children's non-verbal communication was considered during video documentation. Creating digital animations enhanced the children's understanding of combinatorics. The digital animations were more systematic with more permutations than the paper and pencil documentation. The study contributes with implications for how digital play with animations can be integrated in early mathematics education.

Digital play, Early mathematics, Combinatorics, Animations, Learning design sequence

Validation of a tool to assess mathematical skills with board games in early years

Liliana Silva (1), Andrea Maffia (2), (1) University of Messina, Italy, (2) University of Pavia, Italy

The presented exploratory research aims at validating an assessment tool of mathematical skills in kindergarten. Tools for the assessment of mathematical abilities have been developed recently by researchers, but less is known about if and how teachers use such tools (Cerezci, 2020). While mathematics is usually not addressed as a subject in kindergarten, scientific literature has largely shown that counting skills develop between 3 and 6 years old. Van de Rijt and Van Luit (1998) distinguish three stages: using counting words (cardinal/ordinal aspects of counting and acoustic counting), structured counting (counting synchronously, pointing to objects), and resultative counting (the last word mentioned is the total, counting without pointing). Also, categorization skills evolve, moving from categorization based only on perceptual clues to other considerations (Gelman & Meyer, 2010). The authors designed an assessment rubric with reference to the indicators by Van de Rijt and Van Luit (1998), and Gelman and Meyer (2010). The validation was carried out through a double level of revision: a first, carried out by two researchers in mathematics education, and a second, in which 20 kindergarten teachers assessed the game-play activity of three children shown in videos. Videos are made with parental consent according to European GDPR. Children's faces are never captured. Experts' feedback on the rubric led to slight modifications to the assessment tool. The resulting version has been proposed to kindergarten teachers. Results show small variability among teachers in the use of the rubric. The rubric appears promising as an assessment tool in kindergarten.

assessment, board game, mathematics, playful learning, rubric

"Distance Educational Links" for inclusion in early childhood: play and technologies at school. An Italian experience

Federica Baroni, Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Italy, Ilaria Folci, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

In response to the pandemic that involved early childhood education from 2020 to 2022, the Commission for Education and Instruction 0-6 in Italy elaborated the pedagogical guidelines on "Distance Educational Links" (LEAD). We describe an experience in the Audiofonetica inclusive school in Brescia (16% disabilities, many deaf): we studied the actions of educators according to this approach to verify its impact on children 0-6 years, families and the educational community. The importance of play in childhood is recognised and it's known that the teacher-child relationships provide a critical caregiving context for children's socioemotional development (Mortensen & Barnett, 2015): the research is based on Differentiated Instruction framework (Tomlinson, 1999) to design inclusive contexts and assumes that multimedia technologies can support the childhood's creativity (Resnick, 2002: 37). The study was conducted according to the research-action model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982) to enhance teachers' practice and implicit knowledge (Mortari & Ghirotto, 2019:150). Post-experience interviews with educators and questionnaires to 55 parents allowed us to investigate perceptions and the impact of actions on the context. The qualitative analysis of documents and materials produced during the period of distance or blended learning completes the research. Questionnaires anonymous; interviews on a voluntary basis. The results show the centrality of the relationship, the importance of circular communication, the changing role of the family, especially in inclusive education. These findings suggest implications for the design of services in the post-covid era, including how to use technology in early childhood, also in relation to the experience of play.

Distance learning, Technologies, Inclusion, Affective bonding, Experience

D 3

CREATIVITY AND AFFORDANCES IN PLAY SPACES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Mandy Geddis-Capel, University of Mount Union, United States

The idea of affordances revisited

Christine Seehuus (1), Cato Tandberg (2), (1) Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway, (2) Inland Norway University of Applied Science, Campus Hamar, Norway

This study is a theoretical study aiming to revisit the term affordance and put affordance at a glance more in line with what we think is the idea behind the Gibson & Gibson term (Gibson & Gibson, 1955). According to Gibson (2000) affordances are discovered by exploration, a complicated process where action in itself is an event-stimuli situation, which gives new information about changes caused by the event and information about what the organism is doing. The theoretical framework will be build on the concept of affordance (ie Gibson 1976, 2000, 2003 etc); features experienced due to functional significance (Heft, 1989), subjected to constant transformation and sociocultural change ensuring new entities with novel affordances introduced into the culture (Glăveanu, 2012). The study is theoretical, using systematic searches of peer reviewed papers and national curricula as a theoretical platform for understanding the term affordance and the role in play, creativity and learning. Selected studies are compared and summarized on the basis of the author's experience, existing theories and models. Results are based on a qualitative rather than a quantitative level. As the interaction of the human animal and the environment is a series of exploration events is important not to miss out on the idea that learning is a creative cognitive process. It is through exploration that learning occurs, conclusions are drawn, choices are validated, resolution of problems are solved. We need to understand how this term can be valid and be of value in play, creativity and learning.

Affordance, Mind-body divide, Learning as creative process, Agency, Transformation

A definition of creative play and the role of the teacher in supporting children's creativity

Evi Loizou, Eleni Loizou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

This study aims to describe the role of the teacher in enhancing children's creativity, within the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) framework. Play as a cultural activity (Vygotsky,1978; Elkonin,1972) includes children's interaction with peers, teachers, tools, materials and imagination to support their play actions and enhance their learning (Van Oers,2003). The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) suggests that children during play can negotiate different rules (social, technical, conceptual, strategic), exhibiting their level of involvement which is encompassed with the freedom to alter that participation in different ways (Van Oers, 2003, 2013, 2009). This is a qualitative research (Creswell, 2007) and data collected through video

recordings from the 'Toy Factory' play area and reflective journal. Play episodes were analysed in a two – level coding according to specific rules (e.g.technical) and creativity elements (e.g., flexibility). Children's agreement for participation by their parents and their anonymity had to be ensured. Inform letters and consent forms with a withdraw option were signed and pseudonyms are used. Creative play underpinned by the CHAT framework is seen as a cultural activity in which children and teachers participate in the process of creativity in the context of the Arts. Teacher as a mediator, scaffolds children's creative play, using cultural tools (e.g., questions) operating in the realm of technical, strategic and conceptual rules while endorsing creativity elements (e.g. supporting divergent thinking). This study suggests corresponding rules that were seen through the teacher's actions and were handed to children to enhance their creative play experiences thus framing their Zone of Proximal Creative Development.

Creative play, CHAT theory, Arts, Creativity, Teacher's role

Lights, Camera, Teach: Building engaged play through theater-based pedagogy

Mandy Geddis-Capel (1), Kevin Kern (1), Natalie Kern (2), (1) University of Mount Union, United States, (2) Alliance City Schools, United States

This study aims to present how the combination of actor's workshops and teacher's training contributes to engaged learning and active play for young children. The relationship to this work is underpinned by historical research in peer-reviewed journals and articles on teaching as acting (Fuller, 1973), teaching as performance (Yoder, 1974), and theater and child's play (Schmitt, 1981). Theoretically, this work is predicated on ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the mesosystem (Louis, 2018) of how the coaction between educators and children can influence play. This framework was chosen to best understand the interplay between theater, pedagogy, and play and its association to the learning community. Supported by an interpretative and interdisciplinary research paradigm this study explored the crossover between acting and teaching (Griggs, 2001), and to what degree that teaching pedagogy and the scaffolding of play is supported by actor's training. The qualitative methods used literature analysis to conduct a semi-systematic review. The ethical considerations recognize secondary sources and the use of interdisciplinary works to advance the understanding of this research. Teaching Pedagogy is a critical component of teacher training and serves as an important reason for this study. Preliminary findings reveal that teaching as acting and creative dramatics enhancing childhood play is a limited area of research, but a qualified one that can be recognized as an element of teacher pedagogical training in early childhood education. Implications will be drawn to how this literature review can directly impact teacher training to support active child's play and engaged learning.

Play, Actor's Training, Imagination, Ideation, Respectful Classroom Communities

D 4

PLAY AND TRANSITIONS FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO SCHOOL

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Jóhanna Einarsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

Transitions from early years to primary school – an important chapter in the child's story.

Aoife Ní Mhaoláin, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland

The aim of the research is to examine the transfer of pupil information from early years settings to junior infant classrooms and assess if teachers find current transition arrangements satisfactory. This presentation draws on research on curriculum and play-based pedagogy in the early years (Hayes & O'Neill, 2017) and transition practices (Ring, 2016, 2018). INTO research in this area (2020) was suspended due to the pandemic but a joint project is underway in collaboration with Early Childhood Ireland. International research states that skills identified by teachers as being important to children starting formal school are social skills, independence, language skills, and the ability to listen and concentrate (Dockett & Perry, 2004, 2005; Peters, 2007). Organised communication between early years settings and primary schools enables relevant information sharing, helping facilitate smooth transitions. A mixed-methods approach was used including document analysis and surveys. Five primary schools were approached to participate in this study and principals and teachers engaged with the research. Feeder pre-schools in the areas were identified and practitioners in these settings completed a similar version of the survey tailored to suit their context. A consent form and information sheet was provided to all participants. Names of participants were replaced with pseudonyms and individuals were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Structured, professional discourse and interaction with pre-school practitioners is essential to allow teachers prepare for incoming pupils. Teachers must be formally supported in managing the transition of pupils from early years settings to primary school.

The primary school as a playful space. Fostering playful learning and teaching.

Francesca Berti, Free University of Bolzano/Bozen, Italy

The paper aims to explore the primary school as a playful space, thus overcoming the separation between the kindergarten, as the place of play, and the primary school, as the one of learning (Dewey 1938). Literature has shown that games and playful activities in the primary school set in motion bodily, emotional, social and cognitive dynamics (Petillon 2016, pp.20-35). Yet, there is an ongoing tension between playing and learning, rooted in the very idea of educational games, i.e. games played for the purpose of learning, which emerged in the 18th century, when play was no longer considered a pastime, but a waste of time (Berti 2021). The study is based on Play-based Learning (Staccioli, 2004, Briggs & Hansen 2012) and on Bateson's concept of "play frame", indicating the interactions in place among actors, spaces and materials (Bateson 1979). A qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2010) and a participatory perspective according to the Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss 2011), was conducted on 16 interviews with children, age 6-10. The research followed the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) Ethic Guidelines, i.e. parents and children were informed; interviews could be interrupted; data pseudonymised and then anonymised. Audio data deleted. It emerges that children's perceptions of the activities do not distinguish learning activities from the play ones. Their descriptions recall Dewey's consideration of the learning process: the encounter between "mental playfulness and seriousness" (Skilbeck 2017). The paper suggests further reflection is required on the teachers' "playful attitude" and their playful approaches to everyday school situations (Petillon 2016).

Play-based Learning, Game-based Learning, Play frame, Playful attitude, Participation

Children's experiences of transitions from preschool to school

Jóhanna Einarisdóttir, Sara Ólafsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of Icelandic children's experiences in transitions from preschool to primary school and their views on the similarities and differences between these institutions. Research has identified starting school as a major milestone in children's lives that often has implications for their learning and development (Eckert et al., 2008; Dockett et al., 2019). The study draws upon Childhood studies which place emphasis on the strengths and competencies of children to actively influence their social settings. Children are regarded as contributing members of society, experts on their own lives with opinions that should be listened to (Honig, 2009; Jenks, 2004). A preliminary study involved six children, aged 6 to 8 years. Data were constructed through peer interviews. Two children participated in each interview which were constructed as conversations between the children and the researcher. The children were provided with art materials which they worked on during the interviews. The conversations were simultaneously audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The study was explained to the parents who gave their informed consent. Consent was also negotiated with the children. They were given the opportunity to withdraw. EECERA ethical guidelines were followed. The preliminary findings indicate the importance of children's social relations with other children and adults during transitions as well as their relationship with the material environment. The findings suggest implications for educators and policymakers to focus on supporting children during the time of transition and emphasize continuity between the school levels.

transitions, childhood studies, continuity, children's perspectives, relations

D 5

AGENCY, CHILD PARTICIPATION AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Sílvia Barros, Instituto Politécnico do Porto, Escola Superior de Educação, inED, Portugal

Toddlers' playful acts of agency: Re-framing young children's autonomy.

Bryndis Gunnarsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this study is to examine how toddlers use playful and humorous acts to explore, navigate, and co-construct the boundaries of their social world in an ECEC setting. Other research reveals the importance of the peer group to toddlers and their interest in influencing the environment they find themselves in (e.g., Corsaro, 2017; Løkken, 2000; Cekaite & Mondada, 2021; Rutanen, 2007; Bateman, 2020; Pálmadóttir, 2017). This study sits within the paradigm of constructionism and ethnomethodology, examining how, through every-day actions, toddlers co-construct their social world with their peers. The study is a single-case study conducted in an ECEC setting in Iceland. Through video recordings, social interactions of four case-

study participants were observed, using conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) to examine the strategies they use to interact. When doing research with young children, there are several ethical considerations to keep in mind, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and power differences (Einarsdóttir, (2007). All gatekeepers gave their informed consent and throughout the data collection period, assent was enlisted from the participating children. The findings suggest that toddlers are competent in managing the organisation of their own social worlds through playful and humorous strategies that they co-produce with their peers. The possible implications are an increased understanding of the importance of the peer group to toddlers and the competent ways they act as social agents. Teachers with this understanding will be more able to provide the environment and routines that supports peer interactions, therefore enhancing quality provision.

Toddlers, Social interactions, Autonomy, The peer group, Agency

Teachers' Perceptions on Practices Promoting Child Participation in Early Childhood Education and Care across four European Countries

Sílvia Barros (1), Vera Coelho (2), Olga Wysłowska (3), Efthymia Penderi (4), Helena Taelman (5), Sara Araújo (1), Nadine Correia (6), Urszula Markowska-Manista (3), Konstantinos Petrogiannis (7), Anneleen Boderé (5), Manuela Pessanha (1), Cecília Aguiar (6), (1) Instituto Politécnico do Porto, Escola Superior de Educação, inED, Portugal, (2) Universidade da Maia, Portugal, (3) University of Warsaw, Poland, (4) Democritus University of Thrace, Greece, (5) ODISEE University College vzw, Belgium, (6) ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, CIS-IUL, Portugal, (7) University of West Attica, Greece

This study examined teachers' perceptions about their participation practices in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and about facilitators and constraints influencing child participation. Children's right to participate in ECEC is essential for a democratic society and may be considered an indicator of ECEC quality (Sheridan, 2007). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that children have the right to participate in matters affecting them, expressing their views freely, and having those views respected and considered. Lundy (2007) proposes a model centered in child participation, considering four dimensions: space, voice, audience, and influence. Considering ECEC teachers' crucial role in promoting child participation over time and across daily events, from play, routine and care to structured activities, this qualitative study presents teachers' perceptions shared during one focus groups in each of the following countries: Greece (N=6 ECEC teachers), Poland (N=4), Portugal (N=10) and Belgium (N=5). Inductive and deductive analysis procedures were conducted. Project procedures were approved by an Ethics Committee; informed consents were obtained. No risks associated with participation were identified. The four dimensions of Lundy Model were reflected in practices reported by teachers in all countries, some of which specifically focused on play, providing a new insight through the lens of participation. Facilitators and constraints were conceptualized in an ecological perspective, from classroom, to center and community levels. Results contribute to inform participation practices in ECEC across Europe, and to enlighten policy discussions regarding contextual support for ensuring children's participation rights.

Participation, Children's rights, Child-centred practices, Contextual support, Teacher's perspectives

Epistemic cognition and executive functioning in early childhood

Sue Walker (1), Jo Lunn (1), Laura Scholes(2), (1) Queensland University of Technology, Australia, (2) Australian Catholic University, Australia

The project explored the relationship between epistemic cognition (EC) and cognitive flexibility with respect to social inclusion/exclusion in ECEC. Research (Brownlee et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2020) has shown that epistemic cognition can contribute positively towards social inclusion. We argue that, to engage in reasoning about inclusion/exclusion, children need to evaluate competing perspectives and be cognitively flexible. Cognitive flexibility is an Executive function (EF). EC refers to thinking about the nature of knowledge and knowing (Sandoval et al., 2016). EC is important in social inclusion. Social reasoning requires a capacity to evaluate competing perspectives, it may also require children to be cognitively flexible. We propose that the development of EF is related to young children's EC by facilitating children's ability to take different perspectives. A quantitative paradigm and methodology were used. Eighty-two 3-5-year-old children participated. Children's cognitive flexibility was assessed through three EF tasks. Children's EC was assessed through a pictorial and interview methodology. Parents consented for their children to participate. Children also provided assent. Children's assent was confirmed when data were collected. Results indicated that children's EF and EC as were not related. There are several possible explanations for this finding. A critical issue for future researchers will be the difficulties associated with measuring EC in early childhood. Our study highlights that language-based assessments are problematic. Using a non-language-based method may assist, but in this study, perhaps owing to the young age of the children, the drawings did not contribute information beyond the qualitative interviews.

Epistemic cognition, Executive Function, Cognitive flexibility, Social inclusion, Measurement in early childhood

Chair: Andy Schieler, University of Applied Science, Germany

Children's play during COVID-19: Shifts, challenges and hopes

Gizem Silistire, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

This paper, as a part of ongoing PhD research, aims to explore how early learning and childcare (ELC) settings in Scotland are shaped during the pandemic and how changes impact the construction of childhoods, as well as children's play. As part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many practices have been implemented in ELC settings that impact children's play. In times of crisis, play can function to normalise children's lives (IPA, 2017), and is essential both to ensure children's wellbeing and to protect their rights (Play Scotland, 2021). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon 'childhood studies' (Tisdall, 2012; Punch, 2019), accept children as active and constructive members of society (Prout & James, 1997; Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup, 2009). Play is accepted as a way for children to position themselves, form social relations, engage with discourses (Rosen, 2017). The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretative research paradigm. 35 online semi-structured interviews were conducted with early years practitioners and stakeholders. The published government documents were analysed through a thematic approach. The information sheet and consent forms were provided to participants. Their informed consents were re-negotiated during the interviews. The emerging findings demonstrate that the concept of COVID-19 and limitations associated with it seem to have permeated everyday lives of children and children have been dealing with the changes through everyday acts and play. Outdoor play was given prominence and became central in many ELC settings, in line with government guidance. These findings suggest understanding the implications for how current policies around the pandemic are reflected in practice and possible implications for future.

children's play, COVID-19, constructions of childhoods, structures in settings, COVID restrictions

The perspective of daycare professionals on changes of play contexts based on the pandemic measures

Andy Schieler, Lara Schindler, University of Applied Science, Germany

On behalf of the ministry of education in Rhineland-Palatinate (Germany) we implemented a study about the effects of the pandemic measures on the daily pedagogical work. Other studies aimed at the occurrence of infection (DJI/RKI 2021, Forster et al. 2022) or loads of families (Cohen et al. 2020). In contrast, we focussed on the interaction with children, the pedagogical setting and digitalization to get information about how the play contexts were sculpted by the pandemic measures. SKA The study was conducted within a quantitative research paradigm (Little 2013). Questionnaires were filled out online by 1.415 pedagogical professionals of 380 kindergartens in 36 of 41 districts in Rhineland-Palatinate. The analyses consisted of descriptive and inferential statistics. The online-survey followed the university's ethical guidelines and was anonymous, thus, a tracing of participants' personal information is not possible. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the survey at any time. The results show that for some issues children's play context did not shape sustainably due to the pandemic measures (e.g., group setting, participation). However, the communication with children, team members and parents was affected by digital interactions and the pedagogical focus was more on care than education. These findings implicate how structures and interactions changed based on the pandemic and, thus, how play contexts of children changed.

early childhood education, play contexts, pandemic measures, communication and digitalization, online-survey

Strategies to mitigate the adverse impact of COVID-19 on children under-5 in Wales: A Delphi Study

Cathryn Knight, Jacky Tyrie, Margarida Borrás, Swansea University, United Kingdom

This research addressed the question: "What do experts believe are the most effective strategies to mitigate the adverse impact of COVID-19 on children under-5?" The COVID-19 pandemic led to early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting closures internationally. In Wales, roughly ¼ of children under-5 were impacted by the closure of ECEC settings. While literature is emerging on the impact of the pandemic (Amorim et al. 2022; Clarke, 2021; Davies et al. 2021; Egan et al. 2021; EEF, 2020; Murray, 2020; RCPH, 2020; WHO, 2020), little research has explored potential strategies to mitigate these adverse impacts (OECD, 2020). The research question was answered using the Delphi methodology. The Delphi method aims to support group decision making by seeking expert opinions across a number of surveys (Delbecq, VandeVen & Gustafson, 1975). Three consecutive surveys were distributed to expert participants in ECEC. Alongside the traditional Delphi study a one-off survey

was also launched for ECEC practitioners in Wales. Ethical approval for this research was granted via the Swansea University ethics committee. Important to this research was maintaining the anonymity of participants. In order to avoid any participant becoming identifiable collective results are reported, however, individual responses are not detailed. The dominant theme within the strategies suggested was the importance of high-quality play experiences. The importance of universal provision and quality support for teachers and families was also highlighted. This research, funded by the Welsh Government, provides directions for policy and practice to mitigate the adverse impact of COVID-19.

COVID-19, Early Childhood Education and Care, Delphi, Policy and practice, Play

D 7

THE ROLE AND VALUE OF TOY LIBRARIES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Ioanna Palaologou, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Three different ways of inhabiting toy-libraries. An analysis of the immersive experiences of toy-librarians, children and their parents

Stéphanie Rubi (1), Yannick Hernandez (2), Stéphanie Constans (3), Corinne Ponce (4), Véronique Rouyer (4), (1) Université de Paris - CERLIS (CNRS), France, (2) Université Bordeaux Montaigne - PASSAGES (CNRS), France, (3) Université Rennes & - LabPsy, France, (4) Université de Bordeaux – LabPsy, France

This four-year inquiry aims at understanding how toy-librarians, kids and their parents inhabit toy-libraries, by looking at their expectations and experiences. Research has shown that toy-libraries are children's areas (Roucous, 2006) offering playgrounds, qualified professionals, toys and games that encourage playing (Brougère, 2005). The theoretical framework draws upon current multidisciplinary theories of children's play (Corsaro, 1997, Vigotsky, 1967, Delalande, 2001), sociability (Goffman, 2013), social theories about inhabiting or dwelling (Joseph, 2003, Stock, 2015). We used a qualitative interpretative research paradigm (Guba, 1981) and socio-ethnographical approach (Beaud & Weber, 1997) in three contrasted toy-libraries. We led semi-structured interviews (6 with toy-librarians, 15 with parents and children), 3 filmed commented-walks for each toy-library and 39 sessions of observations (36 ethnographical, 3 filmed). We proceeded with a thematic content analysis in a comprehensive approach (Kauffman, 1996). Ethical considerations of qualitative research were respected and approved by the pilote-committee (professionals, researchers). Our findings demonstrate that dwelling in toy-libraries implies several experiences. The spatial organization varies according to the toy-library's play project and the professional identity of the toy-librarians. Thus, children have different possibilities to develop free-play, to move the toys. Most parents consider the time spent in toy-libraries as a quality time out of the rush of daily routine. As children play less and less in playgrounds (Dyment & O'Connell, 2013) while playing remains an essential childhood activity, toy-libraries offer a safe play space, play partners and play objects whose affordance is assessed by the toy-librarians, which should be of interest for educational policies.

Inhabiting toy-libraries, childhood studies, free-play, toy-librarians, parents

The nature of Children's Play: Comparative Research on Children's Play and Toys in China from Ancient times to the Present

Lynne Zhang, Happy Future Connections Children & Family Academy, China

Our research project aims to find a broader and culturally understanding of the nature, value and forms of children's play to support the development of the play-based ECEC curriculum with Chinese culture context through a comprehensive research nationally and internationally from ancient times to the present. The research builds on the findings of previous researches: Chinese Traditional Play and Toys (2013) and Comparison Study of Children's Play Activities through paintings in five countries (2019) and the national questionnaires My Childhood Play & Toys (2021). This research draws on multi-disciplinary theoretical perspectives including Chinese traditional philosophy especially Confucius' theory, anthropology, neuroscience, social constructivism, educational learning theories, Vygotsky' social-cultural theory and Piaget's theory on schema and Flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi, etc. The methodology consisted of interviews, ethnographic study, documentary qualitative analysis on play. education, toys for children (such as Chinese traditional classics, archaeological data, museum materials, paintings, books), national questionnaire, etc. All participants were voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and signed the informed consent document and could withdraw from the study at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Our presentation will discuss more findings such as Hide-Seek or make-believe activities existed for two thousands years in China and most of play activities were similar both in a French painting (in 1587) and in a Chinese painting of Song Dynasty. As newcomers, Children start-up, connect and construct the internal mechanism for their whole life by play

(Lynne Zhang). This research project and findings has been drawn government, academic, teachers and public's attention and are helpful to develop play-based curriculum.

history of play in China, culture and play, rethink play and learning, neuroscience, schema

French toy libraries: A playful context for the parents-child interactions

Corinne Ponce (1), Stéphanie Rubi (2), Stephanie Constans (3), (1) Université de Bordeaux, France, (2) Université Paris Descartes, France, (3) IUT de Rennes, France

This study aims to examine parents-child interactions during play activities in French toy libraries with a particular focus on fathers. The library toy serve an important social function, providing a valuable meeting place for families (Ozanne, 2011) and improving the quality of interactions between family members (Kléménovic, 2014). This study is based on the psychological model of Vygotski, namely parental encouragement during a shared game can promote the commitment of the child in the zone of proximal development (Doyle, 2009) and on the models in educational sciences considering that shared rules define the framework of the game in which everyone will be able to evolve freely (Brougère, 2005). The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretative research paradigm (Guba, 1981). Filmed and ethnographic observations were carried out in two toy libraries in various spaces as well as semi-structured interviews with parents. The analyzes of the observations make it possible to see whether or not the parents play with their child, according to what methods and what support they bring to the play activity. Ethical considerations of qualitative research were respected (consent form, participants' pseudonyms). The findings show that most parents pay more attention to the rules of the games contrary to the children, that their interventions offer other possibilities of action for playing. Some differences between fathers and mothers in play activities also appear. These results suggest implications for how toy-librarians could consider their role in promoting the parents-child interactions, in connection with public policies to support parenthood.

toy-library, parents-child interaction, qualitative research, free play, observation

D 8

MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES AND DEVELOPMENT

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Charlotte Löthman, Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Sweden

Multilingualism and language teaching in ECEC: teachers teaching strategies and conditions in two Nordic countries

Jeanette Koskinen, Örebro university, Sweden

This study aims at investigating language teaching strategies used by ECEC teachers in Sweden and Finland and their conditions for organizing language teaching for multilingual children. Research shows that language development in early childhood impacts cognition and academic achievement (Hagen, 2016: 650). Investigating multilingual children, research has mainly been concerned with how children's home languages are used as a learning resource (Kirsch et al., 2020: 2-3) and how multilingual children interact in play (Björk-Willén, 2007: 2134). The theoretical framework departs from a sociocultural perspective on learning (Vygotsky, 1987), a German-Nordic Didaktik perspective on teaching (Klafki, 1995) and language awareness (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Study was conducted within a quantitative research paradigm (De Leeuw, Hox & Dillman, 2008). A web-survey was answered by 233 teachers in Sweden and 42 teachers in Finland. Data was analyzed using descriptive and cluster-analysis in SPSS. The study does not focus on sensitive personal data neither about teachers nor children, but instead on teaching strategies. Ethical principals of The Swedish and Finnish research council was followed. Informed consent was requested. Respondents received information about handling of personal data in written form. Data was handled with confidentiality. Preliminary findings indicate that teachers value implicit teaching strategies such as free play and daily conversations. Teachers also struggle with didactical planning which might be a result of organizational issues. Play-based learning is valued and language teaching is integrated in other daily activities. Findings suggest implications for how language teaching and didactical planning can be further developed.

Language teaching, Teaching strategies, Multilingualism, Didaktik, Nordic

Becoming parents in a bi/plurilingual, English-dominant context in Canada: what language choices for children?

Marie-Hélène Marquis, Université de Moncton, Canada

This study aims to establish the relationship between ecosystemic factors that could structure the language choices planned and carried out by parents of children up to 4 years of age, thus contributing to their child's language acquisition. Living in a

bi/plurilingual, English-dominant context in Canada requires constantly making language choices for oneself and one's family, whether consciously or not (Commissariat aux langues officielles, 2016). At the crossroads of ECE in a minority context and sociolinguistics, particularly the family language policy (FLP) approach (De Houwer, 2011, 2018; Spolsky, 2012, 2019), this paper will present some results of a mixed-method prospective study with a sequential explanatory cross-sectional design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Sociolinguistic questionnaires were first administered to two cohorts of participants, parents to be (n=27) and new parents (n=99), in order to draw a sociolinguistic portrait of a sample of the Southeastern New Brunswickers, transitioning to parenthood (n=126). Three couples of parents to be and four couples with children aged between 4 months and 4 years then consented to participated in a semi-structured virtual interview, which allowed the researcher to better understand how their experiences, and language values could structure their language behaviours with their child(ren) and, ultimately, the language choices they make for them. The findings show that majority of responding families want French-language Daycare Services and schooling for their children, regardless of their mother tongue. These results suggest a need to increase the supply of Francophone Childcare services and access to French schooling in Canadian minority communities.

Family Language Policy (FLP), parental values, multilingual settings, parental choices, pregnancy

Managing newly arrived children's double transition. Towards inclusionary practices in rural Swedish preschools.

Charlotte Löthman, Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Sweden

This PhD-study aims to explore how inclusion of newly arrived children is accomplished in rural preschools with no or little previous experience of cultural and linguistic diversity. Research shows that when newly arrived children start preschool in a new country, they go through a "double transition" since the context is unfamiliar from a cultural and linguistic perspective compared to children with majority background (Lazzari et al. 2020; Picchio & Mayer 2019). With inclusion (Petriwskyj 2014) as a theoretical starting point, practitioners' narratives were analysed through Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogism. The study was conducted within qualitative, participant centered paradigm (Guest et al. 2013; Hill et al. 1997). Nine focus-groups interviews were carried out (Goss and Leinbach 1996) in three preschools located in a rural municipality in Southeastern Sweden. The total number of focus group participants was thirteen, with each focus group consisting of 3–5 participants (Kitzinger 1994). Informed consent was an ethical consideration and practitioners were informed that their participation was voluntary (Swedish Research Council 2017). The analysis reveals that the practitioners moved from a monologic to a dialogic stance that helped them reflect critically on their culturally endorsed beliefs and practices and adjust them to the needs of the children. The implications are that practitioners should enter into a close dialogue with all migrant children, in order to guide them to participate in daily routines and play activities. Otherwise, there is a risk that the children's aspirations to be included will go unnoticed.

Dialogism, Newly arrived children, Rural preschools, Inclusion, Double transition

D 13

IMPLEMENTING A REAL INCLUSIVE PLAY EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

Self-organised Symposium

Children with disabilities very often can find it difficult to play as a natural activity in life, due to the obstacles they meet: their functional limitations from one hand, and the ways their environments are adapted to their needs from the other. Play for children with disabilities should be appropriately prepared as to: accessible environments and tools (toys), proper play proposals, acknowledged play adults as mediators. This will not turn the play activity into a rehabilitation exercise, rather creating the right opportunities for these children can freely play as they want, together with their peers. Inclusion is the result of a careful and targeted process, and play for the sake of play can be supported through and expert educational guide. On the basis of the studies developed by the COST Action "LUDI - play for children with disabilities", the Symposium presents consolidated methods and tools to reach this purpose.

Chair: Daniela Bulgarelli, Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy

Play for the sake of play: overcoming the impairment

Daniela Bulgarelli (1), Serenella Besio (2), (1) Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy, (2) University of Bergamo, Italy

The paper will present the framework and the results of the project "LUDI - Play for Children with Disabilities (CwD)" (www.ludi-network.eu; 2014-2018) addressed to support CwD's play within inclusive contexts. The multidisciplinary network (about 100 researchers) developed methods, tools and experiences in the field. Previous literature considered recovery of CwD's

impairments as the sole scope (Shakespeare 2013), their play as a mean to assess competences (Ray-Kaesler 2018), support rehabilitation (Bulgarelli 2021) and special education (Besio 2018). Conversely, LUDI pursued play for the sake of play (Besio 2016) as the main ludic activity for CwD. To accomplish the right to play (UNCRC 1989, UNCRPD 2006), that is essential for CwD, barriers to activity and participation must be destroyed while inclusive environments should be built anew. This can be done by adopting the bio-psycho-social (Braibanti 2015, WHO-ICF 2001) and the rights' model (Watson 2013) as conceptual frameworks, that can support CwD' full participation and inclusion. The project was hinged within the eco-systemic paradigm (DeSavigny 2009), while the Action-Research (Chevalier 2013) methodology and the participatory methods (Anadòn 2007) have been adopted to involve CwD groups with their families. Ethical approval was granted through submission of any survey tool used to University's devoted body. Participatory method responds to these requirements. LUDI gave rise to new policies and educational competence to overcome CwD's impairments and break existing barriers that hinder their right to play. LUDI introduced and validated original methods and tools to support CwD's play activities and developed innovative theories in this scientific area.

children with disabilities, play for the sake of play, impairments, environmental barriers, inclusive play and play contexts

Well-prepared environments: the competence behind inclusive play

Mabel Giraldo (1), Odile Perino (2), (1) University of Bergamo, Italy, FM2J, France

The study provides an overview on the adaptations of the ludic contexts to support inclusive play of children with different types of disabilities. Environments are the "containers" of play (Sutterby 2019) especially for children with disabilities; their play activities are not hindered only by functional limitations rather mainly by contextual factors (WHO 2001). Literature states that a well-structured environment becomes a facilitator to support activity/participation in inclusive contexts (Besio 2017). The focus on play contexts has been considered controversial: "purists" stated that when play is organized/controlled by adults is no longer play (Kushner2012); the "possibilists" considered that any environment is a place where play can be practiced. In case of disability many play activities are not spontaneous (Besio-Bonarini 2022) but should be elicited through specific interventions on play environment (Barron 2017). Over the years, hundreds of children with/without disabilities are observed playing together at the "Ludopole" Center in Lyon, in well-prepared play environments based on the Universal Design paradigm, with appropriate/accessible materials/toys. This gave opportunity to validate the "ludic framework", through the collection of data concerning playfulness (Bundy, 2005) of children with and without disabilities playing together. Ethical frameworks for inclusive child research are adopted, including Informed consent, balancing privacy and support, confidentiality, safety, protection and safeguards (Jenkins et al 2015). The main features of play environments that solicit inclusive social and cognitive play with peers are presented. Children with disabilities need equal opportunity to play; adults should create the indispensable conditions and effective play contexts to reach this goal.

play, well-prepared environment, right to play, children with disability, inclusion

Accessible toys: how to find and to assess them

Nicole Bianquin (1), Daniela Bulgarelli (2), Odile Perino (3), Maria Costa (4), (1) University of Bergamo, Italy, (2) University of Turin, Italy, (3) FM2J, France, (4) Aiju, Spain

This contribution presents the TUET – Toys and games Usability Evaluation Tool (www.tuet.eu) a specific tool that allows to evaluate the usability of toys used by children with disability (Costa et al., 2018; Bianquin, Bulgarelli, 2019). The tool is the result of the research activity of two institutions (AIJU in Spain and FM2J in France); the COST Action LUDI Play for Children with Disabilities (www.ludi-network.eu) was the context in which these two institutions worked together. The core of this research is the conviction that the world surrounding children with disabilities must be transformed (Encarnacao et al. 2018): objects and environments should be rethought, through a new inclusive awareness that supports the diffusion of accessibility paradigms, to guarantee the opportunity to the right to play. The contribution discusses the theoretical frameworks, its use, and the implications in educational, familiar, and manufacturing contexts. The tool is illustrated by one of the team members who was involved in its validation and was responsible for the translation into the Italian language. Toys should therefore be environmental factors able to support every child in play: only a rethink of these (Perino, Besio, 2017), starting from the principles of Universal Design, can really turn them into 'inclusive' and 'for all'. The tool aims to conduct adults (parents, teachers, educators, toy designers) who deal with children with disabilities and playful objects, to become more aware of the necessity to produce, choose and buy toys that allow everyone to play, meant as free, self-determined, and enjoyable.

play, toys assessment, observation, children with disability, adult role

In this self-organized symposium, recent theoretical advancement on the relationship between teaching and play in ECEC entitled, Play-Responsive Early Childhood Education and Care (PRECEC) is presented with examples of empirical research. First, some key conceptual resources of this theory are introduced. Then follows three presentations, each reporting on empirical investigation informed by this theory.

Chair: Niklas Pramling, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The challenges of teaching goal-oriented in taking a play-responsive approach

Camilla Björklund (1), Hanna Palmér (2), (1) University of Gothenburg, Sweden, (2) Linnaeus University, Sweden

The aim is to problematize goal-oriented play-responsive teaching in early childhood, particularly why it seems so difficult to include mathematics as a relevant feature of play. The research builds on work by van Oers (2010) who developed ideas for play-based learning in mathematics, and the central notion of mathematizing as conceptualized in mathematics education by Freudenthal (1968; 1991). In respect to van Oers and Freudenthal, new findings from empirical research in preschool settings (Pramling et al. 2019) foreground a tension considering how to conduct goal-oriented teaching that is responsive and thereby relevant to children's play. The study contributes to the development of Play-Responsive Teaching, a pedagogical theory inducing methods for teaching in early childhood. 15 video-documentations from five teachers' active involvement in preschool children's play, with pedagogical purposes, are analysed qualitatively with focus on the interaction between the children, the teacher and the mathematical content that is embedded in the play activity. Participating teachers and children's legal guardians have given their consent to the video data being used for research purposes. While the analysis shows that the teachers are involved in children's play, it also reveals the difficulty in asking mathematical questions that are relevant from the perspective of the children. Questions asked do in fact seldom connect to child-initiated activities, and lack a "problem" of relevance to be solved in a mathematical way. The study shows that goal-orientation in play-responsive teaching is a complex and challenging issue that needs further investigation, since this is of relevance to early mathematics education.

early childhood education, goal-orientation, mathematics, play-responsive teaching, preschool teacher professionalism

Toddlers in teaching activities in preschool: Considerations on theoretical and empirical grounds

Cecilia Wallerstedt, Pernilla Lagerlöf, Department of Education, Communication and Learning, Sweden

The purpose of this study is to generate knowledge about what participating in teaching activities requires of children and teachers, and to what extent toddlers are able to do so. A heated debate on teaching in preschool has emerged recently (Pyle & Danniels, 2017); what it may mean for preschool and toddlers in particular (Greve & Hansen, 2018). Theoretically, the study is informed by Play-Responsive Early Childhood Education and Care (PRECEC). We elaborate on teaching on theoretical (developmental research) as well as on empirical basis (original research conducted in preschool). The empirical data consist of video observations of playing activities in preschool, analyzed according to the principles of Interaction Analysis. Prevailing ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council is followed. The findings show that children should be developmentally prepared for participating in teaching activities, as early as from when they are 1 year old, but it is imperative to separate the concept of teaching from the concept of schooling. The communication between children and the teacher presumes that the children's embodied ways of expressions are taken into account, that the teacher and child share a frame of reference, a consistency between activities exists, the teacher is meta-communicating throughout the activities, and that they have a playful frame. An implication is that it is arbitrary to draw any clear line of demarcation between teaching as contributing to children's learning and caring for their emotional well-being. Emphasis should be to promote children's identity formation as knower/contributor rather than focus on domain-specific knowing.

teaching, toddlers, participation, PRECEC, preschool

Play-Responsive Early Childhood Education and Care (PRECEC): Theoretical tools and empirical examples

Ingrid Samuelsson (1), (1) Department of education, communication and learning, Sweden, Maria Magnusson (2), (2) Department of Education and Teachers' Practice, Sweden

The aim is to study how literate tools come into play between children and teachers in the activity of "playing shop". The project as wholeness is published in the open access book: Play-Responsive Teaching in Early Childhood Education On an overall level the research project took starting point in Development Pedagogy (Pramling & Pramling Samuelsson, 2011) but developed into what now is labelled play-responsive teaching – a theoretical approach contributing to the notion of teaching and didactics in preschool. In the present study concepts are treated 'as if' (fiction) and 'as are' (facts) which are characteristic of play-responsive teaching. The study is a case study with focus on written language tools and how these are communicated

in play, as well as how these are appropriated and become part of the development of the paradigm for the whole research project. The interactive analysis establishes a comprehensible narrative built on four video recordings. Data consist of video observations of recurrent play with a teacher in a preschool (4-5 years). The study follows the Swedish Research Council's guidelines (2017) for good research practice regarding information, consent, confidentiality and use. The children's guardians have given their consent. The results show: (i) which written language tools (concepts, distinctions) are introduced and actualized in the play and (ii) how these are appropriated and given significance for the continuation of the play. The aspect of writing that becomes particularly clear is the communicative functions of symbols. How play and learning can be related in practice

Early Childhood Education, Early literacy, Early Writing, Play-responsive teaching, Preschool

D 15

THE INTERSECTION OF TRANSITIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD WITH CONCEPTS OF THE CHILD, PLAY AND CHILDREN'S CULTURE

Self-organised symposium

In this symposium we consider how the child is conceptualised, the playing child as an actor in transitions, and how definitions of affordances, agency and arenas influence the cultures of early childhood and their connection with the cultures of the school. We draw on data from the Froebelian Futures Project and two studies of transition from early childhood to early school in Scotland to consider change over time. We reflect on our shared philosophy of play which takes account of the child, of children's play and transitions, and of diverse informants including Barad (2007), Donaldson (1978), Froebel (2004), Corsaro (2022), Merleau-Ponty (1945), and weaves our view of the young child in transition.

Chair: Lynn McNair, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

'What does it mean to be a child?'

Lynn McNair, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Conceptualisations of 'what it means to be a child' will be explored. The paper presents emerging findings from the Froebelian Futures project, which is aimed at developing practitioner inquiry and compelling new approaches to participation in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). This presentation will draw from the work of Tisdall (2021), whose work on meaningful children's participation will inform this presentation. The data will include perspectives from children on 'what does it mean to be a child, a mind-mapping approach will be used; and it will gather the perspectives on 'who is the child?' from 26 ELC practitioners from one ELC setting, in Scotland. An ethical application was submitted to the University of Edinburgh's ethical committee. Approval was concerned with the principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication. When we stop to think 'who is the child?' it can be easy to return to conventional definitions of 'the child' and 'the adult'. 'The child' is defined often by age. However, what this presentation aims to show is that understandings of the child include many labels, e.g., investment, commodity, soldier, scientist, mother, bride... How the child is viewed, either by the child themselves, or by adults, informs our responses to children. What will be argued is that how children understand the concept of 'who is the child' and how adults consider 'what is the child?' is a starting point for ELC practice.

Child, Early Learning and Childcare, Froebel, Practitioner Inquiry, Children's Participation

The playing child as actor in transition: can you see me, hear me, know my 'why'?

Marion Burns, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

This paper explores how children's play is viewed by others within early childhood play arenas. The author asks, why is the voice of the playing child so often misunderstood, their actions misinterpreted, do the affordances they encounter promote agency and, how might the child come to know why one form of play is permitted or not in different play cultures? Data is drawn from the author's doctoral study: starting school, curriculum continuity and play as pedagogy. The theoretical framework is informed by the work of Bourdieu (1983), Corsaro (2022), Sahlberg & Doyle (2019) as well as Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. The study adopted exploratory interpretive methodology; data from observations and interviews from three nursery settings and four primary schools were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). Participant information was provided and informed consents were gained from all participants in line with BERA ethical guidelines. Informed consent was revisited throughout the study period and pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality

and ensure anonymity. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time. Findings suggest that the child starting school is expected to make sense of other actors' rules and systems for play and follow them whilst learning to fit in. Assumptions made by actors about the child's confidence to challenge, to reshape, to subvert the play cultures encountered are discussed. Implications for policy, early childhood pedagogy and practice, include listening to the child, seeing the child, knowing how they learn and why.

play cultures, voice, agency, spaces, starting school

"I'm shutting my eyes to see in my imagination" The intersection of play and transitions in early childhood

Aline-Wendy Dunlop, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

In this paper concepts of affordances, forms of agency and varied arenas are explored and defined as a means to interpret the intersection of play, wellbeing and the transitions in identity, status and role that occur in becoming a school child. The paper draws on a longitudinal study of 22 focal children (Dunlop, 2021) who are representative of the cohort of 150 starting out together in four schools in one local authority in Scotland. It is underpinned by a socio-bio-ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Tudge et al (2021) networked (Watling Neal, 2013) model. The emerging definitions presented bring the work of Gibson (2002), Pallasmaa (2012), Robinson (2019) and Young and Cleveland (2022) together to add to an interactive hybridised bio-socio-ecological conceptual framework (Dunlop, 2022). In a longitudinal exploratory-interpretative paradigm this hybridised framework acts as both research methodology and method, informing decisions to use direct and video observation, interviews and group work. Longitudinal research required a refreshing of participant information and revisiting of participant consents at four different time points in the study. Findings on the affordances, arenas and agency available to children in transition, or created by them as they influence the culture of which they are part, confirm that play has an important contribution to make to identity, status and role in transition spaces. The possibilities for educator action on policy and practice stimulated by an intersection of play and transition are highlighted, and demand a focus on the arenas, affordances and agency available to children.

transitions, play, affordances, arenas, agency

D 16

Outdoor Play and Learning SIG: Learning with Nature

Self-organised symposium

Outdoor Play and Learning SIG symposium.

Chair: Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey

Social Sustainable Education in a Refugee Camp

Marit Heldal, Queen Maud University College, Norway

The main objective of this presentation is to discuss how an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) institution in a refugee camp can promote social sustainable education. Several researches suggests that a sustainable future for all human beings and for the world is, to a largely extent, embedded in ECEC (Engdahl, 2015; Årlemalm-Hagser & Elliot, 2017; Samuelsson & Park, 2017) among others. This study underlines the importance of children's formation processes as socially ubiquitous and continuous (Klafki, 2000; Brøstrøm & Hansen, 2004; Biesta, 2016; Hohr, 2018; Årlemalm-Hagser & Samuelsson, 2018) Data are drawn from an ECEC institution for both local and refugee children inside a refugee camp, produced through 14 field observations, 36 semi-structured interviews and one group interview from March 2019 until September 2019. All the participants have given an informed consent, and pseudonyms are used replacing names of the participants. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The empirical data reveal three dimensions that work as markers for social sustainable pedagogical practice: the importance of nature and play as a facilitator for children's activities; the importance of participation and equality; and the importance of commitment to the community (Heldal, Hagen, Olaussen & Haugen; 2021). This study attempts to meet the request for practice-oriented research by presenting new ideas of ECEC pedagogical practice, in which one of the key ideas is to bring refugee and local children together and acknowledge affordances in nature as an important pedagogical environment.

Social sustainability, refugee children, formation, community, outdoor play

Maths Attainment in Outdoor Activities

Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey

The research aims to identify maths activities in outdoors in the early years age. To enable children to gain these foundations, teachers are required to integrate children's previous information into formal education via games and activities (van Hiele, 1999). Outdoor areas can provide opportunities for children to organise and control their mathematic learning (Fägerstam & Samuelsson, 2014) and enable children to reach the aims of the programme. Outdoor activities provide an effective learning environment as well as being supportive teaching environments for various subjects like maths (Sandseter & Lysklett, 2017). In addition to formal learning, maths teaching should be included in both indoor and outdoor learning environments (Linder et al., 2011). A survey is used to describe the current situation around England (Oppenheim, 1992) as using random sampling (Creswell, 2012). In addition to this, the observation and interview methods are used to access the data in actual time for researchers (Creswell, 2012) by using voluntary sampling from five different schools. University of Plymouth's Research Ethic's Policy is followed to design ethical aspects (Plymouth University, 2013). This research is still in data collection progress, and the general maths attainment of early years teachers are aimed to be identified. As identifying current maths attainment in outdoors for early years, the importance of maths in curriculum, and the impact of the current situation will be exhibited. Considering the findings, the necessary actions can be identified further.

Maths, Outdoors, early years, attainment, activities

Learning science and literacy in the outdoor space – meaningful learning in the preschool yard

Michaella Kadury-Slezak, Sigal Tish, Clodie Tal, Iris Levy, Sivan Shatil-Carmon, Levinsky College of Education, Israel

The aim of this study is to show how the constant integration between mediation of science and literacy contributes to children's meaningful learning in outdoor spaces. This study emphasizes the importance of the children's participation in the context of emergent curriculum projects performed in the open space. As such, it is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) socio-constructivist approach to learning and on an Emergent curriculum approach (Yu-Le, 2004). Outdoor learning, enhances children's motivation to learn, supports children's holistic development and curiosity and contributes to the development of reasoning skills (Morris et al., 2012). Preschool is an important setting where children become literate, mainly based on the quality of interactions with literate adults and other children (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). Participants were ten ECE student teachers in their third year of study. The methodology used was multiple case studies (Yin, 2014) of emergent projects dealing with outdoor learning based on the mosaic approach (Clark, 2011) using student teachers' reflections and documentations of children's ideas. Consent for participation was given by the student teachers and access to educators' written observations of children which were anonymous. Findings reveal that outdoor emergent curriculum contributes to the children's familiarity with their ecological environment. It also reveals the strong relations between children's scientific thinking and literacy skills and knowledge and outdoor learning processes. This study supports the need to implement emergent curriculum in open spaces in preschools as a tool of enhancing both science and literacy skills and knowledge.

outdoor learning, emergent curriculum, science, constructivism, literacy

D 17

MOVING BEYOND THE 'HUMAN' IN ECEfs RESEARCH

Self-organised Symposium

This symposium invites attendees to embrace (re)thinking research processes that help disrupt essentialist onto-epistemological assumptions within ECEfs. Challenging Anthropocentrism, the three papers highlight ways to confront conventional research methods. We explore three important questions 1. How do educators embrace multi-dimensional complexities around nature and sustainability? 2. Exactly how does a critical, transformative paradigm contribute to sustainable development? And 3. Can ECEfs Teacher Education benefit from posthuman theory? The symposium emphasizes post-era research that is fluid, entangled, open, and transformative and the ways in which such processes can invite new possibilities for teaching and learning within ECEfs.

Chair: Fran Hughes, University of New England, Australia

Exploring transformative pedagogies for Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (ECEfs)

Fran Hughes, University of New England, Australia

How might the movement of Australian early childhood educator's worldviews and pedagogies about sustainability in immersive nature play programs (INPPs) inform research and teaching? Could nature become a potential mediator for knowledge co-construction about sustainability and integral to educator's pedagogies and emergent curricula? Movement from romanticised notions and human-nature dualisms towards a commonworlds framework could challenge dominant

discourses in ECEfS. Taylor (2013) and Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo (2016) have previously argued for change towards entanglements between humans and nature. The theoretical framework of social constructionism (Crotty, 1998) was applied and the conceptual framework drew on the principles of nature play programs and pedagogy (Hughes et al., 2021). Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, 2008) methodologies were employed. Data collection methods included individual interviews, focus groups, reflective journals and field notes from observations over an eight-month period. Approval was sought from the University of New England's (UNE) Human Research Ethics Committee. I was aware of my positionality as insider and sought ethical and respectful relationships with participants. This presentation focuses on the possibilities for challenging a socio-cultural curriculum framework stance where only humans have agency and rights, towards recognition of post humanism (Haraway, 2008) and new materialism (Bennett, 2010) frameworks in INPPs. The data analysis indicated being differently attuned, in particular for the educators and the researcher to think differently with nature to establish alternative ways of contemplating relationalities with nature. This new learning readied all to investigate the multi-dimensional complexities around nature and sustainability.

early childhood education for sustainability, post humanism, new materialism, nature play programs, commonworlds

Collaboration between parents and teachers in making play a core aspect of sustainable development in the early years

Mariette Koen (1), Lesley Wood (2), Seipati-Baloyi Mothibeli (2), Stef Esterhuizen (2), (1) North-West University Potchefstroom, South Africa, (2) North-West University, South Africa

This study explores the value of an interconnected relationship between parents and teachers in making play a core aspect of sustainable development in the early years. Play is fundamental in early-childhood development and education (Groebel, 1885; Vygotsky, 1978). According to Zosh et al. (2018), play brings together children's spheres of life at home in school and in the wider world, exposing them to multiple opportunities for sustainable development. Play-based learning – coupled with interconnected relationships between parents and teachers – nourishes every aspect of holistic development (Chrysa et al. 2019). The theoretical framework draws on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory focusing on the importance of play and on Mugumbate and Chereni's (2019) interconnected relationship model, which includes five relationship levels supporting holistic development. A qualitative approach, coupled with a participatory action learning and action research design, enabled participants to collaborate as equal partners and construct their own meaning from experiences within the research group to advocate for change. Within a critical, transformative paradigm, participants were encouraged to think critically about how a play-based approach could contribute to sustainable development. Given that PALAR's principles cannot adhere to unless participants are well-informed and committed an ethical agreement was signed by the research group to ensure that one another's voices, rights, and opinions are respected. The findings suggest that an engaged relationship between parents and teachers using a play-based approach could form the basis of sustainable development. Partnerships programmes should be implemented to involve parents in a play-based approach for sustainable learning.

Participatory action learning and action research (PALAR), parents, teachers, sustainable development, early childhood

Challenging and Expanding Epistemic Assumptions in Teacher Education for ECEfS

Kassahun Weldemariam, Gothenburg University, Sweden

The study is aimed at developing new theories by countering existing (orthodox human centered) ECEfS theories within teacher education in a different way. There is limited research that investigates the relationship between human and nonhuman from a non-anthropocentric point of view (Cutter- Mackenzie et al., 2019; Taylor, 2017). Yet, the post-anthropocentric approach to sustainability has not been widely applied in teacher education in ECEfS. The study is framed within post-anthropocentric thinking-which is emanated from the broader posthumanism framework. Particularly, posthumanism is about rethinking the relations between the humans and nonhumans by challenging the anthropocentric thinking that elevates human beings above other species (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). As a conceptual study, this presentation deals with concepts/ideas pertaining teacher education within ECEfS. It doesn't involve primary data but instead relies on the analysis of existing body of knowledge in the field. Post-anthropocentric perspective is chosen as it enforces respect for the non-humans and allows to ethically go beyond the position to recognize our place in the universe. Drawing on posthuman concepts, this conceptual paper highlights the limits of orthodox assumptions in Teacher Education. Particular, it interrogates the human-centric assumptions that perpetuate the deep-rooted binary thinking separating human from non-humans including material forces/other species. In doing so, the presentation offers an expanded understanding of the underlying ontological and epistemic assumptions within teacher education for ECEfS. It offers an alternative pedagogical approach for teacher education within ECEfS. This in turn helps teacher to equip children with the knowledge to engender relationality and life-giving processes.

Early childhood education, sustainability, epistemology, post-anthropocentric, teacher education

Chair: Carolyn Blackburn, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

Exploring perspectives and experiences of play in hospital

Kelsey Graber, Paul Ramchandani, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

This study investigates the perspectives and experiences of young paediatric patients who engage in play during hospitalisation. Play can benefit hospitalised children in many ways, including recreation and enjoyment, therapeutic intervention and recovery, and promoting resilience and hope (Williams et al., 2019). Participatory research has solicited children's views on hospitalisation (e.g. Coyne & Kirwan, 2012); however, we know little about children's experiences and views regarding hospital play. This research recognises play as a fundamental right for all children under any circumstance (UNCRC, 1989), including hospitalisation (EACH Charter Article 7, 2015). It is grounded in the 'new' sociology of childhood, recognising children as possessing agency and competence (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). This qualitative study involves interviews with hospitalised children in a UK hospital, alongside interviews with caregivers and clinical staff. Interpretative phenomenological analysis will be employed to methodically explore participants' own lived experiences. Ethical approval was granted from the participating hospital and NHS trust. Caregiver written consent and child assent are required. Pseudonyms will be used in reports. Consent to share still images or video clips for research purposes is optional. Participants can withdraw or stop at any time. Data collection began April 2022 with observations on paediatric oncology ward. Interviews to follow. We anticipate findings to shed light on children's views on hospital play, as well as their needs and wishes. This information will contribute to an enhanced understanding of the value of play in hospitals, and why play is important in such a high-intensity, atypical setting for childhood.

play in hospital, paediatric, healthcare, children's perspectives, quality of life

Free play, nature education and inclusion in Spain: a mother-educator's inside experience

Katia Hueso, Asociación GJNSaltamontes, Spain

This research focuses on the opportunities for children with ASN in Spain to engage with nature through free play, for their wellbeing. The experience of the author (1,2), as mother of twins with ASN, coordinator of a nature preschool and cofounder of a project for families with ASN. Literature on the topic is scant in Spain, less so elsewhere (3-5). Children with ASN are often overlooked in free-play/nature education settings. They miss the opportunity to engage in physical, sensory and cognitive experiences due to their difficulties. They often lack the time, energy and capacity to enjoy them (4), even more than the rest of their peers (6). They suffer a compound effect of lack of accessibility, time and capacity to play and enjoy nature, that limits its beneficial effects (7-9). Yet it's their right (10). An autoethnographic approach (11) is adopted to highlight challenges children must overcome to engage in nature. Ethical guidelines apply. Details changed when needed. Integrating nature and free-play into educational settings is critical to the development of children with ASN, given the pedagogical added value it entails (12). Free play and nature experiences for children with ASN in Spain is usually restricted to group-specific leisure activities, and virtually non-existent in any educational setting (2). (1) Hueso-Kortekaas (2014). Functional-diversity-in-outdoor-EYE,-utopia-or-reality? (in-Spanish) Cuadernos-de-pedagogía 450: 38-42; (2) Hueso-Kortekaas (2020). Nature-as-a-source-of-health-and-wellbeing-for-people-with-disabilities (in-Spanish). Proc.-2nd-AINISE-international-Conference; (3) Chown (2014). Play-therapy-in-the-outdoors; (4) doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2016.1245772; (5) James (2018) Forest-school-and-autism:-a-practical-guide; (6) Louv (2008). Last-child-in-the-woods; (7) doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01489-1; (8) doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18031199; (9) doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2021.1921117; (10) UN Convention-Rights-of-the-Child(11) doi.org/10.4324/9781315186689 (11) Gull et al. (2018) IJECCE 5(2), 10-29.

children with additional support needs, nature kindergarten, narrative, mother-educator, outdoor play

Parents' experiences of homes-schooling for children with special educational needs and disabilities during a global pandemic.

Carolyn Blackburn, Shannon Ludgate, Clair Mears, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

The research aim was to explore parents' experiences of home schooling their child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents experienced challenges in maintaining a home environment that enables

children with SEND to cope with homeschooling (Hopwood and Webster, 2021) and parents have acted as 'gatekeepers' for children's well-being (Canning and Robinson, 2021). We draw on Erin Manning's writing on 'THE MINOR GESTURE', (2016: 1) and through this, challenge political catch up narratives and negative views of homeschooling. Through a qualitative interpretive approach, an online survey gathered views from 70 parents. Open questions related to opportunities and challenges and provided qualitative data for thematic analysis. Closed questions provided descriptive statistics. Themes included success stories, challenging and going at a slower pace/building relationships. Ethical considerations included participants right to anonymity, right to withdraw and informed consent. Additional consideration was given to the power relations that inhere between researchers and participants. Institutional ethical approval was important. The findings revealed that despite acknowledged challenges of home schooling (for example insufficient access to specialist resources, children missing their friends and the demands of balancing multiple family priorities), there were benefits. Success stories emerged from the data including decreased family stress, improved emotional wellbeing for children and fewer critical incidents of emotional meltdowns. We recommend that future policies that take into account the ways in which children learn at home and we challenge catch up narratives. We offer new ways of viewing home schooling.

Homeschooling, Parents, Families, Special Educational Needs, Informal learning

D 19

FAIRY TALES, STORYTELLING AND CREATIVE NARRATIVES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Olga Shiyan, Moscow City University, Russia

Creative narratives of children from classes with different quality of ECE

Olga Shiyan, Igor Shiyan, Moscow City University, Russia

The study is devoted to the manifestations of creative abilities in children's narratives. Play, storytelling and drawing exist syncretically at preschool age, but it's possible to speak of storytelling as a separate activity (Broström, 2002; MacCabe, 1994). Children's narratives are mainly studied as material for the analysis of the structure of stories and creativity (Bretherton, Oppenheim, 2003; Fehr & Russ, 2016). In accordance with the cultural-historical approach, we understand creative abilities as dialectical thinking (reflection of the transformations and solutions of contradictions), and creation of artistic (symbolic) images (Veraksa, Dyachenko, 1994). We analysed children's narratives to figure out how the creative abilities differ in groups with different quality of educational environment. The study involved 57 6-years old children from two preschools. The quality of the educational environment was assessed using the Creative Abilities Support Rating Scale - CASRS (Belolutsкая, Shiyan, 2021), which evaluates the presence of unstructured materials, conditions for play and support of storytelling. We found significant differences in quality of preschools (at the level of 0.01). All subjects participated voluntarily in these studies and were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. EECERA ethical code was followed. Ethical approval was obtained from MCU committee on research ethics. The narratives of children from classes with a higher quality of the environment contained significantly more dialectical actions (at the level of 0.05) and artistic (symbolic) images (at the level of 0.05). This indicates the importance of the environment for the development of creative storytelling.

creative abilities, narrative, dialectical thinking, symbolic image, quality of ECE

Exploring Oral Storytelling as a scaffold for Critical Thinking in a Preschool Context

Catherine O Reilly, Ann Devitt, Noirin Hayes, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

This study aims to explore how and under what conditions oral storytelling could be used as a stimulus to draw out preschoolers emergent critical thinking skills. Research shows how critical thinking can be enhanced in primary schools using picturebooks to scaffold thinking (Lo, 2016; Roche, 2014). However, research exploring critical thinking skills using oral storytelling has not been investigated in early education. This study combines a theoretical framework of constructivism in alignment with a conceptual framework of storytelling as pedagogy. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks draw upon current theories of language and communication that assert children are active problem solvers who learn as social beings (Bruner, 1985). In oral storytelling, the art where a storyteller relays a story to listeners using voice, tone and gesture, story triggers new meaning as children learn to see the world from different perspectives (Phillips, 2013). The methodology is conducted within a qualitative paradigm adopting a design-based research approach (Bakker, 2018). This interactive, participatory research study empowers children to share their thoughts and insights regarding diverse stories. Ethical approval was obtained in December 2020. Adopting an ethics of care perspective, approval is a starting point; ethical considerations is closely scrutinised and managed consistently throughout the study and documented using formal procedural ethical

regulations and an ethic of care perspective for research with children. The study is ongoing with rich video data of child-educator interactions around the storytelling event; preliminary findings suggest that children verbalise early critical thinking skills from age three to five.

Critical Thinking, Preschoolers, Educators, Pedagogy, Storytelling

Elements of fairy tales and co-construction of meaning

Kristin Aadland-Atkinson, NLA university college, Norway

The paper studies the complexity in young children's engagement with fairy tales, through the art of storytelling. Storytelling is situational (Greatbatch and Clark, 2010, Aadland, 2016), and multimodal (Swann, 2002; Lwin, 2016). Children need experience to think with stories (Kuyvenhoven, 2009, Wardetsky & Weigel, 2010). Copley (2013) distinguishes between the story behind-and the narrative as unfolding in-the situation. We search for (co-)construction (Valsiner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978) of the narrative in, and after, a storytelling situation through means given by the story (Bruner, 1986, Wertsch, 2002), and by the storyteller's performative means (Bauman, 1986). The study takes place in a Norwegian school. The children had regular visits from professional storytellers throughout the spring of their first year. Observations were done through the semester, and qualitative interviews with six children were conducted shortly after the final storytelling event. The project was reported to Norwegian centre for research data. Written, informed consent was given by parents, and confirmed orally by the children when participating in the interviews. Fictive names were given in the transcription process. The children seemed to continue a construction of meaning after the storytelling process, and in their understanding they revealed individual experiences of the joint happening. The children's memories of the story seem closely related with their way of engaging in the storytelling event – verbal or non-verbal. Our findings support the idea of narrative thinking, and the importance of engaging with stories, to learn this way of thinking, and therefore the storytelling's place in curriculum.

storytelling, narrative mind, performance, multimodality, co-construction of meaning

D 20

LITERACY AND PLAYFUL READ-ALOUDS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Elizabeth Rouse, Deakin University, Australia

Playful read-alouds - Possibilities and challenges

Sofie Tjärü, Åbo Akademi University, Department of Education and Welfare Studies, Finland

This study investigates outcomes of pre-primary teachers encouraging children's aesthetic and personal responses to literature while reading aloud. Play is a keystone in Early Childhood Education (Mosvold & Alvestad, 2011) and there is a strong connection between children's imagination, aesthetics, play and learning (Lindqvist, 2003; Vygotsky, 2004). Children use play to explore books and literary worlds (Wells Rowe, 1998), but there are indications of teachers seldom connecting read-alouds to aesthetic approaches (Sipe, 2008; Øines, 2019). This study focuses on social and cultural practices of literacy, hence adopting a holistic-oriented perspective of literacy research (Snow, 2008). The action research study was conducted within an interpretivist paradigm and used video observations, reflection diaries and interviews to explore the experiences of five teachers and their groups during read-alouds where teachers promoted children's responses to and experiences of literature. Identities of teachers and children were confidential. Informed consent from teachers and parents was unconditional. Children who rejected research participation took part in the same activities off camera and off the record. Preliminary results show varied stances towards playful read-alouds. Some teachers linked children's increased activity to enhanced learning outcomes, whereas others worried about read-alouds becoming too messy. Most children quickly adopted a more active role, whereas some seemed unsure about the new practice and expressed that they preferred to quietly listen. The results indicate the importance of supporting teachers' awareness of their read-aloud practices as this enables them to consciously decide on how to best promote personal and aesthetic literary responses in their groups.

early literacy, read-alouds, aesthetic approaches, literature didactics, children's literature

Doing literacy in preschool - 1-3-year-olds in literacy events

Hanna Thuresson, Örebro universitet / education, Sweden

The research aims to contribute to knowledge of early childhood education and care (ECEC) as an educational as well as literacy practice for young children by studying how young children acts when doing literacy in literacy events. Previous research has covered literacy as social practice in early childhood education and care (Rowe, 2010: 142). Furthermore, studies have shown young children's different ways for meaning making of e.g. writing (Kress & Cowan, 2017: 13) Theoretical framework is based on a social and multimodal approach to literacy, drawing from Barton & Hamilton (2000) as well as Kress (1997). This observational study is based on a five-month fieldwork among 43 1-3-year-olds in four different early childhood education and care settings. The data consists of video-documented observations as well as field notes of literacy events and were analyzed in gradually condensing steps concentrating on children's actions. Ethical principles relating to basic individual protection requirements were met regarding to information, informed consent, confidentiality, and the use of data. The young children's verbal and bodily signals regarding withdrawn consent were considered. The cultural norms of doing literacy in educational settings clearly shape the children's actions and meaning making processes. The children use a wide repertoire of communicative and multi-modal actions. The actions also entail breaking the cultural norms of literacy practices. Understanding literacy events in early childhood education and care settings requires conceptualization of early literacy as embodied, where gestures and placement of the body are as well-articulated and with same communicative range as verbal language.

literacy events, toddlers, literacy practices, embodied literacy, multimodal

Literacy learning in infant-toddler programs: examining educator beliefs and practices

Elizabeth Rouse, Maria Nicholas, Deakin University, Australia

This Australian study sought to better understand the beliefs and practices of ECEC educators regarding the planning and teaching of literacy in play-based early childhood settings. This study sits within an emerging body of research in which literacy with very young children is positioned within a contemporary practice of school readiness where privileging print awareness over earlier stages of literacy in an effort to 'prepare' children for school (Nicholas & Rouse, 2020; Rouse, Nicholas & Garner, 2020). The study was framed by the theory of practice architectures where participants' 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (Mahon et al, 2017), provide a conceptual lens through which to examine beliefs and practices. Drawing on an interpretivist paradigm, a multi-site case study design was used. Participants included nine educators working with children aged between two and three years who participated in a semi-structured interview where they were sharing their personal thoughts and ideas. Ethical clearance was sought and approved by Deakin University Ethics committee, and participants provided written consent. Pseudonyms have been used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. Findings showed that play-based pedagogies were often overlooked when seeking to support children's literacy development, with a preference for more formalised foci on print-based learning activities, including a focus on alphabetic letter recognition. This suggests a need for a greater focus on more holistic literacy development where play rather than more instructional teaching approaches is the instrument used to foster children's development through the speech-print continuum (Terrell and Watson, 2018).

Early childhood literacy, Play, Practice architectures, Speech-print continuum, Early childhood education

D 21

OUTDOORS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COVID

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Sharon Skehill, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

Learning from the Forest to create equity in children's play and learning spaces.

Suzanne Axelsson, Independent (Stockholm University), Sweden

This 18 month inquiry aims to engage holistic methodologies to create sustainable approaches to ECE rooted in social justice in Sweden. Research shows that autonomous play (Sando et al, 2021) and time in nature (Fyfe-Johnson et al, 2021) are essential for children's well-being. Indigenous Knowledges (Windchief & San Pedro, 2019) shifted the study from theoretical to include practical/holistic. The study uses the Indigenous approach of "walking the land" (Hamm, 2015), multi-species communication (Massumi, 2014, Wohlleben, 2015) as well as the theory of decolonisation (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) to seek out change-making methodologies to increase opportunities of creating communities of learners using the Original Learning Approach (Axelsson, unpublished). The study dwells within an Indigenous paradigm (Kuokkanen, 2000) that recognises my own non-indigeneity but values the multiplicity of knowledges/worldviews. The method consists of repeated walks in the cultural forest-scape on Lovö, Sweden. Observations were made of the forest, interactions with and responses to the forest. Analysis was conducted through analysing photographs, artmaking and storytelling with a posthumanist approach. This

research is a process of myself and the forest so my ethical considerations were about minimising my negative impact on the natural ecosystem. As an observer of the forest/children my presence makes a positive/negative difference on the natural/play-ecosystem. The findings demonstrate that slowing down, noticing, and understanding how that feels in the body are important steps towards equity, and that art and storytelling are valuable knowledge-building tools. This suggests a need for educators to nurture the whole play-ecosystem to create equitable communities of learners.

Play, Indigenous Knowledge, Decolonisation, Equity, Forest

We're moving out: Our stories of transition to outdoor provision of early years care and education during Covid and beyond

Sharon Skehill, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

This research project began as an action research study to support the staff team as we navigated the Covid-19 pandemic in our nature-based setting (Skehill 2021). It has now developed into an on-going action research project where we continually reflect on practice to support the implementation of our curriculum in the outdoors with all age groups within the full day-care service. The aim of this phase of the research is to identify how this process has supported the professional development of the team as well as the benefits for the children and families. Place-based learning (Smith 2014), underpinned by the rights of the child (Lundy 2007) informs the action research project. CPD experiences have the potential to motivate early childhood educators and empower them in contributing to the development of curricula and the learning environment (Moloney 2021; Oke et al. 2021). The value of play for children's well-being and development has been well documented (Whitebread 2010; O'Sullivan 2021) and this paper presents the argument for the importance of reflection on practice (Schon 1983) to consider how the outdoor space can support children's inclusion and participation in the setting. A qualitative interpretative approach guides the action research (Heidegger 1927) with the educators working with the children, using an initial questionnaire and follow-up support and supervision sessions to consider their experiences in moving to the outdoor learning space. Individual consent and ongoing consultation with participants Outdoor ELC provides inclusive and supportive learning environment for children and practitioners. The value of practitioner research on practice was evident.

Outdoor preschool, Covid-19, Action research, Reflective practice, Innovative approaches

Swedish inner city preschools' outdoor play and educational activities during pandemic

Katarina Gustafson, Department of Education, Sweden

This presentation focuses on how inner city preschools in Stockholm - without a yard, or with small enclosures - conduct outdoor activities and use urban spaces during the pandemic. Swedish ECEC has a long tradition of outdoor activities (Gustafsson 2017) and possibilities for outdoor play is often discussed in terms of design of preschool yards (Jansson 2021). However, in urban areas preschool yards are shrinking or do not prevail. In contrast to other European countries Sweden have kept ECEC open during the pandemic but with policies that daily activities mainly should be practiced outdoors. Hence, drawing on theories of policy enactment (Ball et al 2012) and mobility practices (Ekman Ladru & Gustafson 2018), we have performed ethnographic fieldwork (Hammersley & Aitkins 2019) of outdoor activities and play in two preschools, documented by field notes. Besides formal consents etc., attention has especially been given to the children's diverse ways of showing whether and how they wanted to participate. The project is approved by the ethical board and name and details are anonymized. Findings show how pandemic policies are negotiated and enacted by teachers and children together. Teachers and children handle and negotiate pandemic consequences as being more dependent on local environment, overcrowded parks, physical constraining transports as well as the importance of teachers' local knowledge in order to create space for ECEC educational activities and play in the city. The findings contribute with important knowledge for understanding urban ECEC practices and outdoor spaces that pandemic policies have thrown into sharp relief.

Outdoor play, Policy enactment, Mobility practices, Inner city preschools, Covid-19 pandemic

D 22

POLICY, PARENTS AND PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES OF PLAY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Peter Cloos, Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, Germany

Here comes Madam: rural Indian women's perspectives on play and education.

Radhika Viruru, Texas A&M University, United States

Early childhood education (ECE) in India privileges structured instruction despite the increased focus on play worldwide (Gupta, 2020). This study documents rural Indian mothers perspectives on what role play should have in ECE. Studies from India (Subramaniam, 2015) show that play occupies a contested space in ECE programs even as play based modules that prepare children for school have become popular. This study draws from postcolonial theory which illustrates how accepted practices in ECE mostly represent perspectives from the global North (Nieweyunhus, 2013). This study draws from interpretivist paradigms (Bhattacharya, 2019) and qualitative methodologies that center participant perspectives. Semi-structured interviews and photo elicitations were used to gather data from 12 mothers of young children in one village in southern India. The participants and researcher occupied different socio-economic statuses that can inhibit conversations in India. The researcher built rapport with the participants to offset this concern. Rural Indian women strongly view education as a way to a better life for their children. They saw playtime as “wasted time.” To quote one mother "What I want for my daughter is to be like you: when you walked in, someone said, here comes Madam. I want my daughter to be Madam. Not to waste her time playing in the dirt." Such perspectives align with postcolonial problematizations of play-based education and its mismatch with indigenous perspectives. Play-based models dominate ECE spaces, This research can help practitioners/policy-makers reconceptualize approaches such that they meet children's needs in both developmentally and culturally appropriate ways.

Postcolonial theory, Early childhood education in India, Cultural values of play, Structured instruction, Rural education

Cultures of conversation about play: How educators and parents talk about play

Peter Cloos (1), Katja Zehbe (2), (1) Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, Germany, (2) Hochschule Neubrandenburg, Germany

The findings of the project “Accompaniment of inclusive transitional processes in parent meetings” show how educators and parents talk about play in regular parent meetings and which relevance they attach to play for the transition of children with special needs. The results lead to a deeper understanding of the support of children, so that measures for the qualification can be derived. The partnership between parents and staff is challenged by various dilemmas (Betz 2015). Kaplan et al. (2022) points out in an literature review that transitional process of children with disabilities is much more endangered by breaks than for children attested no disability. The project assumes that events in social processes are created as a transition (Wanka et al. 2020). With this perspective, we ask how play, educational partnership and transitions are linked with each other. The project uses a qualitative longitudinal study design. 30 parent meetings are analysed with the documentary method (Bohnsack 2017). The project was approved by the University ethics committee. All participants signed a declaration of informed consent. The findings point out that a child’s play and wellbeing are addressed in parent meetings in three different ways: as children as actors , as a risk for the organizational order and as children with special needs. Additionally, whereas most of the parents talk about play in context of proud, wellbeing and transition, most educators address play in terms of difficulties. A brochure was created that can be used to reflect on the practice of parent meetings.

play, inclusive transition, doing transitions, educational partnership, children with disabilities

Recontextualizations of the Swedish national curricula: examples from text practices in preschool

Petra Classon, Mona Lundin, Department of Education, Communication and Learning, Gothenburg University, Sweden

The aim is to contribute to research on institutional governance, in this case how the Swedish preschool curriculum are used in local templates for parent teacher conferences by asking: To what degree is the preschool curricula recontextualized as a part of the local recontextualization field, that is in templates for parent teacher conferences in preschool? The Swedish preschool has undergone policy changes resulting in higher demands on preschool teacher work (Eriksson et al, 2019; Löfdahl & Perez Prieto, 2009). The parent teacher conference is but one example of a work task which is compulsory but not regulated in detail. The theoretical framework for the study is based on Bernstein’s (1999, 2000) framework of pedagogical discourse. The study was conducted within a qualitative research paradigm. We explore 64 pages of local templates constructed for the parent teacher conference. Using text analysis, the data was analyzed using Bernstein’s (1999, 2000) analytical concepts of recontextualization, the official recontextualization field and the local recontextualization field. Ethical considerations have been made in the sense that any names have been anonymized. The results indicate that the curriculum is a dominant discourse in the templates, but that there are also elements of local discourses where the national curriculum is recontextualized to local conditions. We conclude that one size does not fit all, i.e., the specific local preschool context is the primary aspect to take into consideration when making templates to support preschool teachers in their work, which has implications for policy makers as well as for practitioners.

curriculum, parent-teacher conference, preschool, recontextualization, templates

Chair: Simon Bateson, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Early childhood inclusion: Written inclusion policy at the program level

Johanna Lundqvist, Malardalen University, Sweden, Elena Soukakou, Malardalen University, Greece,

The study aims at exploring what is known about the purpose of adopting inclusion policy at the program level, the target audience, the content and form that such policies might take as well as the ways to develop and implement such policies. Inclusion is emphasized across international macro policies (UN CRPD, 2006) and is one of the key sustainable development goals (UN, 2015). It is important to have a written policy on inclusion at the program level (Lundqvist, 2021; Soukakou 2016). It is usually developed by staff members. The bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) was adopted. A policy at the program level is one out of several influential factors on children's development. A qualitative scoping review (Peters et al., 2015) was conducted. The authors defined the topic and inclusion criteria, and searched for research literature via SCOPUS and Google. After full-text reading, 21 literature were included. Content analyses were performed. The quality and relevance of the literature was considered, and transparency of the result was ensured. Multiple sources of data enhanced the credibility of the review. A policy establishes terms and a shared inclusive language to be used, and should target a broad range of groups. Concerning the form, the review does not recommend a specific form. Moreover, the review provides several suggestions around the content and some overall guidance on how to successfully develop and implement an inclusion policy at the program level. One implication is to create and implement a written inclusion policy at the program level.

early childhood inclusion, policy, preschool inclusion, Sustainable Development Goal 4, quality of inclusive practices

Liminal Relationalities: On collaborative writing with/in and against race in the study of early childhood

Simon Bateson (1), Shaddai Tembo (2), (1) The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, (2) University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom

This collaborative-autoethnographic paper examines the role of researcher racial identity in early childhood studies. Collaborative writing is well established in the humanities (Gale et al., 2019). However, the process of coming to do research typically happens without comment. As such, questions about relational dynamics - especially among Black and "white" (sic) authors writing about race - tend to go unacknowledged. Our paper draws from the DeleuzoGuattarian (1987) concept of becomings and Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic imagination and develops multi-column narrative methodologies to facilitate our opening up to, and reflections on, the prism of our identifications. Mapping our authorial, individual, and liminal subjectivities through such collaborative-autoethnography enables us to experiment with the boundaries of individuality and explore new modes of joint-inscription. In tentatively decentring colonial tropes of individualism and separation in favour of 'staying with the trouble' (Haraway, 2016) of identity and race, we have paid particular attention to inter/intrapersonal questions of appropriation, representation and tokenism. Our data is ourselves, and our key learning is an emergent ethical heuristic for our future research. Our analysis links this in turn to children's own imaginaries as research subjects, as we begin to explore how such questions might resonate with the (always-already) relational and more-than-human (Taylor, Pacinini-Ketchabaw and Blaise, 2012) inscriptions they make in ELC contexts in Scotland. Such an endeavour contributes toward the broader field of scholarship concerned with problematising racial identities, equality, and social justice. A Froebel Trust grant is enabling us to extend this into studies of "whiteness" in early childhood (2022-23).

race, collaborative writing, early childhood, Deleuze, Bakhtin

Exploring perceptions of the relationship between social inequality, wellbeing and a child's affordances to play through the lens of practitioners and parents.

Hannah Malpass, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

This research explored practitioner and parent perceptions of the relationships between social inequality, wellbeing and play. Children are deeply influenced by the perceptions and judgements made by their peers during play and caregivers at home and in early years settings (Stirrup, Evans and Davies, 2017). Their social backgrounds are integral to the reputations they develop in school; these reputations influence their behaviour and wellbeing (MacClure et al. 2012). Neilsen (2020) argues that through play, children learn to interact socially, speak and listen and share resources with others, and their ability to do this may be influenced by their family background. The theoretical framework brings together Capability Theory (Sen, 1985), Bourdieu's (1986) Social and Cultural Capital and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), representing a novel approach in educational research. This interpretive, qualitative study (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) utilised an online survey for

practitioners and parents of children 0-5 (47 responses) and in-depth episodic interviews with seven professionals. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was sought from participants prior to participation. The potential for power imbalance, coercion and bias was carefully considered. Dominant problematic narratives from both practitioners and parents include concepts of poverty and inequality being poorly understood and participants overwhelmingly identifying Covid-19 as a negative influence upon wellbeing but not linking this, or social inequality explicitly with children's play experiences. This research highlights the importance of building a better understanding of social inequality and wellbeing in early childhood translating to the need for changes in both policy and practice.

social inequality, wellbeing, play, capability theory, cultural capital

D 24

TRANSITIONS IN NORDIC COUNTRIES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Else Johansen Lyngseth, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Teachers from different school forms are developing new strategies to support children's transitions

Ingela Friberg, Kristianstad University, Sweden

The purpose of this study is to analyze the transition from different educational cultures, how teachers support children's transition, in what ways teachers create continuity for children's transitions, and what pedagogical and didactic strategies need to be developed for children's voices to be heard in their transitions. This research built on previous research on transition (Dockett & Perry, 2009; Dockett, et.al 2017; Garpelin, et al 2010). The results can be seen as an answer to the need for more research about how teachers in preschool, preschool class and primary school can create continuity for children's transition journeys (Sandberg, et al. 2017). The theoretical framework is built on professional development theories (Rönnerman, 2004; 2012) and theoretical perspective on children's participation (Hart, 1992). Transition, transition journey, children's voices and participation are used as conceptual frameworks. This research is inspired by action research, an approach with participatory, collaborative, and cyclical ways of producing knowledge and change. Teachers are seen as developers of their own practice with opportunity to constantly ask new questions. (Mc Niff, 2014; Rönnerman, 2004). This project is focusing teachers pedagogical and didactical practices according to children's active participation in the transition process. The teachers received information about the research aim, method, process, and consents were collected from all participants. Ethical guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (2016) and Gustavsson, Hermerén & Pettersson (2011). The results indicate that the teachers develop pedagogical and didactic strategies to support children's perspectives in and around the adjustment. The project inspires to support and create continuity in transitions.

Transitions, children's perspective, relationship, strategies, teachers' professional development

Norwegian parents' experiences of collaboration with ECEC and school in the transition to school

Else Johansen Lyngseth (1), Kristine Warhuus Smeby (1), Kris Kalkman(2), Tuva Schanke (2), (1) Queen Mauds University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway, (2) Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

This study investigates Norwegian parent-teacher collaboration when children are in transition from ECEC to elementary school. We aim to explore issues of parents' lived experiences of transition, disclosing power dynamics that encourage or challenge collaboration. Previous research indicates that the power relation between ECEC and school is asymmetrical (Glaser 2018; Hogsnes & Moser 2014). A reciprocal dialogue between parents and professionals is required based on equal relationship and trust (Balduzzi et al. 2019). The theoretical framework intersects with transitional studies (Corsaro & Molinari 2000; Hogsnes 2019), and sociocultural theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979). This theoretical framework provides opportunities for analysis and discussion. The research approach is within a qualitative research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln 2018). This study is based on ten in-depth interviews with parents/caregivers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Thematic qualitative analysis was done using NVivo. All participants were informed of the project, their rights to withdraw and give their consent. The informants will be anonymous. Preliminary findings indicate that parents concern for their children's transition are based on lack of sufficient insight and information about how ECEC and school are collaborating, how institutional practices contributes to upholding children's play and friendships. In our discussion we critically address institutional practices, and consequences of different ways of informing and collaborating between educational institutions and parents. The results are expected to be used to improve local practices in Trondheim municipality by critically discussing current framings and ways to re-frame the collaboration between parents in ECEC and schools.

Transition between ECEC and school, collaboration with parents, parents experiences, institutional practice, reciprocal dialogue

Expanding or limiting the space of opportunity - Preschool teachers' interactions with children in transition situations

Sigrid Boyum, FLKI, Norway, Lillian Pedersen, FLKI, Norway

The main purpose of the study was to investigate preschool teachers' interactions with groups of children under the age of three in transition situations. A characteristic of the transition situation is the unclearness of what is the next to happen. Fabian conceptualizes it as "leaving the "comfort zone" and encountering the unknown" (2006, p.7). For children in preschool age, and especially children under the age of three, the ability to understand what is not in the present and in the room are limited. They need a caring adult and a well organized transition situation to feel well and secure (Broberg, 2018, p. 33). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) focus on intentionality and embodiment as well as general theories about transition situations (Barrett 1986; Fabian 2006). The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Tjora 2021). The researcher used video recordings of 22 preschool teachers. We have used a stepwise-deductive-inductive approach (SDI) to analyse the empirical material (Tjora, 2021). A consent form and information sheet was provided to all participants. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of preschools and preschool teachers. The findings demonstrate that a well organized transition situation and use of smaller groups of children in transitions can open the opportunity for interactions and a possibility for several people, both children and preschool staff, to work together. These findings suggest implications for how environments and routines might be used to enable children to participate in transition situations.

transition situation, preschool, embodiment, interaction, preschool teacher

D 25

EDUCATION, HISTORY AND AMBITIONS IN CHILE, SCOTLAND AND GERMANY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Felipe Godoy, Monash University, Australia

Care or education? Understanding the role of the early childhood assistant teachers in Chile

Felipe Godoy, Monash University, Australia

This research aims to analyse the discourses of the Chilean early childhood assistant teachers about their role. Scholars have contested a dominant discourse of early childhood teachers as "competent technicians" (Osgood, 2012; Cable & Miller, 2011), according to which the teaching workforce must comply with externally defined competencies to be acknowledged as good professionals. This discourse might be problematic since it excludes alternative profiles of practitioners such as the assistant teachers. To address this issue, the study is informed by a feminist ethics of care approach (Barnes, 2015; Langford et al., 2017), which contests the dualist view of care and education, the subordinate position of care as a social activity and its hyperfeminisation. Discourses were analysed drawing upon a Foucauldian approach (Clarke, 2005), and a total of four interviews and two focus groups with assistant teachers were conducted in two ECE centres located in an urban suburb from Santiago of Chile. Participants were provided with explanatory statements of the project before signing consent forms. The data was treated confidentially, and no children were included in the study. Preliminary findings suggest that the assistant teachers conceive their role as strictly practical, mainly -but not exclusively- fulfilling physical and emotional needs, with little mentions to play and understanding their caring and educational duties from a dualist view. These findings can inform future policies aimed at strengthening the ECE practitioners' work and education, with a broader scope that includes assistant teachers and embracing new approaches to ECE professionalism which foreground caring practices.

Assistant teachers, Ethics of care, ECE professionalism, Caring professionalism, Discourse analysis

Realising the Ambition: Being me, disrupting the discourse on play in Scottish early childhood arenas

Lynn Taylor, Marion Burns, Glasgow City Council, United Kingdom

In this paper we aim to show how Realising the Ambition: Being me, the national guidance for early years in Scotland (2020) and its underpinning philosophy, has disrupted the discourse on play and reconceptualised the image of the child in the early learning and childhood and primary school sectors. We draw on our previous transition from nursery to school study (Burns

2018) and play pedagogy study (Taylor 2019). Our study draws upon socio-cultural (Bourdieu 1983) and socio ecological theories (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998) plus general theories of play and learning (Fisher 2016; Moyles 2015; and Sahlberg and Doyle 2019). A combination of sociocultural and ecological systems paradigms allows us to use interpretative methodology to explore how the national guidance has been used by senior leaders in one Scottish education authority. Qualitative data gathering methods were used and thematic analysis illuminated key themes for discussion. Relevant information and consent forms were issued to all participants in line with BERA's ethical guidelines. Pseudonyms were used for confidentiality and anonymity purposes. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time. The authors found that within reshaped early childhood arenas that actors of all ages benefitted from reconceptualising play spaces; that play as pedagogy is an appropriate approach for revisiting our image of the child. Implications for policy and practice necessitate cross-sectoral collaboration and critically reflective discourse on how play pedagogy can open up opportunities for children to make sense of their world.

the child, pedagogy, play, national guidance, discourse

The impact of Third Reich policies and World War 2 on early education in Breslau/Wrocław: 1933-1945

Andrea Noel (1), Marta Kondracka-Szala (2), (1) State University of New York at New Paltz, United States, (2) University of Wrocław, Poland

To study government policies that impacted Early Childhood Education (ECE) during the Nazi Regime, and how ECE continued during the chaotic time before and after the 1945 Battle of Breslau. Blackburn (1985) and Pine (2010) published books on education during the Third Reich but did not focus on ECE. We utilize Ecological System's Theory because multiple levels of variables impact children's education/development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Government policies interact with other variables to exert enormous impact on learning and development. Archival research is used. After reviewing available secondary literature, an Analysis Aid was developed (Pojmann, et al. 2016) to guide collection/analysis. This research concerns government records/public documents, not first person accounts. Ethical questions regarding which documents to include were satisfied by studying all available documents and incorporating advice from McKee & Porter, (2012) on context, recursive thinking, and evaluating one's motives and personal training. Results show direct impact of Nazi policies on Breslau's ECE, including on Teachers' Organizations, civil servant law changes, which impacted Jews, restrictions on who attended public schools, and the closure of private kindergartens. The period of this study concerns one of the most violent/difficult periods of history, which resulted in unprecedented migration (Demshuk, 2012; Douglas, 2012). Now we are again experiencing large numbers of people displaced by war, yet there is a lack of information about how systems of ECE were historically organized, deteriorated, and/or prevailed in similarly chaotic historical periods. The current research provides such information to inform current policy.

Early Childhood Education, World War 2, Breslau, Germany, Third Reich, Kindergarten

E 1

MANAGING CONFLICT AND MANAGERIALISM

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Kate Wall, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Role play with artefacts in teaching about conflict management in preschool teacher education

Anders Råde, Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University, Sweden

The aim is to develop, prove and assess role play with artefacts about conflict management in preschool teacher education. Research reveals that role play is an innovative and functional way to teach students about conflict management (Morrison et al., 2013). Artefacts, in form of physical objects, has a long tradition in education, and for young children it is important to use visual artefacts (Almqvist, 2008; Uitto et al., 2021). In today's preschools digital artefacts (often tablets) are commonly used (Marklund, 2020). This study studies role play with artefacts, both physical and digital, concerning conflict management in preschool-teacher education. These roleplays will be developed in versions for campus and for online education, an increasing kind of teacher education and also more common in the covid-19 pandemic situation. As theoretical underpinning experimental learning will be used (Kolb, 1984; Moon, 2004). An important aspect in this project is to develop the assessment and assessment-criteria for the student's practical skills with the support of digital tools. The methods for data collection will be digital inquiries and interviews. The EECERA ethical code will be followed concerning informed consent, confidentiality, non-discriminatory, feedback and respecting the well-being of the participants as subjects with human rights. An important dimension in the project is that the use of role play as an innovative and playful method in the teacher education will inspire the future teachers. In preschools this type of teaching is close to children's play world, and can hopefully inspire their play and teach social values.

role play, artefacts, conflict management, preschool teacher education, assessment

Counteracting abusive treatments in preschool practice - Boundaries between conflicts, abusive treatments and violence

Anna Rantala (1), Mia Heikkilä (2), (1) Umeå University, Sweden, (2) Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The aim of this study is to increase knowledge about how action plans can act as support in the work to prevent and remedy abusive treatment in preschool which is, accordance with the Educational Act, a behaviour which violates the dignity of a child. This is done by focusing on how central concepts are used and contextualized in annually written plans. Previous research on the area is limited. This may be due the fact that children may not be seen capable of performing abusive treatments (Kirves & Sananiemi, 2012) or that the assignment is contextualized in a school context (Söderström & Löfdahl, 2017). Policy enactment (Ball, 2003) is used to understand how action plans for the purpose of preventing and remedying abusive treatment are expressed. We focus mainly on performativity and fabrications. This research followed a reflective and critical approach and focus on how policy texts are transformed into practice in form of a local policy plan. The material consist of 89 plans taken from websites of the same amount of Swedish municipalities. The material is anonymized, no names of the children, preschools or municipality is mentioned, and analyzed with content analysis. The findings reveal that the plans of how to prevent and remedy abusive treatment is done in different ways and different levels of contextualisation, and be seen as fabrications or as supportive. This can make it difficult for teachers to be able to decide when it is about abusive treatments or when it is about something else.

abusive treatment, action plans, fabrications, performativity, policy enactment

Impact of managerial systems on the work of Australian and Canadian educators: The implications for teaching and children's learning

Margie Rogers (1), Laura Doan (2), (1) University of New England, Australia, (2) Thompson Rivers University, Canada

Children's play cultures are shaped by their interaction with educators. The richness of these interactions is key to quality early childhood education. These interactions are affected by government-imposed managerial systems within early childhood services in some countries. Our international study of educators' work aims to reveal insights into the impacts of these systems on children and educators. This paper presents findings from Australia and Canada. Previous research demonstrates the importance of educators having time to interact with children to support their learning through play (Rogers, 2021). Quality

interactions are dependent on unhurried time with children to promote their play cultures. When educators feel they are not able to support this, their job satisfaction and professional identity are affected. This study uses a neoliberal framework to study the impact of managerial systems and how it affects educators' work (Sim, 2017). The project uses an interpretivist paradigm and a mixed-method approach using an online survey. The participants were educators with different qualifications and roles, working in various service types. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Ethics approval was granted by the University of New England and Thompson's Rivers University. Approval across two countries required persistence and high levels of communication. The findings demonstrate the impact of managerial systems on educators' feelings of being overwhelmed, overtired, micromanaged and frustrated. The systems also impacted educators' ability to respond to children's needs. The systems also impacted educators' ability to respond to children's needs. This study will be of interest to policymakers, educators, and teacher educators.

Neoliberalism, professionalism, educator well-being, educators' work, managerialism

E 2

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON DAILY LIFE IN PRE-SCHOOL

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Kristín Dýrfjörð, University of Akureyri, Iceland

Young children's perspectives of time in ECEC

Kristín Dýrfjörð (1), Anna Magnea (2), Adrijana Visnjic-Jevtic (3), Alison Clark (4), (1) University of Akureyri, Iceland, (2) University of Iceland, Iceland, (3) University of Zagreb, Croatia, (4) University of South-Eastern Norway, UCL, United Kingdom

This research aims to provide insights into young children's perspectives of time spent in ECEC. Research interest is growing into the relationship between time and daily schedules in ECEC and children's awareness of events, time and the clock (Katsuura et al., 2021; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012; Clark, 2020). Theoretical background relates to children's perception of time, including pedagogical and polymorphic time and children's right to have a voice in matters that concerns them. (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012) Participatory research methods were applied to provide insight into the world of children and increase adults' understanding of their views. Data was collected by "hanging out" with children in six ECEC in Iceland, and by in depth observation and interviews in one ECEC in Croatia. University of Iceland Science Ethics Committee provided a positive review of the study. ECEC authorities, preschool staff and parents provided informed consent. Children involved could express assent or dissent throughout. Time was given to build trust between researchers and participants. The findings indicate that children experience time as the sequence of events. Different types of daily schedules and practices affect children's perception and experiences of time. Deciding where and when to play with friends was important to children and gave meaning. This exploratory study identifies both the importance and complexities in including young children's perspectives in co-constructing knowledge and meanings about the relationship with time in ECEC and its impact on definitions of quality. It implies that children's perception of time should be part of organizing the pedagogical rhythm of daily schedule.

Children's perspectives, Meaning making, Preschool practice, Temporality Play, Daily schedules

What do children do all day? A day in life of 4 year-olds in different early childhood contexts in Quebec.

Nancy Proulx (1), Joanne Lehrer (2), Sophie-Anne Boucher (2), Emmanuella Rémy (2), (1) Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada, (2) Université du Québec en Outaouais, Canada

The aim of this project is to explore how children in four different publicly-funded and regulated early years contexts in Quebec (Canada) spend their day. Garnier and colleagues (2016) found that French 2-year-olds' experiences depended on whether they were the oldest children at the crèche or the youngest children at school. Based on Smith's (2005) sociology for people, this presentation explored both how children's daily lives are lived, and how institutions and discourses shape their experiences. This multi-case institutional ethnography presents findings from participant observation, interviews, and documents collected in four different early years settings: a non-profit childcare centre, a private daycare, a home childcare, and a 4-year-old kindergarten class. In addition to standard ethical procedures, we created a picture book in order to explain the research project to the children, emphasizing their right to refuse to participate, despite parental permission. We also paid attention to body language and facial expressions and sought children's assent throughout the data collection period. While children engage in the same types of activities across settings, how these are organized and the amount of liberty and choice children have varies. In addition, some children in some environments spend a significant amount of time waiting during the day. This project leads us to reflect on the intended and unintended consequences of policy and discourse focused on preparing children for school, and on how ECEC can be organised, indeed, what ECEC is ultimately for.

'The rug is my best place' – in the entangled intersection of children's and educators' views of the educational environment in preschool

Lena O Magnusson, University of Gävle, Sweden

This presentation highlights how three- to five-year-old children and their educators perceive and experience the education environment in the Swedish preschool. As with earlier research (Eriksson Bergström, 2013; Lippman and Matthews, 2019; Nordin-Hultman, 2004), a starting point in the research performed is that the physical environment plays an essential role in what type of educational practice can take place in preschool. The theoretical point of departure in the study is posthumanism. The data is analysed using diffractive readings (Barad 2014; Magnusson, 2021) to see the entangled intersection of the children's and the educator's experience of the education environment. The study was performed as a multiple case study (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018), including preschools in three Swedish municipalities. The data was generated using pedagogical walk-throughs (www.ncl.ac.uk/cored/) with educators and camera tours (Clark, 2010; Magnusson and Åkerblom, 2022) with children. Teachers, children and their guardians have agreed to participate in the study, and the chosen theoretical framework includes ethical considerations throughout the research process (cf. Barad, 2014; Magnusson, 2017). The results contribute to research that touches on the intersection between teachers' and children's perception and experience of the educational environment in preschool and shows how children view the educational environment as a place for play and learning. However, the result can also stimulate educators working in a preschool in their process of designing or re-designing their preschool environment. By also making children's perspectives on the physical environments visible, the result can influence educators and principals in the education practice.

camera tours, diffractive readings, educational environment, pedagogical walk-throughs, preschool

E 3

OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Maelis Karlsson Lohmander, University of Gothenburg, Department of Education Communication and Learning, Sweden

Validation of Play Support Rating Scale (ECERS-3 extension scale)

Olga Kholodova, Igor Shiyan, Anna Iakshina, Tatiana Le-van, Moscow City University, Russia

The aim is to test "Play support rating scale" (ECERS-3 extension). Play support is one of the most important aspects of high quality learning practice (Moser et al., 2014; Sylva et al., 2016). The level of child play development decreases (Brèdikytė, 2011), conditions for play development decline (Remorenko et al., 2017). Although, high level of play contributes to development of emotional area, communication, imagination, agency, and school readiness (Bredenkamp, 2004; Kravtsov, Kravtsova, 2017; Singer, De Haan, 2019). Assessment of play conditions can navigate teachers in quality development. Theoretical framework of our study is Vygotskian theory. The main criteria of play are imaginary situation and double subjectivity (Vygotsky, 2016; Kravtsov, Kravtsova, 2017; Hedegaard, Fleer, 2013; Pramling et al., 2019). PSRS construction, evaluation procedure and scoring system are similar to ECERS-3 (Harms et al., 2015), 94 indicators describe play quality on 4 levels. For validation, qualitative and quantitative analysis of structured observation scores were used: internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha), reliability control, discriminative control via contrast groups (Welch t-tests and Mann-Whitney test) were implemented. The sample includes 32 preschool classrooms (average 25 children of 3-7-year-old in each). PSRS was elaborated on the basis of ECERS-3 principles: focus on conditions, complex assessment, observability, assessment for development (Iakshina et al., 2021). The study followed EECERA ethic code. Informed consent was gained. Participants could withdraw at any time. The PSRS field tests were successful, while revealing a sufficient level of validity and reliability. PSRS is useful for researchers and practitioners for external expert evaluation and self-evaluation.

preschool education, play support, assessment tool, complex quality evaluation, ECERS

The factor structure of the Mature Play Observation Tool in Norwegian preschools

Lisa Karlsen (1), Elisabet Solheim Buøen (2), Ratib Lekhal (1), Veslemøy Rydland (1), (1) University of Oslo, Norway, (2) RBUP Southeast, Regional Center For Child & Adolescent Mental Health, Norway

We aimed to assess the factor structure of the Mature Play Observation Tool (MPOT) (Germeroth et al., 2019) and describe play maturity and adult support as measured with the MPOT, in a Norwegian preschool sample. Studies of preschool quality

utilise several tools assessing adult–child interactions (e.g., Bjørnstad & Os, 2018; Eckhardt & Egert, 2018; Helmerhorst et al., 2015; Pessanha, et al., 2017). Few of these tools focus on play quality specifically, much less peer-play interactions (Germeroth et al., 2019). MPOT addresses this but is not yet validated outside of the United States. This study complements Germeroth et al.'s (2019) validation study by exploring MPOT's factor structure in a Nordic context – one heavily focused on free-play. Our study's framework is Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development within a sociocultural perspective. Observational data was collected in 126 preschool units catering to three-to-six-year-olds. Centred on a post-positivist approach, quantitative data was analysed using Stata, producing descriptive statistics and a confirmatory factor analysis. All practitioners received information and consent letters before being assigned unique numeric identifiers. All participants could withdraw at any time. Findings support the factor structure of MPOT but also show a potential for improving support during play in Norwegian preschools. These findings indicate that MPOT is a valid tool for use in Norwegian preschools but also highlight the need for professional development focused on supporting children's play in this context where MPOT can be used.

Peer play, Adult support, Mature Play Observation Tool, Play quality, Free play

E 4

PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY IN ECE CURRICULA

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Hanne Kvilhaugsvik, NORCE Norwegian Research Centre, Norway

Playing with theoretical lenses: a kaleidoscope of quality in early years curricula

Jan Georgeson, Verity Campbell-Barr, Katherine Evans, Sasha Tregenza-May, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

We explore what playing with different theoretical lenses offers to understanding what constitutes a high-quality early years curriculum. Philosophical and policy histories of early years pedagogy present complex and contradictory discourses of curriculum, learning, play and pedagogy, with terminology often conflated without consideration of nuances (Wood and Hedges, 2016). Here we consider how three theoretical lenses (cultural-historical activity (Fleer, 2010), post-human (Somerville 2020), sociological (Prout and James, 1997) might cast light and shade on understanding what constitutes a high-quality curriculum (Lunenburg, 2011; Wood, 2020). Within a conceptual comparison approach (Soler and Miller, 2003) we work with data from focus groups and practitioner reports on learning walks in which practitioners investigated a curriculum conundrum, an area of curriculum in practice that, for them, warranted further exploration. All participants and gatekeepers were provided with information sheets detailing what the research entailed, where data are stored, who has access and how data will be disseminated. Data were anonymised, removing any identifiable features from the learning walks. Each theoretical lens provides a different insight into the data. A cultural-historical activity theoretical lens focuses on interpersonal processes; a sociological lens highlights how the state/legislative field weakens the pedagogical recontextualising field and a post-human lens considers the material environment as an active constituent of a high-quality early years curriculum. Drawing on different theoretical lenses shows how paths from curriculum text (theory and/or policy) to curriculum practice are criss-crossing and multi-layered, also suggesting that curriculum theory in itself remains fragmented, caught between laissez-fair and developmental approaches.

curriculum, cultural-historical activity theory, sociological theory, post-human theory, Learning walks

There's always room for improvement: Practitioners' perspectives on challenges to quality in ECEC settings

Valerie Sollars, University of Malta, Malta

This study sought to identify challenges faced by practitioners in Maltese ECEC settings in their efforts to offer quality services. Qualified staff who are knowledgeable and skilful in articulating and implementing a curriculum which appropriately addresses the needs of children and families are key for quality provision (Callanan, et al., 2017). However, apart from itself being a contested concept, quality depends on several factors (Vandenbroeck et al., 2021); some may be addressed at micro-level but others are associated to macro-level issues, external to individuals or settings. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bio-ecological systems theory offered an appropriate theoretical framework as practitioners are considered 'active persons at the centre', who develop insights and beliefs from their own contexts and engagements. Data were collected through 63 interviews and focus group discussions with staff from 50 settings. A phenomenological research approach shed light on insights and lived experiences of practitioners (Creswell, 2013). Themes were elicited through NVivo analysis and repeated readings of recorded responses. Following the distribution of an information document and a face-to-face meeting participants signed a consent form. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The University Research Ethics Committee approved the research. Both structural and process factors present challenges. Results indicated the complexities related to quality arising from systemic

issues. Practitioners seemed less likely to identify themselves as contributors to quality or discuss ways to address professional shortcomings. These results are analysed with recommendations about the need for practitioners to become critical and reflective about their practices and contributions to quality matters.

childcare, kindergarten, quality ECEC settings, challenges to quality, practitioners' experiences

Instrumental knowledge? Didactical tools and knowledge regimes in early childhood education

Hanne Kvilhaugsvik (1), Helene Marie Kjærgård Eide(2), (1) NORCE Norwegian Research Centre, Norway, (2) University of Bergen, Norway

This paper aims to analyse knowledge regimes (Campbell & Pedersen, 2014) associated with three didactical tools for social skills in Nordic early childhood education and care (ECEC). Previous research has highlighted the spread of policies and tools aiming to standardise practices in education and to introduce 'evidence-based' methods (Ball, 2021; Wasmuth & Nitecki, 2017), but contributors have also pointed out that influential tools have an unclear background and may be in contrast to Nordic traditions for free play and diversity (Pettersvold & Østrem, 2019; Seland, 2020). We utilise a theoretical framework combining policy enactment (Ball et al., 2011) and translation theory (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2013), allowing us to study the background, organisers, and goals of didactical tools. We conducted qualitative case studies (Yin, 2018) of 9 Norwegian ECEC centres, with thematic analysis of data from semi-structured interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) with 57 informants, and documents from centres and from developers of tools. The centres and informants were given written information about the project before the interviews. All informants have given their written consent to participate. We find that the tools have been spread to centres through a knowledge regime that includes centre owners, municipalities, public organisations, researchers, and non-governmental organisations. The tools are intended to strengthen professionalism and quality, but our analysis shows an ambiguous understanding of the tools amongst staff. Although the tools have laudable aims and are perceived as helpful, we argue that such tools might steer professionalism and practices in ECEC with a vague knowledge basis.

didactical tools, social skills, policy enactment, knowledge regimes, ECE professionalism

E 5

STRATEGIES AND MODELS FOR DEVELOPING STEM

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Gary Bingham, Georgia State University, United States

Teachers' professional development within early childhood education and pre-primary education - In relation to cross-disciplinary STEM teaching

Johanna Hirvi, Åbo Akademi, Finland

In today's society, it is important to reflect over how early childhood education and care (ECEC) and pre-primary education teachers can increase children's motivation and interest for, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This paper explores how a group of ECEC and pre-primary teachers in Finland develop their didactical and pedagogical knowledge in relation to STEM teaching during in-service training. Teachers who take part in in-service training tend to develop a more positive attitude to STEM teaching (DeJarnette, 2018; Alexander et al., 2014). The theoretical framework is based on perspectives on teacher's knowledge that includes teacher's content knowledge, such as pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Present study was guided by a qualitative interpretive research, with data that consist of video recordings from nine in-service training sessions during 2020. A thematic analysis, with an abductive approach, is used to analyse the data. Preliminary results will be presented with an illustrative figure. The research ethics principles in Finland (TENK, 2019) have guided each part of this study. Information about the informants' rights was shared before every in-service training session. After receiving information about the study's aim, their right to withdraw at any point and how confidentiality is guaranteed, informants gave their consent to participate in the study. Preliminary findings indicate that the majority of the teachers appear to have some challenges in conducting cross-disciplinary child-centred STEM teaching at the beginning of the in-service training. This study implicates the importance of in-service training programs that emphasize teacher's professional development.

Professional development, In-service training, STEM teaching, Cross-disciplinary, Pedagogical knowledge

Engaging young children in science learning: Examining two professional learning models

Gary Bingham (1), Hope Gerde (2), (1) Georgia State University, United States, (2) Texas A&M, United States

This study examined the enactment of two Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) professional learning models for supporting preschool teachers' (STEM) practices. Preschool experiences with STEM that are playful, meaningful, and intentional promote STEM interest and learning (Greenfield et al., 2017; Morgan et al., 2016). Although children are naturally curious, most preschool children have few STEM learning opportunities (Gerde et al., 2018; Nayfeld et al., 2011; Tu, 2006). Sociocultural theory identifies how instructional materials, teacher-child interactions, and conversations support children's STEM learning (Breive, 2020; Vygotsky, 1978). This study is framed from a post-positivistic paradigm. Fifty ECE teachers from two early childhood programs received four days of professional learning and coaching in (a) STEM lab OR (b) integrated STEM instructional program condition. STEM labs were pull out spaces for intentional STEM learning. Integrated STEM was coaching received in the general classroom. Both conditions received monthly coaching. Teachers STEM practices were observed three times. Standardized observational measures evaluated both general (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2008) and STEM focused learning practices (Authors, 2019). All university ethical guidelines were followed. Teachers consented to be observed and parents gave permission for children to participate. Teachers and children in the STEM labs experienced more STEM exploration and higher quality STEM conversations than integrated STEM classrooms. Coaches provided more STEM focused coaching in STEM labs. Teachers in STEM labs had higher knowledge and self-efficacy. Findings have implications for effective STEM teacher professional learning that promotes children's STEM engagement and learning.

instructional practices, professional learning, STEM, engagement, STEM pedagogy

Exploring Children's Engineering and Maths strategies in Outdoor Play Activities in Oman

Iskender Gelir, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

This study investigates children's engineering and maths strategies in play activities in a preschool setting in Oman. This study aims to contribute to studies examining the role of outdoor play in maths (Platas, 2017) and the relationships between play and STEM learning (Ann et al., 2015; Solis et al., 2017) by showing that children experience engineering and mathematical concepts in play activities. The study draws on Vygotsky's (1967) notion of play as imaginary situation to analyse children's strategies play activities. It is situated within approaches that point to the link between imagination and cognitive development (Fleer, 2011). This study uses ethnography as research methodology and takes an interpretive paradigm to data analysis. The data included observation notes and video recordings of 3 participant children's interaction in play activities between November 2021 and February 2022. Two sessions per week were conducted, of which lasted around 40 minutes. Permission was taken from the teachers and parents of the children. BERA's (2011) ethical guidelines were followed during observation sessions to take children's best interests into account. The findings indicate that free playtime enables children to express their ideas about constructions (building), measure and functions of materials. It also highlights how teachers' conceptualisation of play is shaped by contextual factors (hot weather), limiting children's interaction with nature. For example, teachers considered play activities in the hall covered with a shade for sun protection as outdoor. It suggests that teachers can develop children's maths conceptual development by taking an intentional teaching approach to playful activities.

Outdoor play activities, Engineering and maths skills, Conceptualisation of play, Contextual factors, Intentional teaching approaches

E 6

EXPLORING NATURAL SCIENCE AND STEM LEARNING IN ECE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Anna Günther-Hanssen, Institution for Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden

Children's imaginative and concrete-based associations during natural science experiments in the preschool.

Nikolaos Christodoulakis, Karina Adbo, Linnaeus University, Sweden

The aim of the study was to explore preschool children's sustained shared thinking during a series of emerging chemistry play-based activities designed as educational experiments (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009). The study is a continuation of a series of researches emphasizing on how children's motivation towards natural science activities is a crucial aspect of establishing sustained shared thinking (Vidal Carulla & Adbo, 2020). Drawing from the theoretical principles of Cultural-historical Theory, motivation is understood as part of the socio-cultural environment of the child (Fleer, 2010). The data was collected from the instances in which children's attention to the activities was interrupted and analyzed using qualitative conversation analysis (Hedegaard, 2012). Instead of omitting these communicational breaks between the adult and the child, they were placed in the center of the research. The analysis highlighted the meaningful character of these moments. Relevant actor's awareness

of the research goals and usage of the data on the basis of respect and accountability were the ethical considerations. Informed consent and confidentiality were addressed. Results show that children recall various aspects from their concrete experiences in the past as a way of making sense of the scientific content. In making these connections, they retrieve a whole range of other associations, mainly belonging to a single episode of experience. Elements of the science activities were often imaginatively re-created. Children's exposure to unexperienced aspects of the sub-microscopic world were recontextualized in the form of imaginative narratives. These findings contribute on understanding the motivational aspects of children's learning of natural science.

Science, Preschoolers, Sustained-shared thinking, Imagination, Vygotsky

Playing with physics: physical phenomena as playmates in children's play and teachers' work with gendering.

Anna Günther-Hanssen, Institution for Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden

The aim of this presentation is to highlight how physical phenomena can work as creative playmates to both children and teachers. It contributes to the contemporary studies that show how scientific contents work as active agents which children learn together with rather than about (e.g. Areljung, 2020; Haus, 2018) and to the still few studies on emergent science and gender in ECE (e.g. Andersson, 2012; Desouza & Czerniak, 2002). Theoretically, Karen Barad's theory of agential realism (Barad, 2007) and de Freitas and Palmers (2016) notion concerning how scientific concepts work as creative playmates to children are used. The presentation connects with a post qualitative paradigm and Barad's (2014) diffractive methodology is used. The data (video, field notes) was constructed during a field study in a Swedish preschool with five-year-old children. An ethical concern was the children's consent which was dealt with moment to moment. Before each video-recording, the children were asked if it was okay to being filmed. If a child seemed uncomfortable the camera was turned of. The findings show how physical phenomena can work as important playmates to children, co-creating their learning, agency and identity construction. They also show how gendering take part in children's play, hindering physical phenomena from becoming playmates to some children. Important implications are that teachers need to make sure that all children, regardless of gender, get the opportunity to embodied play with physical phenomena and how physics concepts, such as acceleration and force, can become important playmates in teachers work with gendering.

physical phenomena, playmates, gender, new materialism, embodiment

To make space for play in the city: Preschool children's outdoor play and mobility in the inner-city of Stockholm

Karin Litsner, Uppsala University, Sweden

This presentation derives from my PhD-project, with the aim to explore children's play and mobility within outdoor activities at preschools in inner-city Stockholm. Due to densification of cities, there are reduced outdoor spaces for children, including preschool yards. The project focus on preschools with either limited or no yards of their own. Hence, they regularly leave the premises - meaning play, learning and socialisation partly occur in public spaces. From earlier research, we know children play in interaction with others and materialities (Cortés-Morales & Christensen, 2014), both within a place and when moving between places, which studies show becomes more than mere transportation (Kullman, 2010). Theoretical departure is interpretive reproduction (Corsaro, 1993), and the notion of humans as simultaneously beings, becomings and having beens (Kingdon, 2018). Additionally, new mobilities aids exploring children's movements. Being situated in a relational paradigm, mobilities emerge in encounters between places, people and materialities (Creswell, 2010). The theoretical perspectives underpin the methodology; where the researcher partakes in the movements studied, inspired by mobile ethnography (Sheller & Urry, 2006), while participatory observations allows research with the children. After ethical approval, caregivers' written consent has been collected. Attention is also continuously given to children's different expressions regarding their participation. Findings will be anonymised before publication. Data collection is recently initiated; thus, the presentation discusses preliminary results about children's mobilities and play in the inner-city. The study contributes with knowledge for ECEC-practices about their outdoor activities, and the children's space in the city - particularly in dense urban areas.

inner-city preschools, public space, relational perspective, mobilities, outdoor play

E 7

ECEC PRACTICES AT HOME AND IN PRESCHOOL

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Takayo Sugimoto, Aichi University, Japan

The shadows and power of literacy discourses in Early Childhood Education

Tina Binfield-Skøie, Ingunn Elisabeth Stray, University of Agder, Norway

This study explores potential role policy initiatives and assessment tools have as agents of discourse in the interaction between multilingual families and ECE institutions. Multilingual children in Early Childhood Education (ECE) have fewer grounds for participation in language stimulating conversations (Palludan, 2005, Giæver, 2020). They also experience difference in possibilities to participate in ECE's everyday life (Bundgaard & Gulløv, 2006). The study draws upon Foucault (1969) aspects of discourses and power and Hood's (2014) notion of "blame-avoidance". The study applies a qualitative design, with post-structural theory as analytic framework. Methods used are document analysis and interviews with ECE teachers (Bryman et al., 2021). Anonymity, trustworthiness, accuracy, and transparency is emphasized in the data processing and presentations. Discourses of multilingual children's language acquisition might frame interaction between preschool teachers and multilingual families. Instead of attending to parents' stories of their children's capacities and ways of being in the world, standardized protocols of the first meeting between multilingual families and ECE institutions are used to assess parents' facilitation of their children's language environments. The manner of questioning, by mapping children's personal "language-history", enables a move of responsibility or "blame" (Hood, 2014), from the ECE to the home environment and upbringing. Parents are held accountable for their children's language learning, as their "success" are examined by a checklist-communicating a biased concept or discourses of what constitutes a "good parent" in a Norwegian context. The findings disclose shadow sides of multilingual policies initiatives, where they become barriers instead of tools of inclusion.

Literacy in ECE institutions, Multilingual policies, Standardizing language assessment, Early Childhood Education, Norwegian language policies

How teachers' decontextualized talk fosters toddlers' social interactions and language development: An intensive longitudinal study of Japanese ECEC settings

Takayo Sugimoto, Aichi University, Japan

We aimed to describe how teachers' use of decontextualized language (henceforth, DL) could create toddlers' rich language environment and motivate their development through a longitudinal study. DL is language or expressions displaced in terms of time, person, or place; it is to talk about 'there-and-then', not 'here-and-now' (Rowe, 2013; Sacks, 1983). Previous research shows that caregivers' use of DL predicts children's later cognitive development and school readiness (Uccelli et al., 2018). However, DL has mainly been studied in family contexts. How young children could possibly benefit from teachers' DL within ECEC settings is understudied. Following Pauker et al. (2018), we closely examined individual teacher-child interactions as a part of process quality of ECEC settings. We redefined DL based on Hackett (1977) and Rowe (2016). Our intensive longitudinal observation study examined two specific contexts of Japanese ECEC settings: picture-book reading and morning-time teacher-child interactions. Our participants were in randomly assigned the control and the treatment groups. We videotaped and measured both verbal and nonverbal interactions between teachers and toddlers. Our research plan including the assignment of children and teachers was reviewed and officially approved by the research ethics committee of the author's affiliated institution. We also obtained the written permissions from the parents. Our statistical analyses revealed that the two different contexts elicited different types of DL and nonverbal communication from toddlers. Teachers' early use of multimodal linguistic inputs moderated toddlers' DL in a stepwise way. We will suggest ways to promote teachers' elaborative multimodal communication with DL in different contexts.

decontextualized language, teacher-toddler multimodal communication, longitudinal observation study, children's language environment, the process quality of ECEC

Developing preschool practice with toddlers " ...that they have something to say about the preschool day..."

Hrönn Pálmadóttir, Ingibjorg Sigurdardottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this study was to develop preschool practice and children's learning environment in accordance with educators' experiences and new knowledge in the field. Other research reveals that the prevailing ideology in preschools influences practices, how children's perspectives, and attention are considered (Alvestad o.fl., 2014; Svinth, 2019). The study is inspired by ideas within education and childhood research where children's ability to participate and influence their environment is in focus (Jóhanna Einarsdóttir, 2012; Moss & Dahlberg, 2008). As well as emphasis on young children as active learners (Trevarthen, 2018). The study was collaborative action research lasting for two years. Educators working with the youngest children in three preschools and two researchers worked in collaboration through the research process. Collaborative action research can be personal as participants examine their own work and practices. Emphasis regarding ethics in such research is that all participants have the same right to express their views at all stages of the study, regardless of their role (Locke et. al, 2013). The findings indicate that educators' perspectives on toddlers and their education changed during the research process

They also saw their pedagogical role in a new way. Emphasis was put on children's perspectives and expression, Furthermore, to observe and develop the learning environment according to children's actions, interests, and needs. The study contributes with new knowledge about preschool practice with the youngest children. Moreover, it supports previous findings that show how collaborative action research are effective approach to improve practice and for teachers' professional development.

Toddlers, preschool pedagogy, collaborative action research, university educators, learning environment

E 8

EDUCATORS SUPPORT, CONTRIBUTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF STEAM ACTIVITY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Anne Nakken, Queen Maud University College, Norway

Exploring teachers' role in supporting children's digital play

Eva Brooks, Maja Højslet Schurer, Aalborg University, Denmark

This three-year study aims to reveal how teachers in early childhood education orchestrate children's digital play. Research shows that including digital technology in pedagogical endeavours, is not simply a matter of teachers' willingness to apply new ways of acting with digital tools; it is a multi-layered process of professional change including mindset and pedagogical dispositions informing new educational strategies (Redecker, 2017). The theory draws on two metaphors for learning: participation metaphor focusing on the activity and context; and acquisition metaphor building on acquiring knowledge (Sfard, 1998). We recognise teachers' actions at the level of the "how to", "what to" or "about what" issues (Andriessen, et al., 2013). Applying a social constructivism approach (Vygotsky, 1987), we used an action research methodology (Lofthouse et al., 2016). Data was collected through video observations, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, teaching plans, video logs/logbooks. Analysis method was thematic (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019). Teachers and parents were informed about the study in writing. Parents agreed by signing informed consent forms. UNCR was fully respected and participating children were carefully informed before verbal consent was negotiated with them ahead and during every workshop. Findings reveal that teachers strived towards a participation metaphor of learning, emphasising co-creation as key activity for pedagogical integration of digital technology in their teaching. They emphasised an acquisition metaphor considering individual enrichment of improving their digital skills. The findings suggest implications for how teachers in ECE settings can enhance individual and collective digital competence to authentically foster and participate in children's digital play

Digital play, Digital skills, Participation metaphor, Acquisition metaphor, Co-creation

“Look! It is growing! preschool Teachers' contribution to children's meaning making in play-based science learning”

Hawa Mnyasenga, Linköping University, Sweden

The study aims to unfold preschool teachers' scaffolding with various semiotic resources during play-based seed germination activity. Previous research targeting preschool science indicates the importance of the teacher's role in leading and acknowledging children's interests during their meaning-making process (e.g., Pramling & Wallerstedt 2019); explorative challenging of children (Jonsson and Thulin, 2019); and responding to children's play and imagination (Hildén, Hultman & Ribaeus, 2021). In addition, other studies call for a more active role for teachers in directing children to goals-specific meaning-making (e.g., Björklund and Palmér, 2019) This study, as part of a larger PhD-project, employs a sociocultural approach Vygotsky (2016) and Rogoff's (1958-) ideas on 'the participation perspective' (Rogoff, 2003), allowing studying the multimodal actions during a preschool teacher-led-science activity. Using a qualitative multimodal approach (Jewitt, 2014), data for this study stems from the video recording of one preschool in Sweden where one preschool teacher and five children 3–5-year-olds do a science activity. The use of multimodal conversational analysis (Mondada, 2018) allowed analysis of various semiotic resources Adhering to Swedish ethical rules (SFS 2003:460), the researcher obtained informed consent from participating children's practitioners and guardians through letters and children through verbal information. The researcher assured the participants about voluntary participation and strictly confidential treatment of research data. Findings show the impact of teaching resources with different affordances used by preschool teachers and their contribution to children's meaning-making in science. Findings suggest implications for how preschool teachers might use multimodal resources to support children's meaning-making during science activities in preschools.

Play-based science, Teachers' role, Multimodality, Scaffolding, Semiotic resources

Early geometric play of four- and five-year-old children

Satoshi Watanabe, Jissen women's university, Japan

This research aims to clarify the developmental tendency of young children's geometric play and guide them to improve their geometric abilities through guided play-based activities. Guided play is child-directed and can allow teachers to enhance children's exploration and learning by commenting on their discoveries (Ash & Wells, 2006: 46). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon current theories of guided play (Weisberg et al, 2013), as well as general theories of instructional model (Rogoff, 1994) and responsibility of learning processes (Brandt, 2013). The study was conducted using a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The methodology of this study is based on "guided Play" (Weisberg et al, 2013). We planned a guided play to construct tops and observed how children play with them. Guided play was recorded, and the dialogue between the children and teachers was analysed according to the research aims. It was necessary for the children and their parents to give their consent. The report included only those children whose parents consented to their participation in guided play. The guided play sessions inspired children to work on 3-D compositions and improved their ability to notice color patterns. Guided play provides opportunities for children to take the initiative and carry out activities that suit their individual abilities. Guided play motivates children to construct 3-D solids focused on the length of triangles and develop hand manipulation. Guided play can also be applied to develop children's abilities beyond mathematics.

Guided play-based activities, Early learning of geometry, Preschool Mathematics education, Child-centred learning, developmental sates of young children

E 13

PARENTS INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S LEARNING (A PEN GREEN AND MIDLOTHIAN COLLABORATION)

Self-organised Symposium

The symposium will look at the theory and research behind the PICL (Parents Involvement in their Children's Learning) project developed by the team at Pen Green in Corby Northamptonshire, followed by an introduction to the Pen Green and Midlothian collaboration. The collaboration has involved training practitioners in the PICL approach, as well as providing the opportunity to train the trainers within Midlothian Council and Midlothian Surestart. The Symposium will include presentations of case studies that have been carried out during the project by both practitioners and parents. Over the past year a team from Sterling University have been carrying out an evaluative study of the project, there will be the opportunity during the symposium to hear about the study, and for us to share the key findings of the study.

Chair: Joanne Benford, Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Parents Involvement in their Children's Learning (A Pen Green and Midlothian Collaboration)

Joanne Benford (1), Jacqueline Matthew (2), Ashley Galloway (3), (1) Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom, (2) Midlothian County Council, United Kingdom, (3) Midlothian Surestart, United Kingdom

This study is an overview of the 'Parents Involved in their Children's Learning' (PICL) approach in Early Years (EY) settings throughout Midlothian. Research demonstrates that engaging in a knowledge sharing approach when working in partnership with parents benefits young children (Easen et al 1992, Whalley & Arnold 2013, Whalley et al 2017). The key theories that have influenced the development of the PICL approach include, Well-Being & Involvement (Laevers, 1997), Schema Theory (Athey, 1990, 2007; Arnold 2003, 2015) & Pedagogic Strategies (Whalley & Arnold, 2013), Lawrence and Gallagher, (2015). Alongside this, the work of Whalley et al (2017) has been used to support the development of the PICL approach in Midlothian. Adopting a collaborative, ethnographic stance, a qualitative approach was used. Andragogy is considered in order to consider how the adults engaging in the training have been supported appropriately. The main ethical concerns were inappropriate sharing of data. This was mitigated by storing data on encrypted, password protected devices, individual consent was sought from participants throughout. Findings indicate a positive impact on parents and their children. Key to the PICL approach is building relationships between practitioners and parents. One outcome is that parents build knowledge and strategies to augment their parenting skills and improve their understanding and relationship with their child. Findings suggest value in the approach even during the pandemic. Future implications include Practitioners & families sharing theory, & knowledge to benefit the children, and parents confidently sharing their expertise about their child with EY practitioners.

Partnership, Collaboration, Education, Relationships, Engagement

Parents Involvement in their Children's Learning (A Pen Green and Midlothian Collaboration)

Jacqueline Matthew (1), Ashley Galloway (2), Janine Stewart (2), Julie Davidson (2), Amanda McCulloch (2), (1) Midlothian Council, United Kingdom, (2) Midlothian Council Early Years Team, United Kingdom

This study summarises a range of practitioners experiences of engaging in the 'Parents Involved in their Children's Learning' (PICL) approach in Early Years (EY) settings throughout Midlothian. Research demonstrates that engaging in a knowledge sharing approach when working in partnership with parents benefits young children (Easen et al 1992, Whalley & Arnold 2013, Whalley et al 2017). Key theories that influenced the development of the PICL approach include, Well-Being & Involvement (Laevers, 1997), Schema Theory (Athey, 1990, 2007; Arnold 2003, 2015) & Pedagogic Strategies (Whalley & Arnold, 2013), Lawrence and Gallagher, (2015). Additionally, the work of Whalley et al (2017) supported the development of the PICL approach in Midlothian. Case studies demonstrated how practitioners and parents worked together. Video was used as an observational tool, and reflection has taken place to consider the effectiveness of the approach. A collaborative, qualitative approach was used. Considering Androgogy to understand how the adults engaging in the training were appropriately supported. The main ethical concern was inappropriate sharing of data. This was mitigated by storing data on encrypted, password protected devices. Permission to share was gained from participants. Findings indicate a positive impact on parents and their children. Key to the PICL approach is building relationships between practitioners and parents. Parents comment that they have a clearer understanding of how the theory links to their child's play and learning. Future implications include Practitioners & families sharing theory & knowledge to benefit children, and parents confidently sharing their expertise about their child with practitioners.

Partnership, Collaboration, Education, Relationships, Engagement

Parents Involvement in their Children's Learning (A Pen Green and Midlothian Collaboration)

Hannah Hale, Judy Warburton, University of Stirling, United Kingdom

This research project is an evaluation of the experiences and impact of the 'Parents Involved in their Children's Learning' (PICL) approach. Research demonstrates that engaging in a knowledge sharing approach when working in partnership with parents benefits young children (Easen et al 1992, Whalley & Arnold 2013, Whalley et al 2017). The work of Whalley et al (2017) has been used to support the development of the PICL approach in Midlothian. This project drew on a sociologically and psychologically-informed understanding of early years provision and education and the experiences of families with children (<5 years). A collaborative, qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and online surveys enabled insights into the impact of PICL. All interviewees received an information sheet and consent form prior to taking part. Interviews were recorded using a digitally encrypted method either by audio or video. No identifying information were included in the final report to ensure anonymity. Findings point to a positive impact on parents and their children. Key to the approach is building the relationship between practitioner and parent. This enables a two-way conversation to share the child's behaviour, allowing the practitioner to provide, often in a subtle way, insights of how the behaviour relates to childhood behaviour schema. One outcome is that parents build knowledge and strategies to augment their parenting skills and improve their understanding and relationship with their child. The findings suggest value in the model to support parent-child relationships, even during the challenging period of the pandemic.

Partnership, Collaboration, Education, Relationships, Engagement

E 14

PLAY IN TIME OF CRISIS

Self-organised symposium

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) emphasizes that play is an inalienable right of the child. In the psycho-pedagogical literature, play is recognized as the engine of physical, cognitive, affective, and social development, especially in childhood (Piaget, 1945/1972; Vygotskij, 1976). Currently, participation in play activities is conceptualized as an aspect that characterizes the daily life of children and, as such, participation in play is strongly influenced by contextual factors, both environmental and personal (ICF-CY; WHO, 2007). The CPC symposium aims at discussing changes in play habits of children following two different types of events: Covid-19 and related lockdowns, and disasters. Restrictions on play can be further exacerbated by physical and / or cognitive impairments present in children with disabilities. It is therefore of interest to investigate the impact that restrictions on play might have in both typically-developing children and children with disabilities.

Chair: Daniela Bulgarelli, Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy

Outdoor play of children with and without disabilities during Covid-19 lockdown

Daniela Bulgarelli (1), Nicole Bianquin (2), Carol Barron (3), Mary-Jane Emmett (3), (1) Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy, Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Italy, (3) Dublin City University, Ireland

This contribution describes outdoor play and contextual factors affecting it in 4- to 6-year-olds during one Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. Several factors might affect outdoor play: individual and family aspects, neighbourhood environment, policy, socio-cultural factors (Boxberger & Reimers, 2019; Sallis et al. 2006). According to the ICF (WHO, 2007), the Covid-19 lockdowns could have been barriers to outdoor play (Kovacs et al. 2021) and had a greater impact on children with disabilities. Meanwhile, contextual factors such as parents' role and features of the outdoor could have been facilitators for play (Brockman et al. 2011). An online questionnaire was spread in Ireland and Italy in May 2020, to collect parents' views on their children's play. Parents of 594 typically-developing children and 43 parents of children with disabilities filled in the questionnaire. A content analysis was run on the open-ended question "Which was the best idea you (parent) had to enable your child's outdoor play?". Two Ethics Committees approved the research and parents gave their informed consent. The active role of parents in organizing routines and spaces, introducing novelties and innovations in play, and the existing features of the built environment were facilitators for children's outdoor play. No differences in outdoor play emerged between children with and without disabilities, and in the strategies that their parents used to support it. Some differences related to age, gender, and nationality will be discussed. This contribution builds on the importance of adults' role and the impact of built and natural environment on children's play.

Outdoor play, ICF-CY, Contextual factors, Children with disabilities, Covid-19

Preschool children's play during lockdown

Paola Molina (1), Alessandra Monetti (2), Elisa Sangiorgi (2), Simona Giuseppina Caputo (2), Sonja Ferrero (2), Maria Teresa Marcone (2), (1) Università degli studi di Torino - DIST, Italy, (2) Università degli studi di Torino – SSPS, Italy

Our research aims at exploring the effect of the lockdown experience on children's play, using a qualitative approach, necessary in the first steps of studying a new and unexpected experience (Molina et al., in press). In Italy, the COVID 19 pandemic abruptly modified the everyday experience of parents and children, affecting children's play as well (Kourti et al., 2021). Nevertheless, play remained an important resource for the resilience and well-being of children and families (Nieto et al., 2021). From the bio-psycho-social perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1981; Hinde, 1979), we explored the overall children's experience, via the parent's words. Sixteen semi-structured online interviews were conducted during June and July 2020 with parents of 18 children (9 girls, 3 dizygotic twins) attending during the last year of preschool. We utilized the "interview d'explicitation" methodology (Vermersch, 2005). The analysis was conducted through a content analysis of the transcribed protocols. A consent form and information sheet were provided to all participants, after authorization from the school. The research project was approved by the Turin University CBA (Ethics Committee). Preliminary results highlight the different approaches to play during the lock-down, considering the presence of siblings and the parent's availability as well: when similar age siblings were present in the family, the lockdown experience intensified the relationships; when no sibling was present, the role of available parent became more important. The research results helped teachers rethink teaching during the lockdown, and better understand the experience of children and parents.

Play, COVID 19 pandemic, Pre-schooler, Parents, Interview d'explicitation

Educating beyond the emergency. A preliminary overview on the use of play for children in disasters

Mabel Giraldo, University of Bergamo, Italy

The study provides a literature review on play in "emergency situations" (humanitarian/natural/man-made disasters) with a specific focus on the situation of children with disabilities (CwD). Even if literature on the child's play is immense and internationally acknowledged, little evidence exists on the use of play in disasters, especially related to CwD (Giraldo 2020). From the Nineties, a new discipline, emergency pedagogy (Kagawa 2005), deals with education-related issues during/after disasters (Sinclair 2002) but not concerning play and especially disability (Giraldo 2020). Bridging this lack, the paper offers a literature review gathering main primary/secondary sources (from ERIC, EBSCO, PsycINFO, Science Direct, SocINDEX) in a coherent/critical corpus the research on this topic in order to reflect on the pedagogical value of play for all the children in disasters. The review adopts a rigorous procedure (Levy & Ellis 2006) following a multiphase analysis (Galvan 2006). The review highlights the main declinations of play in disasters where it is often included and subordinated to a therapeutic-rehabilitation framework. This "ludomatics" perspective prevails over a use of play as "play for the sake of play", that is generally replaced (implicitly/explicitly) with the risk to overshadow its genuinely fun/recreational dimension. Despite the lack of data and the consequent need for further in-depth analysis, play is more important than ordinary for all the children living such extraordinary lives. Policy makers who are sensitive to children's play needs in the planning, design and management of programs and related education practices to support such children would create more desirable environments alleviating the possible effects of lack of play.

play, play for the sake of play, disaster, children, disability

PLAY AS A CONTEXT FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

Self-organised symposium

Symposium explores play and its centrality as a construct integral to the development of children's social, cultural, and spiritual development. Play remains critical to efforts supporting children's wellbeing as an influential factor on their emerging and unfolding sense about self in three contextual dimensions: friendship, spirituality, and cultural identity. Presenters explore how these dimensions emphasize the need for play as cornerstone for early childhood development and wellbeing. In each dimension, presenters discuss how children negotiate realities, make sense of experiences driving individual socioemotional, spiritual, and cultural development. Considerations to outdoor play as context for children's friendship development is examined with attention to children's interactions and dialogue. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's spirituality is pondered from a Froebelian play perspective. Play as context for cultural identity formation is addressed with consideration to role of traditional play as cultural learning repertoires.

Chair: Wilma Robles Melendez, Nova Southeastern University, United States

Children's spiritual development through play during the Covid-19 pandemic: a Froebelian perspective

Fengling Tang, University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

This research aims to explore the role of play in facilitating children's spiritual development during Covid-19 pandemic from a Froebelian perspective. There are challenges to children's social-emotional development and wellbeing due to impact of Covid-19 pandemic (Hamilton and Wood 2020). O'Keeffe and McNally (2021) address play as pedagogical strategy in supporting children's resilience and wellbeing during the pandemic. Spirituality is considered as interconnectivity between child, humanity, nature, divinity and unknown worlds in Froebelian literature (Froebel 1887; Bruce, 1987/2021; Read, 2006; Tovey, 2013). Contemporary research highlights spirituality as integral part to human development/connectedness transcending religious-secular boundaries (Bone 2008). Stockinger (2019) argues for inclusive practice to enable children's spirituality for diverse ways of thinking. This qualitative case study considers children as active research participants (Clark and Moss 2001; Robson 2011). The study explores two children's home play scenarios during the pandemic in England via thematic analysis. Protecting child participants' wellbeing underpins the study. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from parents and assent of child participants were carefully attended to. The study reveals play as 'unifying mechanism' in nurturing children's spirituality (Bruce 1987) during the pandemic. Children's fears/worries about Coronavirus were incorporated into play, where they were negotiating with imaginary worlds, creating lines of enquiries, and seeking for inner peace for themselves/others. This study via the Froebelian lens reveals unique findings about the role of play in nurturing children's spirituality during the pandemic. This has implications for early childhood pedagogy beyond the pandemic in addressing spirituality as key part of children's holistic learning.

spirituality, play, a Froebelian perspective, holistic learning and wellbeing, Covid-19 pandemic

'This is teamwork': children's interactions in outdoor play

Zoi Nikiforidou, Jennie Jones, LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY, United Kingdom

The aim of this study is to explore young children's interactions with peers and practitioners during outdoor play. The study draws on previous research in the field of children's social development and interactions during play and in particular during outdoor play (i.e. Waite, Rogers, Evans, 2013). In addition, the study addresses the role of the practitioner and practitioner involvement during free play (i.e. Karlsen, Lekhal, 2019). The theoretical framework is based on relational pedagogy (Hedges, 2018; Papatheodorou, 2009) acknowledging relationships, interactions, communication and interconnection of people, places and things. This approach emphasises the importance relationships and interactions have on children's wellbeing, learning and development. Naturalistic observations of twelve 3–4-year-old children and 2 practitioners were applied in this ethnographic study. Children's interactions were recorded while playing freely or while participating in structured adult-led activities outdoors. Critical events were identified for further analysis based on participants' linguistic interactions. Issues of anonymity, confidentiality, the right to withdraw and voluntary consent were addressed before, during and after the study. During outdoor free play children demonstrate high levels of social skills like teamwork, cooperation, negotiation and dialogue. Also, children at the age of 3 rely more on practitioners' (rather than on peers') input in order to extend their thinking, imagination and play flow; especially when practitioners use open ended questions. Such findings provide insights in children's lived outdoor experiences underlying how sometimes children at younger ages seek for practitioners' scaffolding.

outdoor play, interactions, relational pedagogy, social skills, practitioner involvement

Juguemos para ser! Playing and becoming! Preserving culture through traditional children's play in immigrant families

Wilma Robles Melendez, Wayne Driscoll, Nova Southeastern University, United States

Need for preserving cultural heritage guided project given its role on immigrant children's ethnocultural identity formation facing influence of acculturation, social dynamics (Berry, Tajfel & Turner; Vygotsky). Play as sociocultural learning context, developmental conduit for children's cultural heritage preservation. Considers role of traditional play experiences at home, classroom connecting children to heritage and influencing ethnic identity formation. Anchored on culturally responsive practices framework, relates to presenters' previous research on culturally conscious practices supporting cultural heritage of children and immigrant families. Acculturation experience influences immigrants' cultural identity formation (Berry; Bhugra & Becker 2005) calling for culturally affirming practices. Conceptual framework based on Convention on Rights of Children recognizing children's rights to play and to their cultural identity. Anchored on Vygotsky's sociocultural principles, Moll's funds of knowledge and Ladson Billings' culturally-responsive pedagogy., Respond to child rights for culturally-conscious experiences supporting immigrant children's cultural identity formation through play as cultural-heritage learning space. Traditional/culturally-based play serves as developmental factor supporting child's sociocultural wellbeing affirming child's cultural identity. Literature analysis yielded play conceptualizations and its affordances for ethnocultural learning and ethnic identity formation. Unstructured-interviews with Hispanic immigrant parents, teachers generated views on traditional play's role on identity formation, practices at home/classroom. Practices, activities, cultural play artifacts/materials determined through data analysis. Participants consent obtained. Goals explained at each data point and confidentiality maintained following research ethics (EECERA 2015). Traditional play at home/classroom connects and preserves children's sociocultural heritage influencing identity formation. Contributes/informs practices for immigrant- children needs supporting heritage and identity development.

traditional play and cultural heritage, ethnic identity formation during early years, cultural needs of immigrant children, play contexts, culturally responsive pedagogy

E 16

PLAYING AND WORKING WITH AI IN ECE. ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS OF PEDAGOGICAL PROFESSIONALS

Self-organised symposium

The symposium explores the use of digital media as reflected in teachers' beliefs and practices in using ICT and digital AI-based toys in daily pedagogical work. The research takes place in Germany, Italy and Lithuania. within the EU project "I am not a robot. Working with AI in pedagogical practice". Based on the assumption that understanding educators' motivations and behaviors in detail is crucial for the successful implementation of an AI initiative, a questionnaire was developed based on a previous study on digitalization in kindergarten (Knauf 2019). Following within-case, country-specific, and cross-case, cross-national analyses, different foci on the value of technology were identified in the sample, leading to different goals for practice. At the same time, a European comparison of ECE in the use of digital media in the three countries involved is possible. This reveals surprising similarities, but also culturally determined differences.

Chair: Ulrike Stadler-Altman, Free University of Bolzano, Italy

Working with AI in ECE, tool boxes for educators

Ulrike Stadler-Altman, Free University of Bolzano, Italy

Based on the results of the survey conducted within the framework of the project, the attitudes and reservations of educators in one region of Italy are presented. The results of the analysis are related to the DigCompEdu in order to be able to point out suggestions for a profitable use of digital media in everyday pedagogical life. If we compare the situation in ECE across Europe, we find that research at the political, governmental and practical levels (Alexiadou & Stadler-Altman, 2020) is similar with regard to current issues. At the European level, the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu 2017) provides a competence framework as orientation that can be used at the national level, e.g. for the design of further training and projects. The study is based on the theoretical approach of mediatisation. Digitisation in ECE centers is understood in the context of a multi-level model in three dimensions: Work with children, professional work, administration. The questionnaire is based on a standardized survey (Knauf 2019). Due to compliance with Italian data protection regulations and the use of a standardized questionnaire, no ethical conflicts have arisen. It is expected that attitudes and reservations of educators towards digital media will become visible. This may explain why DigiComEdu is hardly received in Italy. Based on the results, tool boxes for the pedagogical work will be developed to support the use of digital media in the kindergarten and to enhance educators' professional work especially with A.I.

Digitisation in German ECE centres - between enthusiasm and scepticism

Helen Knauf, University of Applied Sciences Bielefeld, Germany

The study records the development of digitisation in ECE centers in order to identify the drivers and challenges of digitisation. The results presented are drawn from the second wave of interviews in a longitudinal study (Knauf, 2019). The study is based on the theoretical approach of mediatisation. Digitisation in ECE centers is understood in the context of a multi-level model in three dimensions: Work with children, professional work, administration. The study follows a pragmatic paradigm. It is based on a standardized survey in 190 German ECE centres. The longitudinal study allows a comparison of the situation before and after the Corona pandemic. The participants in the study took part voluntarily and were informed about the aims of the study. The collection and analysis of the survey follows the principle of data minimisation and preserves the anonymity of participants. Many institutions only have rudimentary equipment with digital devices and internet access. A majority of the professionals are not or hardly qualified in media education. But there are also indications of a paradigm shift: Many professionals stated that they themselves frequently and gladly use digital media for the preparation and follow-up of their pedagogical work and that they are basically open to media pedagogical work with children. The study shows that digital media are already ubiquitous in ECE centers. Professionals, providers and policy makers should monitor this development closely and work to ensure that digital media are used to serve pedagogy and not the other way around.

Digitisation, Ece centres, Professional development, Mediatisation, Digital play

Digitalization in kindergartens in Lithuania: trends and implications for teachers' professional development

Lina Kaminskienė, Ilona Tandzegolskienė, Ona Monkevičienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

The aim of the research was to analyze what are new trends in the application of digital tools in kindergartens and whether these new trends create challenges for teachers' professional development. In Lithuania there have been little studies focused on digital media in early childhood education. Čėsnaite and Bagdonas (2014) analyzed the benefits of ICT for pre-school children's cognitive development. Kelpšienė (2020) investigated how augmented reality is applied in pre-school education. The study based on the theory of mediatisation was conducted in the framework of the EU project "I'm not a robot" to reveal Lithuanian teachers' attitudes towards the use of digital tools in kindergarten education. The quantitative, pragmatic paradigm based research approach and a survey design was chosen to attain the aim of the study because it helps disclose the attitude of teachers towards digitalization practices in kindergartens in Lithuania. We refined and used the questionnaire developed by Helen Knauf (2019). Teachers' survey was conducted online following the ethics of research in accordance with the principles of reliability, confidentiality and integrity. The study will present the current status of availability and applicability of digital media and AI in kindergarten sector. The research findings also reveal how digital media is integrated into pedagogical practice of teachers in the classroom. The study will raise a debate whether current situation indicates new trends of digitalization in kindergarten and pre-school education and whether these trends implicate arising needs for teachers' professional development in the field.

kindergarten education, innovation, digitalization, AI, teachers' professionalis

E 17

DATAFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND DATA GOVERNANCE IN FINNISH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Self-organised symposium

Evaluation has become a key part of people's mundane lives. The transition to an 'evaluation society' (Dahler-Larsen 2011) is also reflected in early childhood education (ECE). Various tools for evaluation and data management, such as quality metrics, digital portfolios and customer satisfaction surveys, have increased in ECE. This can be described with the concept of datafication. Datafication refers to an increase of the volume and variety of data in making decisions that influence the daily life of ECE. This symposium presents and discusses a larger research project that examines datafication and data governance, including assessment and evaluation in Finnish ECE. By leaning on transparadigmatic approach, we illustrate how there is a need to focus on local assessment practices in order to 1) understand the variation in reactions to datafying ECE and 2) the productive and constitutive force of datafication.

The discussant of the symposium will be Dr. Guy Roberts-Holmes.

Chair: Anna Siippainen, Tampere University, Finland

Assessment and evaluation in datafied early childhood education – VADA research project

Anna Siippainen (1), Maiju Paananen (1), Paakkari Antti (1), Toivonen Hanna (1), Rouvinen Eerika (1), Guy Roberts-Holmes (2), (1) Tampere University, Finland, (2) UCL Institute of Education, United Kingdom

In this presentation we discuss ongoing research project: Assessment and evaluation in datafied society (VADA). We aim to describe the broad field of datafication by using the Finnish context as an example and wide range of perspectives such historical perspectives of evaluation and the production of data as a form of governance. Earlier research has identified various approaches to evaluation of education (Ball, 1998). The approaches vary for example in terms of their object and subject (e.g. Dahler-Larsen, 2011). We aim to illustrate how we can get a more nuanced view on evaluation regimes by focusing on local level practices (e.g. Eerola et. al. 2022) in addition to national level examinations. This will be done with the help of the concept of datafication (e.g. Bradbury, 2019 Roberts-Holmes, 2015) and actor network theory (Latour 1999). Datafication will be examined with the help of transparadigmatic approach by using quantitative survey data, document analysis and autoethnography. The project uses relational ethics approach (Ellis 2007) to tackle both ethical issues that can be predicted beforehand such as the questions of anonymity, carefulness, openness and responsible publication but also those that we cannot foresee. Our results show that we can identify micro regimes of evaluation which vary depending on what kinds of networks they are produced in. In addition, the functions evaluation and the extent of datafication vary locally. The knowledge produced will be used for addressing the challenges we are facing in datafying society and for designing socially sustainable ways of evaluating ECE.

Datafication, mixed method, survey, assessment, evaluation

Genealogy of Finnish evaluation and assessment in early childhood education

Hannele Pitkänen, Anna Siippainen, Tampere University, Finland

By current educational policy discourse evaluation and assessment are considered self-evident part of educational improvement. In this paper, we examine 1) how has this understanding been mobilized and shaped in the Finnish early childhood education (ECE) policy discourse, and 2) which are the underlying rationalities enabling the current understanding contributing to the intensification of datafication. This paper builds and adds on earlier research in datafication and poststructuralist theorization on education governance, governmentality and data (Bradbury 2019; Foucault 2000; Roberts-Holmes 2015) by providing an account of those discursive and historical conditions under which the rise of data has been enabled as a mean of governing ECE. Paper uses genealogical methodology and theoretical frame by analysing the descent and emergence of our current understanding (Foucault 1977; Pitkänen 2022). By using Finnish ECE curricula and policy documents since 2003 as data, in line with poststructuralist genealogical methodology, the document analysis focuses on incidents of mobilization, transformations and disappearance of rationalities, conceptualizations and ideas of evaluation and assessment. The post-structuralist perspective adopted requires reflective examination of the role of researcher in constituting the knowledge about the 'reality' that it in itself examines. The findings suggest we have experienced a transition from professional model highlighting enhancement led approach to evaluation towards the datafied educational governance which relies on neoliberal rationality of accountability by directing its focus on children's learning and development and by following the principle of external auditing. The research will help us understand the historical trajectories of the assessment and its "imperative" nature.

evaluation, genealogy, governmentality, policy discourse, datafication

Highjacked by desires? - Infrastructure of child-staff ratios in Finnish early childhood education

Hanna Toivonen, University of Tampere, Finland

This research contributes to the field of data governance by introducing specific case from Finnish early childhood education. The aim is to illustrate how child-staff ratios identified as data infrastructure work, flux and do in a preschool context. A growing body of research identifies the influence of 'digital' methods in the ways of education and early childhood education practitioners are governed. (Roberts-Holmes & Bradburry 2016; Williamson 2016). The research contributes to the literature by examining data governance as assemblage (e.g., Paananen 2019). Assemblages are scrutinized with the help of the concept of data infrastructure (e.g., Sellar 2015). The role of 'desire' in data infrastructures is scrutinized by utilizing Gill Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's theoretical framework of assemblage (French agencement). Earlier research has focused on describing assemblages as sum of their parts (Buchanan 2021). This research adds on that by using autoethnographic and document data to investigate the flows of desire in data infrastructures and where the desire gets its force from. Autoethnography is conducted by following guidelines of relational ethics (Ellis 2016) and ethics of consequences (Etherington 2007). The persons who were involved in autoethnography were informed about the research and the researcher discussed with them regularly. The results imply that situational assemblages generate cross-draught between preschool director and municipality officials by imbodying

various aims for governance. The results of the research can be used to designate how mundane policies materialize in early childhood education and what kind of effects they have in everyday life of a preschool.

Data governance, Data infrastructure, Assemblage, Desire, ECE

E 18

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Laura Herold, University of Arkansas, United States

Learning Organisation Kindergarten at the University of Applied Sciences Merseburg

Sandra Frisch, University of Applied Sciences Merseburg, Germany

The five-year project “Research Kindergarten”, supported by the German Ministry of Education and Research, focused on the theory-practice-transfer-effects of the kindergarten CampusKids at the university Merseburg - a learning organisation with a circular transfer of theory and practice from university to kindergarten, from kindergarten to supra-region and back. There is little research about kindergarten as learning organisation. Broadening Senge’s (2011) and Vanneboas’/Gotvassli’s (2014) idea of a learning organisation we understand all kindergarten-members as researchers and learners affected by continuous change. To realise the project we focused on Senge’s four dimensions and identified and evaluated the "dimensions" children and pedagogues, team, university, region. They cooperate and learn from each other. Pedagogues have to work professionally (Oevermann 1996), that includes dealing with change. Expertise and reflexion came from the faculties of the university and from students. They also did research on ECE at CampusKids. Social, business and engineering expertise was made applicable for ECE. Our results were discussed and evaluated with supra-regional partners via further vocational trainings, workshops, conferences or internships. A steering committee selected the (research) projects that were carried out and evaluated sensitively and anonymously. For everyone, participation was on a voluntary basis. Results of a bachelor thesis on participant research with children (Nickel 2019) was also an ethical basis. The result was a steadily growing network of different, closely cooperating and steadily learning actors. This project has shown the great advantages of a learning organisation kindergarten at a university and its impact on the professional work of other kindergartens.

learning organisation, theory-practice-transfer, research kindergarten, professionalisation, sensitive research

Using research methodology as a method for professional learning

Amelia Church (1), Amanda Bateman (2), (1) University of Melbourne, Australia, (2) University of Waikato, New Zealand

We will illustrate how real-life video clips of teacher-child interactions analysed through the methodology of conversation analysis (CA) can be used for professional learning in effective ECEC pedagogy. High-quality interactions in early childhood education and care (ECEC) are central to children’s early learning (Tayler, Cloney & Niklas, 2015), yet the details of how to build these interactions is not always accessible in ECEC professional development (Hamre et al., 2013). To address this, we show that by supporting educators to identify features of teaching practices in empirical data, the mechanisms of pedagogy become clear (Church, Bateman & Danby, 2022). Our research builds on the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (CARM; see Stokoe, 2014). From an ethnomethodological perspective, we use the methods of CA to investigate elements of learning interactions (Church & Bateman, 2021). Participants provided assent and consent to use the video data for the purposes of teaching and research, and video data are anonymized using filters and audio deletion of names. We demonstrate how a CA approach to ECEC pedagogy is useful in understanding and implementing recommended practices, such as sustained shared thinking (Siraj, Kingston & Melhuish, 2015). Exploring the micro-details of real-life teacher-child interactions, enables us to identify the sequences of turns (e.g. the design of questions and responses in the third turn) that support children’s learning. We argue that this approach contributes to professional reflection that is otherwise unachievable within the demands of daily professional routines and practice.

Professional learning in ECEC, Conversation analysis, Child-educator interactions, CARM, Talking with children

Bringing Back Play in Kindergarten through Collaborative Study

Laura Herold, Shelley McNally, University of Arkansas, United States

Our study reveals effective strategies for creating playful learning environments in United States (US) kindergartens using a professional learning community (PLC) model. Despite the importance of play for young children’s learning and development (Zosh et al, 2017), time spent on free-play in kindergarten has decreased due to an increased focus on academics (Bassock et

al, 2016). PLCs hold potential for increasing play in kindergarten through joint inquiry, especially when researchers and educators partner (Hipp & Huffman, 2010). This study is grounded in socio-cultural and social constructivist theory (e.g., Vygotsky, 1987), and constructivist learning theories (Piaget, 1971). It focuses on a year of collaborative study among a team of US researchers and elementary school educators. Questionnaires were completed and content analysis conducted using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Photographic evidence of classrooms was gathered before and after the playful environments were established. Potential ethical concerns called for protecting the anonymity of the participants and school. Consent forms were provided and pseudonyms offered. School data were generalized, ensuring privacy. Participant perspectives on the PLC model used to study and define play in order to establish playful kindergartens will be presented and themes will be revealed. Definitions of play within today's political landscape will be explored. Finally, the playful environments themselves will be shared. Emergent findings suggest implications for collaborative inquiry between researchers, teachers, and districts, as well as classrooms environments that foster play in US kindergartens. These can serve as broader models for others seeking to bring back play in kindergarten.

professional learning community, play, child led, environment, kindergarten

E 19

GUIDED PLAY AND NATURE PLAYSCAPES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Victoria Carr, University of Cincinnati, United States

Nature Playscapes: Affordances that Support Preschoolers' Executive Function during Free Play

Victoria Carr, Leslie Kochanowski, University of Cincinnati, United States

This study aimed to discover components of executive function preschoolers use during free play in intentionally-designed nature playscapes. Research has shown that rapid changes in executive function skills occur during early childhood (Zelazo, 2015), allowing for engaged, active, and reflective forms of learning (Marcovitch, et al., 2008) and problem-solving, authentically afforded within nature playscapes (Carr et al., 2017). We investigated the use of executive function skills (cognitive flexibility, working memory, and inhibitory control) using operational definitions from the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function—Preschool (Gioia et al., 2003) within a socio-cultural context (Vygotsky, 1987) to label children's behaviors during uninterrupted play on playscapes. A qualitative interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) was employed to analyze vignettes created from a sampling of video data of naturally occurring events in playscapes. Observations of the interplay of the child-environment relationship and affordances within the playscape were interpreted to discern impacts on the interactions and actions of children's play and components of executive functions. Parents/guardians of participating children provided written consent on ethics-approved forms collected by trained researchers. Coded data were de-identified and pseudonyms were used for participants. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time. Findings demonstrate that playscapes can be executive function-enhancing environments, as children are likely to set their own goals, problem-solve, self-regulate, focus attention, and demonstrate cognitive flexibility. Study outcomes suggest that repeated access to playscapes, providing authentic opportunities for children to exercise executive functions, underpins skills and dispositions necessary for making decisions about their own sustainable futures.

Executive Function, Nature Play, Playscapes, Preschool, Problem-solving

Uniting play and learning: the role of guided play in children's education

Elizabeth Byrne (1), Kayleigh Skene (2), Christine O'Farrelly (1), Natalie Kirby (1), Eloise Stevens (1), Paul Ramchandani (1), (1) University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, (2) University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

This systematic review and meta-analysis examined the effectiveness of guided play interventions for children's learning. Previous reviews investigated the impact of adult guidance on children's learning (Alfieri et al., 2011; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016), but did not consider play. Several studies have reported positive links between guided play and children's learning (e.g., Coplan et al., 2010; Ferrara et al., 2011), but questions remain regarding its overall effectiveness due to differences between studies. Guided play is a pedagogical approach that falls under the umbrella of 'learning through play' (Toub et al., 2016; Zosh et al., 2018). It combines aspects of children's play, such as fun, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation, with the crucial role that adults play in scaffolding learning experiences. Interventions from 39 studies were reviewed, of these, 17 were included in meta-analyses. All compared guided play with direct instruction or free play control conditions, with children ≤ 8 years. Although this research is a literature review based solely on secondary data, ethical considerations were made to ensure inclusion of literature from a range of sources. Guided play had greater a positive effect than direct instruction for early maths

skills ($g=0.24$), shape knowledge ($g=0.63$), and task switching ($g=0.40$), and than free play on spatial vocabulary ($g=0.93$). Narrative synthesis also revealed heterogeneity in how studies conceptualised and implemented guided play. While more research is needed to understand how, why, and for whom guided play works best, the findings provide evidence that playful learning opportunities can have a place in early years classrooms.

Guided play, Interventions, Systematic review, Meta-analyses, Early learning

Integrating a Cooperative Guided Play Model in Saudi Kindergarten Setting

Rehab Agzagee, Strathclyde, United Kingdom

The aim is to integrate Cooperative and Guided Play Model as a play-based pedagogy in the Saudi Kindergarten setting. There is a growing body of research that has explored the benefits of integrating play into learning such as Structured Play (Walsh et al., 2011), Purposeful Play (Bautista et al., 2019; Ageliki, 2010). Research has shown several studies involving children's participation in the research methods: collecting data and decision making (Donovan, 2016; Malone 2013). There is a research gap involving children below seven years old in the research (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). The play model aligns with Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky (1978) and Guided Participation Theory by Rogoff (1990). They position the child as an active agent who participates in interactive play-based pedagogy with guidance for meaningful learning. Involving children in developing the play model indicates a Transformative paradigm which empowers learning process of constructing knowledge through social interaction (Creswell, 2018). The methodology is aligned with Participation Action Research design using child-friendly qualitative methods. An Informed consent will be sight by parents and a renegotiation assent will be carried out with children. The children's names will be pseudonymized and their identification in the visual data will be blurred. The data outcomes and children's reflection will identify how children can contribute to the development of the play model and how this integrating will shape the pedagogy. These findings will build a pedagogy play model through children's participation with peers and adult guidance to be implemented in different contexts.

Cooperative Play, Guided Play, Play-based pedagogy, Participatory Action Research, Play model

E 20

LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Rosie Flewitt, Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

A Posthuman Perspective on Play: One Child's Story of Intra-Actions with the Material World

Sally Brown, Georgia Southern University, United States

This study investigated the ways human and nonhuman resources facilitated literacy learning across various contexts in order to disrupt the mind/body dichotomy. Young children communicate, play, and learn across modes within the more-than-human world (Murriss, 2016). Sensory experiences and movement (Hackett & Somerville, 2017), affective relationships with materials (Leander & Boldt, 2012), and materialdiscursive intra-actions (Barad, 2007) are entangled as children create their own forms of meaning in unexpected ways. A posthuman framework sees humans and nonhumans as active agents in a continual state of becoming (Kuby & Rucker, 2016). Children experiment with materials (including technology) resulting in new ways of being, knowing, and doing (Arnott, 2016). The focal participant is a four-year old Khoi. Year 1 data from the qualitative research included a Nexus analysis (Wohlwend, 2021) of video clips and images to capture embodied literacies and entanglements. Ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 2016) with parents and child provided insight into the process of making and unmaking things during play. Ethical guidelines included parental consent and child assent. Prior to each interaction, the child was asked, "Would like to talk with me today?" The findings demonstrate the importance of the affordances of material resources as intra-actions unfold. Khoi's literacy learning was entangled with nonhuman materials like Google, Legos, gardening, and books. New boundaries are forged problematizing concepts like best practices in early education. Moments in time are opportunities to affect and be affected by materials highlighting the importance of the whole child and the notion of an emergent curriculum (Murriss, 2015).

Post humanism, Literacy, Play, Entanglements, Intra-action

Researching 0-3-year-old children's language and literacy play at home in a digital age

Rosie Flewitt (1), Lorna Arnott (2), Julia Gillen (3), Karen Winter (4), (Katrina McLaughlin (4), Janet Goodall (5), (1) Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom, (2) University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom, (3) Lancaster University, United Kingdom, (4) Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom, (5) Swansea University, United Kingdom

This recently-launched, two-year ESRC-funded study breaks new ground in researching 0-3-year-old children's language and literacy play at home in the digital age, in diverse communities across the four UK nations. Digital technologies feature prominently in contemporary family life (Chaudron et al. 2018; Kumpulainen & Gillen 2020). Even very young children observe and use language playfully in digitally-mediated activities, e.g. e-books, digital toys and interacting via mobile devices (Arnott et al. 2019; Zhao & Flewitt 2020). Drawing on social semiotic theory (Kress 2010), socio-materiality (Barad 2003; Murris 2016) and respecting young children's participation rights, the study builds empirically-grounded conceptualizations of 0-3-year-olds' engagement with today's technology-rich cultural artefacts, where play and meaning making are entangled with 'humans, nonhumans and more-than-humans' (Kuby & Rowsell 2017: 285). The multi-phase study design offers a template for interdisciplinary research, including iterative innovation in participatory approaches to researching the home. Research methods include an online survey, remote interviews with families and professionals, followed by 40 in-depth case studies. In alignment with our conceptual and theoretical approach, we emphasise the interpersonal, responsive nature of research ethics, using creative approaches to ensure informed and voluntary child and adult consent. This paper critically evaluates how the study will generate findings related to researching the home environment collaboratively and sensitively with young children and their families in diverse communities. Here, we focus on research impacts, including multi-phase research design and a palette of participatory methods from which families can choose the approach most apt for their circumstances, including self-generated data.

Participatory methods, Multi-phase methods, 0-3-year-olds, Home Learning Environment, Language play

Children's and teachers' conversations about the medium when reading digital picture books

Margrethe Jernes, Marianne Undheim, University of Stavanger, Norway

The aim of this research is to explore the content of children's and EC teachers' conversations about the medium (tablets and digital picture books) during dialogue-based reading activities in Norwegian ECEC. Previous studies mostly emphasise the number of media-specific statements (Lauricella et al., 2014: 21-22; Parish-Morris et al., 2013: 203-205), and to a lesser extent the content of the children's and adults' conversations, which we do. Child-child interactions in peer culture (e.g., gaining and sharing control) (cf., Corsaro, 2009) and socio-cultural perspectives about child-adult interactions (e.g., sustained shared thinking) (cf., Sylva et al., 2004) are used as theoretical framework. In this qualitative study we explore four video-recordings in which groups of six 4-5-year-olds and one teacher participated in dialogue-based reading activities with digital picture books. Inspired by grounded theory we have conducted an inductive qualitative content analysis (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008: 152). In line with EECERA's ethical code for researchers, all participants (the children, their parents and the teachers) have provided their verbal and written informed consent, they were informed about their right to withdraw, and about anonymity. The findings show that the children's and teachers' conversations about the medium mainly focus on taking turns and access, e.g., hunting for hotspots, and less about the story. Further, reading digital books with groups of children is a complex activity. Thus, the findings emphasise the importance of incorporating various aspects of digital technologies and media into EC teacher education, to prepare the preservice teachers for complex activities such as digital reading.

shared dialogue-based reading, children and teachers, medium, digital technology, digital picture book apps

E 21

PANDEMIC, PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Jools Page, The University of Brighton, United Kingdom

Professionalism and Pandemic: Exploring Teachers' Perception and Parents' Perspectives in Turkey and the U.S.

Sinan Yozgatli, Fatma Merve Halipinar, Indiana University, United States

It is unclear if COVID-19 has affected early childhood education (ECE) as a profession and if so, how ECE profession is viewed by families and teachers. It is the authors' aim to explore this with teachers and families in Turkey and the U.S. Even though positive social, academic, and economic outcomes in ECE are well documented, as a profession ECE remains under-appreciated and undervalued. Too often, ECE teachers are deemed as babysitters who just allow children to play all day (Krogg & Slentz, 2010). As in many aspects of life, COVID-19 pandemic may have interrupted and changed ECE (Jalongo, 2021). This research

builds on Ingersoll and Collins (2018)'s conception of teaching profession indicators to understand how COVID-19 have affected ECE and how its professionals are viewed. It also aligns with Arndt et al. (2018)'s conception that acknowledges the professional identities are shaped by societal perceptions. This descriptive research study utilizes a qualitative research design that employs interview techniques. The researchers will ask parents if/how their perspective of ECE professionals have changed because of the pandemic, and teachers in Turkey and the U.S. if/how their own professional teacher identities have changed. All participants will sign consent forms; pseudonyms will be used; participants can withdraw at any time. Early emerging findings support researchers' predictions of differences across the two societies (Turkey/U.S), with teachers'/parents' perceptions of ECE/professionals declining in Turkey and rising in the U.S. Emergent findings support researchers' predictions that this study will increase cross-cultural understanding of perceptions of ECE as a profession.

Early Childhood Profession, Covid-19, Teacher Identities, Early Childhood Teachers Profession, Parents' Perspectives on Teacher Profession

COVID and [the disruption of] the playful world of the young child

Jools Page, Jodi Roffey-Barentsen, Peter Clough, University of Brighton, United Kingdom

This research asks: In what ways has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the lives of young children [0 – 7 yrs] in England? Amongst a plethora of pandemic-focused projects, research in the ECEC field has amplified existing concerns with child poverty (Eissenstadt, 2020), separation and attachment (Elfer, 2020), maternal anxiety, and other health issues (Van Leer Foundation 2020). What is still embryonic is research which expresses the depth of these issues in children's (and their families') disrupted lives. This study generates child-focused narratives (Clough & Nutbrown 2019) which qualitatively characterise the salient experiences and issues as families with young children reflected on how they experienced 52 days of 'Lockdown' The project design adopts a case study method using an opportunity sampling frame (Jupp, 2006) and used unstructured interviews and documentation as the primary methods of data collection. The ethical imperative of this study lies in its capacity to inform concern about those issues with experiential data; it was unique at this time and contributes to earlier accounts by focusing on the voice of parents and other carers. The study findings reveal the myriad ways in which their lives and those of the children were disturbed; not least as exigent events of care and affect displaced the familial and the familiar in that community of play which is such a large part of the child's world. The study highlights the concerns parents have regarding their children's social skills and interactions, as the pandemic affected the natural playful world of the child.

Children's Play, Covid-19, Families, Pandemic, Stories

Parental perceptions of their preschool and elementary school children with respect to teacher-family relations and teaching methods during the first Covid-19 lockdown

Clodie Tal (1), Sigal Tish (2), Pninat Tal (2), (1) Hemdat HaDarom – College, Israel, (2) Levinsky College of Education, Israel

The goal of this study was to learn about parental perceptions of preschool and elementary school children with respect to relations with the teachers and distance learning during the first Covid-19 lockdown in Israel. Several studies performed in different countries (Hong Kong; China; Norway) explored parents' views of distance learning at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. They investigated either preschool (Dong, 2020) or elementary school (Bubb & Jones, 2020) children, or both (Lau & Lee, 2021) This research is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach: that distance learning by a child is impossible without parental encouragement and enabling. In this quantitative study, participants were 602 parents of children in preschool, grades 1-2, and grades 3-6. Participants completed a questionnaire designed for this study that measures attitudes towards aspects of distance learning and teachers/children relations. Consent, anonymization, storage of data were addressed by anonymous questionnaires, no conflict of interests between participants and researchers, and availability of data to anyone interested. Findings indicate that the child's age and the quality of the relations with teachers had an impact on how parents perceived children's and teachers' activities during the lockdown. Parents assessed quality of distance learning of preschoolers as low and indicated that the young children were not fearful of contamination and were mostly engaged in offline play. Preschool children seem to require suggestions of non-digital play activities during crisis periods like this pandemic, while first and second graders seem to require frequent contact with and involvement of the teacher.

parents' perceptions, , covid-19 crisis, family-teachers relationships, preschool children, distance learning, covid-19 crisis, parents-teachers relationships

E 22

PRINCIPALS, HEADS AND DEPUTIES IN ECE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Daniela Ulber, HAW Hamburg, Germany

Deputy leadership in Early Childhood Education

Leena Halttunen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This study explored the nature of EC leadership involving directors and deputies in Finland. The focus of the study was to understand what were the main roles of deputies and understand how deputy directors enacted leadership. There is a variety of positions in ECE leadership related to middle leaders like deputies are. Studies focusing on educational leaders (Sims et al. 2018) and middle leaders (Rönnermann, 2017) show the unclarity of roles in these positions. The theoretical underpinnings of this research are aligned with distributed leader-ship (Harris, 2008) and teacher leadership (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). The qualitative study was done using interviews and diaries as data collecting methods. A total of six face-to-face interviews were completed. The analysis focused on the situations where deputy directors described having leadership and on descriptions of the relationships between the deputy and the center director or between deputy and the other center staff. Each participant chose the place for the interview. The gender of the participants is not mentioned. While most participants were female, the names used are Finnish female names. The findings showed commonalities between the six participants but also an emphasis placed on the particular leadership roles they performed as a deputy. The seven roles identified in the interviews and diaries were mainly related to daily operational matters and administrative work and illustrate the multifunctional nature of their work. This study may clarify the role and responsibilities of deputies and how to enable their leadership showing also issues which constrain their work.

Leadership, Deputy leaders, Early childhood education, Pedagogical leadership, Relationships

How preschool principals enact an inclusive education through documentation

Hanna Vretblom, Umeå University, Sweden

This study focuses on principals' responses regarding documentation of special educational needs (SEN) in Swedish preschools. The curriculum allows large scope for principals to interpret and implement SEN documentation, which raises questions about values, knowledge, and processes that steer SEN documentation. According to the curriculum, the aim of documentation is to evaluate and analyse the education. However, research suggests that practitioners are uncertain about documentation in relation to SEN (Renblad & Brodin, 2014) and that documentation more often focuses on children than on evaluating the education (Lutz, 2009; Palla, 2018). This study draws on Schön's (1995) theoretical framework regarding professional knowledge as co-constructed through reflective processes in preschools and in relation to principals as agents. Following an interpretive paradigm, ten in-depth interviews were conducted with principals of Swedish preschools. The interviews were analysed through a thematic approach (Cohen et.al, 2011). The principals were provided with written information about the study and gave their written informed consent before the interviews. The data was anonymised, and all the ethical requirements of the Swedish Research Council were followed (SRC, 2017). Even though all principals in the study work towards the goal of an inclusive preschool, the analysis reveal three main positionings towards documentation (resisting, accepting, enthusiastic). The positionings are characterised by different views on: The value of documentation; The space for reflection in the documentation process; The principals' own role in coordinating, structuring, and evaluating documentation. The findings are important for understanding how to improve SEN knowledge management in preschools.

Documentation, Special educational needs, Inclusive education, Management, Reflection

The importance of head teachers as leaders for organisational development in ECEC settings - An international perspective on the conditions for good leadership

Daniela Ulber (1), Dagmar Bergs-Winkels (2), Itala Ballaschk (3), (1) HAW Hamburg, Germany, (2) Alice-Salomon-Hochschule, Germany, (3) Fachhochschule Südwestfalen, Germany

The study aims at identifying processes, tools, supporting factors as well as relevant actors of successful organisational development in ECEC. Research shows that leadership plays a pivotal role in the functioning and developing of an organisation (Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet, 2014). However, little is known about the conditions for good leadership and organisational change. National and international studies confirm the importance of leadership for organisational development in ECEC settings (Siraj-Blatchford and Hallet, 2014; Resa, Groeneveld, Turani & Anders, 2018). There is evidence that head teachers have an important impact on process quality. At the same time, little is known about development processes, conditions for successful leadership and adequate support systems. The study integrates a literature review and an interview study with 15 international experts from the field of ECEC. It is based on an explorative and qualitative paradigm. All interviews were conducted voluntarily, data have been anonymized. Results show that organisational development as a complex process needs to be addressed on different levels. Successful development is often correlated with behavioural patterns of transformational

leadership. Moreover it becomes evident that different levels of the educational system play a significant role, e.g. structural conditions, qualification level of staff as well as support by politics, administration and universities. There is a need for further leadership education for educational consultants and moreover still a lack adequate contextual support for educational leaders which promotes adequate development measures and at the same time does not restrict the scope for action at the level of the organisation.

organisational development, leadership, professionalisation, learning organisation, quality improvement

E 23

SORTING MATHS IN ECEC

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Chrystalla Papademetri, European University Cyprus, Cyprus

A Pedagogy of willingness to uncertainty, triggering the unexpected: Stories of children playfully doing mathematics!

Chrystalla Papademetri, European University Cyprus, Cyprus

The research, aims to investigate a Creative-Learning-and-Play (CLaP) culture through stories of children doing mathematics. Triggered by the idea that, Early Childhood Education_ECE can be advanced by play and structured/non-playful activities (Smith, 1994), we argue that, in the way learning is grounded within contemporary theories (e.g. constructionism), structured activities should also be playful; they should share the same characteristics as play and view 'mindfulness and playfulness as integral to human creativity, combined to keep us alert [and] in it for surprises' (Ackermann, 2015). Thus, a framework underpinning internationally recognized ECE approaches (Reggio Emilia, HighScope) and their Constructivist roots was adopted. The study uses autoethnography which allows investigation of our own pedagogical practices. As an educator-researcher investigating what a CLaP culture might look like, I share 3 stories of 5-7 year-old-children attending an afternoon STEM club. Sources of data included videos, children's artefacts/representations, and personal reflective notes. An informed consent letter explicitly explaining the research and thus addressing ethical considerations (benefits of involvement, privacy and confidentiality issues) allowed the parents to voluntarily agree on the terms of their child involvement. Data analysis indicates that, within a CLaP culture, structured/adult-initiated activities share play characteristics, are 'creatively' co-designed with the children and make use of objects-to-think-with, with which children are familiar through free-play. The study connects creativity with the element of triggering the unexpected and the willingness to uncertainty and implies the need for a shift from 'a linear practice of planning-for-teaching' to 'a dynamic, open-ended process of designing-for-learning.'

Creative design, Playful learning/playfulness, Constructionism, Mathematics, objects-to-think with

Sorting and re-sorting

Lisa Kristina Lunde (1), Hjørdis H. K. Bakke (2), Christine Seehuus (1), Anne Nakken (2), (1) Inland Norway University of Applied Science, Norway, (2) Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Being able to sort is fundamental to functioning normally in our world. We look at children's (4-6) ability to sort and re-sort objects. Sorting in categories is one thing, re-sorting a selection another. Sorting skills have been investigated through learning abilities and memory as well as word learning and imitation (ie. Fitzpatrick & Pagani, 2012; Pomper & Saffran, 2016; Saji et al., 2011; Williamson, Jaswal, & Meltzoff, 2010). If you see sorting and re-sorting as vital for a learning process (ie. Fitzpatrick & Pagani, 2012; Pomper & Saffran, 2016; Saji et al., 2011; Williamson, Jaswal, & Meltzoff, 2010), it is of interest how the skill is exhibited in the child sorting. The skill can be an imitation game or a true creative process (Glavenau 2012, 2020). In each study a small group of children were asked to sort different items in separate selections followed up by a conversation about their selection. The children were then asked if they could re-sort the same items. A written consent form were obtained for all children participating. Our pilot studies shows that sorting is easier for the children than re-sorting. One observation is that children trained to sort by pre-set criteria found it harder to create own criteria when sorting compared to novel sorters. The importance of creative flexibility in choosing categories may impact the way ECEC teachers introduce and teach children sorting and re-sorting.

Sorting, Re-sorting, Learning, Kindergarden, Skills

Exploring Early Years Mathematics Teaching and Learning in the context of an Irish Preschool Classroom

Lynn O'Dwyer, Maynooth University, Ireland

A 12 week Action Research Study aimed to discover how curriculum leaders could enhance teaching and learning early year's mathematics (EYM) for children attending preschool. Young children learn EYM in mathematics rich environments, with playful teaching and mathematics curriculum (Ginsburg, 2009). Early Years Teachers (EYT's) should be knowledgeable in mathematics, with strong pedagogical practice (Dooley et al, 2014). The study draws upon theories of teaching and learning mathematics in early years –socio-cultural, cognitive and constructivist theories, including meaning making, understanding, participation, communities of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991); co-construction, sustained shared thinking (Wood, 2013); maths related language (Sfard, 2007). A Self-Study Action Research paradigm (Whitehead, 1989) was used. Quantitative data measured base/final level mathematic skills. Mathematics environment audits were completed. Qualitative instruments ascertained mathematics attitudes and beliefs of EYT's and parents. Informed consent was negotiated with all participants and re-negotiated during the study. Pseudonyms were used. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time. Ethical Guidelines of Maynooth University were followed. Attention was paid to the potential power dynamics involved. Main finding of the study was that young children benefit from knowledgeable EYT's guiding play in a rich mathematics environment. Other findings were that EYT Training in maths is inconsistent. Many EYT's have maths anxiety, and are not trained in maths pedagogy. There is no mathematics curriculum for children 3-5 years. Implications are for more subject-based mathematics training for novice EYT's; and CPD training for practicing EYT's. A curriculum for EYM should be developed.

Early years mathematics, Mathematics environment audit, Early year's mathematics pedagogy, Maths anxiety, Early years teacher training

E 24

TROUBLING PROFESSIONALISM, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL PEDAGOGY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Ximena Poblete, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile

I may be a better professional, but we have lost the fun! Troubling professionalism in Chilean early childhood education

Ximena Poblete, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile

This paper examines the tensions between neoliberal and caring discourses in the construction of educators' professional identities focusing on how different technologies of power govern the meaning and use of play in educators' practice. There is an important body of research on how professionalism in ECE is produced within the tensions between neoliberal and gendered discourses and its impact on practice and professional identities (Moss, 2014; Arndt et al., 2020; Osgood, 2012). However, little is still known about how educators negotiate and produce their professional identity within these tensions and the complexities while deconstructing these discourses. The study is framed within feminist poststructural theories as they allow to understand how EC educators perform and deconstruct professionalism (Butler, 2006; Foucault, 2009). Framed within an interpretative paradigm and a qualitative methodology this study conducted a Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and Situational Maps (Clarke, 2003) to analyse the data. Methods included semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 39 educators and 11 principals from 8 nurseries and 10 preschools in Santiago, Chile. Ethical approval was granted by each participant. BERA Guidance for educational research was followed in the study. Findings show that neoliberalism is increasingly colonising the caring discourse and the use of play to extend an economic understanding of ECE. Practitioners embody this tension in their practice and relationships. This study contributes to highlight the hidden complexity of the tension between education and care and expose the role of the neoliberal discourse in the marketisation and commodification of practitioners' emotions.

Professional identity, Gender, Neoliberal policies, Professionalism, Performativity

Social justice in the context of playful interaction

Nadia Norling Tshili Klarsgaard, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

The study aims to uncover pedagogical strategies for promoting social justice (Bell, 2016) among 3- to 6-year-olds in a Danish ECEC context. The study leans on Robinson & Díaz (2017) and Gillborn & Billings-Ladson (2017), who find that ECEC professionals tend to celebrate diversity instead of critically addressing inequality and need guidance on recognizing and dealing with the often unintentional and indirect discrimination. Critical theory (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010) and poststructuralist perspectives (Foucault, 1980; Butler, 2004) constitute the study's metatheoretical framework proving analytical insight into how societal structures of power and dominance related to, e.g., gender or "race" are performed on a micro level in the kindergarten. The qualitative research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) frames the study that is inspired

by critical ethnography (Vannini, 2009). Participant observations are conducted in two kindergartens focusing on social practices where hierarchies of differences are manifested or disrupted. A consent form and information letter emphasize the participant's possibility to withdraw from the study. Access to the field is continuously (re)negotiated with the children. Furthermore, reflections on the researcher's position are ongoing. Pseudonyms are used for all participants and locations. The preliminary findings offer theoretical and empirical insight into how children address and negotiate social categories such as gender, "race", or disability when they play. From a social justice perspective, the significance of the findings will be discussed, focusing on child-adult interaction. The findings suggest a need for further research on how professionals in ECEC can promote social justice through playful interactions with children.

Social Justice, Playful Interaction, 3- to 6-Year-Olds, Critical Ethnography, Social Categories

E 25

OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING SIG; CHANGES TO DAILY LIFE AND CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Self-organised Symposium

In light of the recent global pandemic and other disruptions to daily life, this symposium explores how outdoor play and learning experiences have been sculpted across different settings, contexts and countries. The three presentations, collecting research findings from different countries (Japan, Norway, Greece), aim to shed light to the play and learning opportunities, possibilities and challenges were aroused in outdoor environments and how they were influenced by their actors, affordances and arenas.

Chair: Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Affordances in nature as an educational environment promoting integration of refugee children and local children in an ECEC.

Trond Loge Hagen, Queen Maud University College, Norway

The study aimed to give more knowledge on how affordances in nature environments encourage different kind of play and learning to integrate refugee children and local children into an ECEC. Research has shown that using nature as an educational environment provides affordances for children and for educators to enrich play, promoting variety of spaces, and facilitates a dynamic, social, all-consuming and creative play (Storli & Hagen, 2010; Knight & Luff, 2018; Heldal, Hagen, Olausen & Haugen; 2021). The study is based on the theory of affordances (Gibson, 1979), and illuminates perspectives on children's play in interaction with the nature environment where children can meet their experiences, culture and reality, and transform experiences, making them clearer and more understandable. This study draws on data from one ECEC institution in a refugee camp. Data include 14 field observations, 36 semi-structured interviews and one group interview. All the participants have given an informed consent, and pseudonyms are used replacing names of the participants. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The data shows that the children were allowed to intuitively explore and engage in play based on their own subjective perceptions of the environment, indicating that nature—with its rich and diverse affordances—creates a platform for dynamic play across culture, background and gender. This study meets the request for practice-oriented research by presenting new ideas of ECEC pedagogical practice, bringing refugee and local children together and acknowledge affordances in nature as an important pedagogical environment.

outdoor play, integration, affordances, refugee children, nature environment

Influence of Covid-19 on outdoor and playground activities in Japanese ECEC settings

Kiyomi AKITA (1), Mariko MIYATA (2), Yuta MIYAMOYO (3), Machiko Tsujitani (4), Kaori ISHIDA (5), (1) Gakushuin University, Japan, (2) Shiraume Gakuen University, Japan, (3) FUKUI University, Japan, (4) Ochanomizu University, Japan, (5) Institute of Research on Playground, Japan

The aims of this study is to clarify how the use of outdoor and playground in ECEC settings has changed throughout Japan as a result of Covid-19. There have been various narratives about the impact of Covid-19 on childcare in various countries (Bertram & Pascal, 2021), but the impact of Covid-19 on outdoor activities has not yet been fully discussed. OECD (2020) pointed that the COVID-19 pandemic was a forceful reminder that the outdoor activities play an important role for physical and emotional well-being for children. Bronfenbrenner (1995) PPCT model – process, person, context, and time are utilized as the framework for this study. This study is based on the results of a questionnaire survey of 437 centres in Japan. The survey was anonymous, and the participants agreed to the purpose. Compared to pre-Corona, 23.7% of the respondents answered

that the use of the playground and outdoor environment had increased, and 36.6% said it had decreased. In many preschools, the garden was perceived and used as a place that could provide a richer and more stable environment for children without being too dense. In addition, 68% of the settings reported an increase in the number of discussions among staffs regarding the safety management, locations, and activities. In order to make effective use of the outdoor space, it is important for educators to recognize the significance of outdoor activities, and it is suggested that importance of dialogue among staffs in the centres.

Covid-19, Outdoor play, Playground, Japanese ECEC centres, PPCT model

A GoPro-look on how children aged 17-25 months assess and manage risk during free exploration in a varied natural environment

Alexander Olsen (1), Ellen Beate Hansen Sandseter (2), Steffen Tangen (1), (1) Østfold University College, Norway, (2) Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This study aims to investigate how toddlers assess and manage risk in free exploration in a varied natural environment. Research identify what risky play is (Kleppe et al., 2017; Sandseter, 2007), and indicate that it has positive effects for children's development, learning and health (Brussoni et al., 2015; Sando et al., 2021; Sandseter & Kennair, 2011). Risky play can also positively affect children's ability to assess and manage risk (Lavrysen et al., 2017). The Theory of Affordances (Gibson, 1979) constitutes the theoretical framework for the study, focusing on how toddlers perceive, utilize and handle the physical environment in which they move and explore. The study was conducted within an explorative qualitative approach (Dalland & Keeping, 2020; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Observations were collected through head mounted GoPro cameras while seven toddlers explored a natural environment. Informed consent from ECEC staff and the children's parents were gathered, and the children could choose when and how to wear the camera. Pseudonyms replace participants' names. The results show that toddlers are able to assess and manage risks in challenging natural environments. They assess risks directly and indirectly, and develop their own risk management skills. The results also show that practitioners sometimes do risk assessment/management on behalf on the child and thus override the child's own actions. The findings suggest implications for an ECEC practice where children, even as young as 17-25 months, should be allowed to explore challenging environments and learn how to assess and manage risks.

Toddlers, risk assessment, risk management, exploration, GoPro

Symposium Set F

15:40 - 17:00, Thursday 25th August 2022

F 1

PRACTITIONERS PERSPECTIVE ON THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF PLAY

Self-organised Symposium

The self-organised symposium presents results of a comparative study project in Estonia, Germany, and Russia. The international study deals with the topic of teacher beliefs about children's participation and different ways of promoting children's participation in kindergarten and pre-schools before and during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Chair: Anja Seifert, Justus Liebig Universität Gießen, Germany

Experiences and beliefs of early childhood teacher students towards playing and participation in kindergarten and pre-school in Estonia, Germany, and Russia before and during Corona (Russian perspective)

Igor Shiyani, Russia, Irina Vorobyeva, Evgeniy Krashennikov-Khait, Moscow City University, Russia

The aim is to investigate how student with teaching experience reflect and describe children's learning and participation. Russian part of the study is focused on differences in answers between students with teaching experience and without it. The results of previous international comparative studies (cf. Sandberg et al. 2015, Broström et al. 2014) show that there is no common view on children's learning and participation in different countries. Understanding of "learning" based on theoretical understandings of learning and participation, grounded in traditions of Co-Constructivism and Social-Culturalism (e.g. Bronfenbrenner 1979, Piaget 1975, Vygotsky 1978; Damasio 2004; Rogoff 2003, Säljö 2005). Participation is considered to be a key concept in early childhood pedagogy and studies (cf. James/James 2008). The questionnaire survey is based on characteristics of participation and studies of children's play and participation (cf. e.g. Pianta 2003). In a mixed-methods design, questions are asked about the importance of participation from the point of view of future pedagogical experts, participation is a basic precondition for democratic pedagogies. All subjects participated voluntarily in these studies and were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Students give more conservative answers than practitioners (based on previous research). A significant proportion of the participants in this study are active educators, but they study part time. A deeper examination of their positions reveals significant differences. The results of the research helps practitioners to sharpen their perception of participation in everyday kindergarten life in connection with their practical experience and learning background.

participation, play and learning, teacher beliefs, daily practice, comparative studies

Children's participation in free play and learning activities: the view of teacher students in Estonia

Maire Tuul, Aino Ugaste, Tallinn University, Estonia

In Estonia children are seen as active participants of their learning, and play is considered to be the main activity of children. How these ideas are put into practice depends on teachers' understanding of children's participation. Thus, the aim of our study was to explore how students learning to become ECEC teachers understand children's participation in play and learning activities, and what changes in participation they have experienced during the spread of COVID-19. The study is an extension of previous international study 'Learning and participation - two interrelated key-concepts in the preschool' (Johansson & Sandberg, 2010) and studies of the same international research group, which investigated preschool and primary teachers' views on children's learning and participation (2012, 2013, 2015, 2021). Theoretical framework is based on social-cultural theory with reference to Dewey, Vygotsky, and Rogoff. In participation the opportunity for children to take an active part in decision-making is considered important (Sandberg & Eriksson. 2010). We used mixed method research design and sent a questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire to all students studying ECEC at Tallinn University (N = 147). The Estonian Researchers' Code of Ethics was followed with voluntary participation, anonymity and a right to withdraw throughout the study. The data showed that teacher students interpreted children's participation in free play and participation in learning slightly differently - the opportunity to influence what happens was more prominent in free play. The findings offer insight into different views about children's participation and thus help to improve teacher training.

participation, teacher students, kindergarten, play, learning

Experiences and beliefs of early childhood teacher students towards playing and participation in kindergarten and pre-school in Estonia, Germany, and Russia before and during Corona

This study is part of an international comparative research in Germany, Estonia and Russia and focuses on student teachers' view of children's participation in everyday kindergarten life. It deepens and expands the understanding of teachers' view on participation, which was investigated more generally in previous work (cf. EECERA 2020, 2021). The results of this earlier research show a high degree of variability in the understanding of the concept "participation" and indicate the need for further investigation (Broström et al. 2015: 837f). Theoretical background is a complex of socio-culturally oriented learning theories that deal with activity, participation, and social interaction (Vygotsky 1978; Rogoff 1998; Stetsenko 1999; Säljö 2005; Damasio 2004) and include children's right to play and participate in pre-schools (Hart 1997; Hansen & Knauer 2013). The study with student teachers (n=60) utilises an online survey questionnaire based on characteristics of participation and includes both quantitative and qualitative elements (mixed-method study). The qualitative part was analyzed by qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2014). The voluntarily participating interviewees opted in the goals, contents and distribution of the study. They were informed about data protection and the right to stop the interview or to disconform at any time. The answers and descriptions of student teachers' experiences and beliefs differ between the countries regarding children's involvement in free play, structured activities and boards of participation. The study helps practitioners to sharpen their perceptions of true participation in everyday kindergarten life and could lead to a better understanding of the complex meaning of this term.

participation, play and learning, teacher beliefs, daily practice, comparative studies

F 2

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S AGENCY AND CITIZENSHIP

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Queena Lee, Monash University, Australia

Developing a toolkit to support young children's involvement in Liverpool's bid for UNICEF Child Friendly City recognition.

Clionagh Boyle, Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

The research aim was to support the co-design of a toolkit for Early Years settings to support young children's involvement in Liverpool's Child Friendly City strategy and action plan. This included creative provocations for young children to explore what they like or would change in their neighbourhood, community and city. This work is situated in scholarship such as that of Alderson (1993, 2017) which emphasises the importance of young children's agency, the vital connections between interpretations and implementation of rights, between universal principles and local understandings of these. The research engages with the theoretical framework proposed by Lundy (2015, 2018) which identifies four key elements for conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC- Space, Voice, Audience and Influence. Located within a critical realist paradigm (Alderson 2013) the research employs qualitative critical inquiry methodology and methods to explore children's meaning making through analysis of multimodal artefacts (Clark 2005) elicited using an engagement toolkit with children's centres in Liverpool. The research was approved by the ethics committee of Liverpool Hope University and information and consent forms for children, parents and practitioners form part of the engagement toolkit. An important contribution of the study is the way in which it illuminates the complex ecology of setting, neighbourhood and city in which children's involvement as rights holders is negotiated. The design and implementation of the Young Children's toolkit has the potential to impact on policy and practice when considered ecologically in terms of a bi-directional system (Bronfenbrenner 1979) .

Children's Rights, Audience, Voice, Space, Influence

Teaching Practices in Supporting Development of Children's Agency: A Cultural-Historical Analysis

Queena Lee, Monash University, Australia

This research aims at developing new knowledge in helping early childhood (EC) professionals' understanding about the developing process of children's agency and enriching their pedagogy kits to support such development. Agency is dynamic and communal (DeJaeghere, McCleary & Josić, 2016; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), which requires to be studied in motion. However, the research focusing on children's agency development and the corresponding teaching strategy are relatively sparse, which is the gap this research contributes to. Vygotsky's cultural historical theory (CHT) is adopted as the theoretical framework. Agency manifests in children's agentic behaviours that is conceptualised by the concept of cultural forms of behaviour (Vygotsky, 1997 & 1998) and the concept of social situation of development (Vygotsky, 1998) is used to frame the teacher-child interactions during the analysis. The corresponding methodology of Vygotsky's work is adopted in this research, the experimental genetic method (Vygotsky, 1997). 6 qualified EC teachers are interviewed separately and their interactions

with 16 focus children across 5 EC settings are captured through videography. The analysis is conducted through thematic case study with the theoretical concepts from CHT. Explanatory and consent forms are provided to all teacher participants and guardians of the focus children. Children's consent to participate is always sought before the commencement of research. Play provides opportunities enabling children's agency development, where teacher can plan and organise their interactions with children in order to provide scaffolding accordingly and effectively. The research provides insights for EC professionals' understanding and agency-friendly practices to support children's agency in motion.

development of children's agency, teacher-child interaction, role of play, teaching practice, cultural historical theory

Children's Belonging in ECE in Sweden - a matter of Friendship, Available Teachers and Collective Events

Karin Larsson, Department of Didactics and Teacher's practice, Linneaus University, Sweden

The aim is to contribute knowledge about children's belonging in Swedish preschool. The research questions are: What do children, educators and parents emphasize as important aspects regarding children's belonging in ECE? How can this be understood based on children's right to belong to a preschool community? The study is connected to the international research project: Politics of belonging - promoting children's inclusion in educational settings across borders, funded by NordForsk. Researchers have pointed out that values education as an educational practice is a neglected field in research (Puroila, et. al. 2016). A growing concern is how to prevent children's exclusion and improve their belonging (Johansson, 2017; McKay, 2014). The study applies to Nira Yuval-Davis (2011) social theory about the politics of belonging. This allows for explorations of belonging in ECE from both the participants' point of view and a broader societal context. A content analysis is used as a first step, followed by a theoretical analysis. Data consist of interviews with children, educators and parents and video observations of everyday interactions between children and between children and their educators in ECE settings in two multi-ethnic preschools in Sweden. The study was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. A written consent from parents and a sensibility to children's permission characterize the interviews/observations. The findings indicate that friendship, available teachers and collective events are aspects of importance for children's belonging in ECE. By enhancing children's belonging in preschool, the quality of values education in the institutions may increase.

Values education, Preschool, Societal structures and dynamic processes, Politics of belonging, Content analysis

F 3

PRACTITIONER INQUIRY AND PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Robyn Babaeff, Monash University, Australia

Using reflexivity as a Dynamic Leadership practice to better gain insight of play-based learning perspectives in those we lead

Robyn Babaeff (1), Sharryn Clarke (2), Elfriede Taylor (2), John O'Shaughnessy (2), Leigh Disney (1), (1) Monash University, Australia, (2) Department of Education and Training, Australia.

This research investigates ways early childhood educational leaders (ECEL), through communities of practice (CoP), understand perceptions of play-based learning (PBL) with families and educator teams they lead. Previous research conducted in Western Australia, indicates teachers struggle to implement PBL in early childhood classrooms, arising from minimized support from school leaders and reduced professional agency (Wallace & Hesterman, 2021). Gillie Bolton's (2018) theoretical framework of reflexivity was used to probe difficulties people have in understanding the perspective of self and others. This mixed-methods study uses constructivism where online forums, surveys and interviews sourced data. Thematic analysis identified common themes including barriers to gaining insight. Ethical approval was granted by Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Victorian Department of Education and Training to ensure that participants were able to choose their anonymity status and contributions. ECELS were able to collectively brainstorm through CoPs to identify common barriers across service type in understanding how their communities perceive and value PBL. Using reflexivity, ECELS identified their own barriers to understanding others by carefully constructing a survey tool and rigorous processes required to gain authentic insight. ECELS demonstrated surprise at the findings of their own research and discovered how to address personal biases first, before making assumptions about the perspective of others. CoPs that use reflexivity are an effective means of identifying

insight relating to their learning community perceptions including PBL. By gaining this insight, ECEs can lead others to enhance and promote PBL in their programs.

CoP, PBL, Reflexivity, Leadership, Research

Challenges and opportunities in developing participatory pedagogy in Finnish ECEC

Charlotte Lindh, Jan-Erik Mansikka, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Finland

Our study investigates the relation between pedagogical documentation and a participatory pedagogy in the Finnish ECEC context. Pedagogical documentation is a potential tool in sustaining and developing co-produced projects enhancing learning in different ways (Weckström et al., 2021). However, its use is always dependent on the context (Dahlberg & Elfström, 2014) linking to underlying values and pedagogical thinking (Sharmahd & Peeters, 2019). This study approach pedagogical activity in a process of becoming (cf. Barad, 2007) that can be more or less participative, we lean on a conception of participatory pedagogy that utilizes pedagogical documentation as a central working approach (Formosinho & Peeters, 2019; Lenz Taguchi, 2000). The study is an action research project (Rönnerman, 2018) with four participating ECEC centers in Finland. The focus is on problem-solving actions collaboratively with the participants. Our empirical data consist of multiple items; plans, protocols, observations and interviews collected from fieldwork during 2021-22. We have been permitted consent to conduct the study by the municipality. We have informed the respondents about the study and retrieved their written consent. We make sure that we protect the anonymity of respondents and their working units throughout the research process. Our findings will deal with both challenges and opportunities when it comes to develop the everyday pedagogy in the ECEC centers towards a more participatory direction. Our results provide a deeper understanding about the implementation of pedagogical documentation in one particular national context, which can be valuable for both practitioners and policymakers globally in striving for qualitative ECEC.

Pedagogical documentation, ECEC context, Pedagogues role, Participative pedagogy, Action research

Playing with play: Pedagogical Documentation or Practitioner Inquiry?

Alma Fleet (1), Adam Christie (2), (1) Macquarie University, Australia, (2) South Australia state Department for Education, Australia

Drawing on experiences with 150 South Australian early childhood sites, this research investigated Pedagogical Documentation and Practitioner Inquiry as professional learning tools enabling educators to be more present with children, through playful pedagogies and collaborative relationships. Similarities and differences across these processes were investigated. Pedagogical Documentation is inspired by work in Reggio Emilia (Giudici et al., 2001), while Practitioner Inquiry encapsulates various traditions (Fleet, DeGioia & Patterson, 2016). Focusing on early childhood teacher research(ers), Perry, Henderson, & Meier (2012) acknowledge potential overlap of these processes, which is explored further in this study. Practitioner Inquiry (Stremmel, 2007) and Pedagogical Documentation (Rinaldi, 2006) are usually seen as separate pedagogical processes, albeit with similar philosophical underpinnings. Becoming explicit about previously implicit arguments (Meier and Henderson, 2007), teacher research (Henderson et al., 2012) is reconceptualised here to include participatory pedagogies (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012). Within a socio-constructivist paradigm, professional development programs over four years were interrogated to clarify participant interpretations of pedagogical documentation and practitioner inquiry. The authors synthesised project perspectives to evolve theories tested subsequently through case study interviews in one children's centre. EECERA ethical protocols have been adhered to, with written informed consent from case study participants. Practitioner Inquiry tends to investigate adult practices to enable improvement, and Pedagogical Documentation tends to focus on learning alongside children to foreground their perspectives and theories. Intellectual curiosity and analytical reflection characterises both. Conceptualising adult learning alongside children's investigations strengthens professional practice. Integrating Pedagogical Documentation and Practitioner Inquiry supports professional practice around play-centred pedagogy.

Practitioner Inquiry, Pedagogical documentation, Play-centred pedagogies, Professional practice, Collaboration

F 4

GENDER AND MEN'S CAREER PATTERNS IN ECE

Self-organised symposium

The inclusion of men in the ECEC workforce is a major strategy for recruiting and retaining highly skilled staff for the ECEC sector (OECD 2019). This symposium presents different perspectives on career trajectories of men in ECEC from various perspectives. Andrae and Brody highlight the role of societal context and individual agency in men's career decisions in ECEC.

Sullivan and Thorpe focus on the role of peer relations in gender-mixed teams. Finally, Elkarif underlines the interplay of gender and cultural factors in her research on migrant and non-migrant men working in ECEC. Together, the three papers open up new perspectives to understand gender relations in the ECEC work force, and suggest policy development and practical measures towards a more diverse work force.

Chair: Tim Rohrmann, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Hildesheim, Germany

“It wasn’t a romantic marriage”: A metaphor analysis of male early childhood educators’ career narratives

Markus Andrä (1), David Brody (2),(1) FH Dresden, Germany, (2) Efrata Teachers College, Israel,

The goal of the study is to understand the meaning of career decisions for men in ECEC by analysing their metaphoric renditions of their narratives. Research on men’s career trajectories in ECEC has relied on interviews and observations (Brody, 2014; Jones & Aubrey, 2019), surveys (Jones, Hadley, & Johnstone, 2017), and storylines (Brody, Emilsen, Rohrmann, & Warin, 2020). The conceptual metaphor thesis forms the theoretical background of this study (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Examining men’s ECEC careers through their narratives is grounded in constructivist theory positing the individual’s active involvement in his career path (Bujold, 2004). The epistemological foundation is “embodied realism” which brings mind and body together by using of metaphors that connect the two (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). The study employs metaphorical analysis that provides deep insight into men’s intentions and understanding of themselves, as expressed to others (Schmitt, 2017). Ethical permission was granted by the academic institution of one researcher. All ethical procedures were followed in data collection and reporting to ensure anonymity. We reemphasize the significance of the interplay between the societal context and individual agency in understanding how men manage to function within a female work territory. Their metaphors enable them to translate their corporeality into a deeply convincing reality. The intellectual gender discourse that typically accompanies investigations of men in ECEC is valuable in its own rite; however, the corporeal dimensions of this study balance those theoretical approaches, enlighten our understanding of men in ECEC and give promise to future research.

men’s career decisions, metaphorical analysis, men in early childhood education, men’s career narratives, masculinities

Gendered expectations vs gendered initiatives: perspectives of male practitioners with migrant and non-migrant background in Germany

Halah Elkarif (1), Tim Rohrmann (2), (1) Hildesheim University, Germany, (2) HAWK Hildesheim University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Germany

This study analyses how male practitioners in ECEC approach masculinities differently according to their cultural background. Drawing on data collected for a PhD project and following some cross-cultural research on men and gender in ECEC (Peeters et al. 2015; Koch & Farquhar, 2015; Xu, 2018), the current paper is investigating gender-related perspectives and attitudes among some male practitioners with migrant and non-migrant background in Germany. Adopting the social constructionist theory, masculinities in this study are considered as outcomes of merging social, cultural, and historical factors (Addis et al., 2016) and therefore masculinity here is not fixed, as it is always developing through interaction (Bryman, 2012). Although many studies addressed masculinities and men in ECEC (O’Keeffe, 2017; Brody, 2015; Brownhill et al., 2016), little attention was given to elaborate the role played by culture in shaping such perspectives and attitudes. Within a generic qualitative methodology, 18 face-to-face long interviews were conducted with male practitioners with migrant (Middle east) and non-migrant background in different cities and institutions in Germany. All participants gave written informed consent to the voluntary participation in the study and to the use of their anonymized data for scientific publishing purposes. Complicated intersections between masculinities and professionalism were highlighted across the analysed data, asserting a clear difference among the participants in understanding and practicing masculinity according to their cultural background. These findings suggest the need for continuous professional support for gender-mixed teams, with a specific focus on gender reflexivity and the interplay between gender and cultural factors.

Male educators, masculinities, gender, culture, practice

The Men’s Centres: Does the clustering of men together in a centre support inclusion in the female-dominated occupation of ECEC?

Yuwei Xu (1), Victoria Sullivan (2), Karen Thorpe (2), Laetitia Coles (2), (1) Nottingham University, United Kingdom, (2) The University of Queensland, Australia

We take the unique circumstance of many men working together in ECEC to ask whether more men on staff within a centre improves the men’s experience of inclusion, leading to their retention. Engaging men in ECEC is one of nine recommendations of the OECD (2019) report on the international ECEC workforce crisis. Rates of educator turnover are high with estimates

ranging from 20-50% per annum (Thorpe et al., 2020; Totenhagen et al., 2016; Whitebook et al., 2014). Interpersonal relationships are powerful in communicating inclusion or exclusion in gender-segregated occupations (Sullivan et al., 2021). Exit is associated with experience of feeling 'other' perpetuated by judgements of men's sexuality, motives, and ability (Acker, 2012; Kossek et al., 2016). We undertake an abductive analysis of interviews with ten men comprising 20% and 25%, of the staff in two ECEC centres; ten times the national and international representation of men in the ECEC workforce. Ethics approval was gained through the University of Queensland Institutional Human Research Ethics Board. All participants and data have been deidentified. Our data identifies a developmental process in which supports and mentorship, from female and male colleagues, are critical to retention early in career. Beyond, the building of a distinct male contribution underpins continuing career engagement. Implications for inclusion and workplace productivity are complex as the presence of more men disrupts the established social order and new tensions emerge. Our findings challenge the assumption that increasing gender-minority numbers will necessarily improve inclusion in the workplace, as broader gender dynamics pervade.

Early Childhood Education and Care, Male Educators, Workplace Environment, Gender and Education, Occupational Sex-Segregation

F 5

EXPLORING UNDERSTANDINGS, COMPETANCES AND INTERGRATION OF STEAM

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Morten Rask Petersen, UCL University College, Denmark, Denmark

Developing ECE teachers' STEM competences

Adrijana Visnjic-Jevtic (1), Ana Štefanec (2), (1) University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education, Croatia, (2) Kindergarten Dobro Drvo Zagreb, Croatia

The aim of the research was to determine how profesional development and trainings contribute to the development the teachers' competences in the STEM. DeJarnette (2018) indicates that teachers do not feel competent to encourage the development of children's scientific thinking due to lack of education in this area. Stephensen, Fleer, Fragkiadaki and Rai (2021) state that teachers participating in lifelong learning programs got ideas how to enhance children, especially girls, learning in STEM. Research shows that the development of scientific literacy encourages creative thinking and innovation in children (DeJarnette, 2018). Vartiainen and Kumpulainen (2019) believe that scientific literacy is a prerequisite for understanding scientific concepts in education. Teachers are responsible for encouraging learning, so they need to be supported in deepening STEM competences. The research combines a qualitative (interviews) and a quantitative research paradigm (self-assessment questionnaire). The quantitative research was conducted before and after STEM training with ECE teachers (N = 28) and students (N = 3) participated. Three participants participated in interviews conducted after the training. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research, possibility of withdrawing from participation and were guaranteed anonymity. The research was conducted in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the University of Zagreb and EECERA Ethical Code. Pre-training assessments show insufficient information about STEM activities in ECE. Post-training assessments showed increased competences in different areas of STEM education. Trainings contributes to the teachers competences for STEM activities in ECE, so it should be part of longlife learning.

active learning, continuous professional development, scientific literacy, STEM experiences, workshops

An Integrative Review of STEM Integration in Early Childhood Education

Andrea Ng, Sarika Kewalramani, Gillian Kidman, Monash University, Australia

The purpose of this study is to disclose the existing STEM education that is integrated into the early childhood settings (ECE). A recent critical review on STEM education by Takeuchi et al. (2020) highlighted the lack of attention to STEM teaching perspectives, especially in the ECE context.

The data synthesis will be based on the different levels of iSTEM proposed by Vasquez et al. (2020) - disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary. The different levels of integration will guide the understanding of the existing perception on what and how STEM education is delivered in ECE. The integrative review is the employed methodology to conceptualise how STEM is being integrated into ECE. An integrative review study is an empirical research to develop an extensive understanding of a specific phenomenon of interest (Toronto & Remington, 2020). In order to increase the data accuracy, saturation and triangulation, the authors worked collaboratively to select and study the papers closely. The findings are based on the reviews of 17 papers, attempting to provide some insights on what and how to integrate STEM into ECE. The literature revealed how STEM integration was perceived, current approaches to integration, the factors to consider, and the

challenges of iSTEM in ECE. The overall results were then consolidated and presented into a transdisciplinary STEM framework. Thus, the findings of the study provides some guidance for both research and teaching directions to move beyond the single silo subject teaching approaches by merging STEM disciplines across all early learning tasks when possible.

STEM, STEAM, integration, inSTEM conceptual framework, early childhood education

Science practices: A play based approach to science with young children

Morten Rask Petersen, Linda Ahrenkiel, UCL University College, Denmark, Denmark

The aim of the study reported in this presentation is to develop a set of science practices in a play perspective in young children. The Danish curriculum for daycare (2020) describe science as an investigative approach, which opens up for active involvement of nature and natural phenomena. Play is likewise understood as an approach to explore the world. The descriptions of science resembles Inquiry-Based Science Education (IBSE) (Minner, Levy, & Century, 2010) applied in school-settings. Johnston (2013) describes how the different phases of IBSE may be recognized in early childhood education. Play is young children's primary practice form (Sutton-Smith, 1997; Skovbjerg, 2021; Jørgensen, 2018), and to investigate the practices of play we use the concept of play qualities (Skovbjerg, 2021; Skovbjerg & Jørgensen, 2021). By combining the appearance of inquiry and play, we have developed a theoretical set of science practices. The science practices were tested through an action-research design (McNiff, 2013). Together, practitioners and researchers then refined the science practices based on observations from practice and through multiple iterations. Close analyzes of field notes were made to point out emergent categories and themes (Clarke, 2003). The professional's appreciative and guiding attitudes assured continually consents of the children, why close and respectful collaboration with all participants was crucial (Koch, 2021). The findings demonstrate that the developed set of science practices enhance a play based approach to science in preschool which strengthen children's participation in science activities, and create an analytical framework for research and a tool for more reflective practice.

science education, play, emergent science, participatory methods, action-research

F 6

PARENT'S PERSPECTIVES ON PLAY IN ECE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Sule ALICI, Kirsehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey

Educators' and parents' perceptions of children's play and learning opportunities in ECEC

Marina Lundkvist, Tove Ingebrigtsen, Elisabeth Bjørnstad, Ann Grethe Baustad, Nord University, Fakultet for lærerutdanning, kunst og kultur, Norway

This presentation explores educators' and parents' perceptions on different quality criteria promoting children's play, learning, well-being and development opportunities. The study is related to two quality studies, the EU project 'European Quality Seal and the Norwegian BePro-project. The study draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and Sheridan's pedagogical perspective on quality (Sheridan, 2001, 2007). The study is also guided by research and theories related to high quality in ECEC This study is a part of an European stakeholder survey regarding quality in ECEC, based on a questionnaire rating different quality aspects in ECEC. Educators and parents from 30 Norwegian ECEC institutions participate in the study and were invited to describing their five most important factors for care and education in ECEC. The study follow ethical standards and privacy policies approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service and The Norwegian Data Protection Authority. We guarantee the participants' confidentiality and anonymity In this presentation we will analyze and discuss in-depth our analyses related to the most important factors rated by educators' and parents' against Sheridan's four dimensions of pedagogical quality; those of the society, the child, the teachers and the learning context. We will have a special focus on promoting children's play and learning. The Norwegian framework plan highlight collaboration between educators and parent's and our findings can contribute to the discussion about what is quality from different perspectives and how to implement in practice.

ECEC quality, Play, Learning, Educators views, Parents views

A strength-based approach to exploring parents' engagement in children's play in rural Tajikistan

Zarina Muminova, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

This research explores parents' and educators' perceptions of parents engagement in children's play in rural Tajikistan. Play has an enormous influence on children's development (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 96). However, existing research shows that while some parents consider play an important parental role (Bornstein & Putnick, 2012; Haight et al., 1999), some do not and avoid playing with children (Farver, 1993). By employing funds of knowledge theory (Moll, 2019), this research shows parents engagement in children's play arising naturally in their everyday life, which are overlooked. This study employed a case study approach (Yin, 2018) to investigate the topic and used qualitative research tools like interviews and children's video-diaries to collect relevant data. To ensure participants' agreement and anonymity, I used informed consent form and pseudonyms. I also asked parents to create video-diaries, allowing them to delete images/footages they did not wish to disclose; this eased the ethical consideration for using the 'home' as a research site. Overall, this study argues that while parents' and educators' interviews show parents' lack of participation in children's play, children's video-diaries evidence parents' and children's joint participation in various spontaneous activities during completing house chores or farming that has element of play. However, this is not recognised or valued due to what constitutes a play for parents and educators. This research outcome will help educators and preschools to better understand children's exposure to informal playing opportunities arising naturally within home environment and utilise them to connect children's experience of play at home and preschool.

parental engagement, play in rural areas, funds of knowledge, home learning environment, rural childhood

What can we learn from observing children and parents in play activities in contexts of oppression in Palestine?

Rabab Tamish (1), Pete Dudley (2), Ahmad Fasfous (1), (1) Bethlehem university, Palestine, (2) Cambridge university, United Kingdom

Although essential, learning through play is often misunderstood and thus at risk. We wanted to discover the status and role of play in the eyes of parents/care givers of young Palestinian children in a refugee camp that has stood in Bethlehem for over 70 years (0.5M children are educated in refugee camps). Regular participation in high quality play with peers and adults is widely accepted as a prerequisite for good child development and later success in learning. Without it, by age five, children can already consider themselves failures (Sylva et al. 2010). Parental support for children's setting-based learning through play enhances its effect, boosting school outcomes by 50% (Desforges 2005). Yet many teachers and still more parents/carers distrust the value of early play. Our theoretical position is founded in sociocultural learning (Vygotsky, 1978) we explored how play was used to help motivate, support and scaffold development and to support parents to engage children in 'sustained shared thinking' (Sylva et al., 2010) extending cognitive development through play. We used action research in an interpretivist approach using observations and discussions with parents and children as they participate in a pre-school program. We gained the trust of parents and children through working in a community centre to obtain informed consent and adopted BERA ethical guidelines. Military occupation, oppression, displacement and poverty are limiting parental expectations and understanding of play-based early years practice. Investment is needed in public understanding of play-based learning for parents and society.

Parent role, political oppression, adult child learning, community learning, Palestinian children

F 7

THE CULTURES AND VALUES OF PLAY

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Debra Harwood, Brock University, Canada

How can children achieve hope for the future through gardening and farming activities?

Anne Lynngård, Norway, Kari Grutle Nappen, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL)

The research aim in this study is to get knowledge on values and competences children develop when they participate in gardening and farming activities together with competent adults. Theory on children's participation, environmental citizenship, and garden learning (Heggen et al., 2019), and Bergan et al, 2021. shows that garden and farming activities increases children's connections to nature. In this study we interconnect sociocultural learning theories, and Arne Næss's eco-philosophy to develop a method for practical work in education for sustainability, primarily through gardening and farming activities. We use qualitative methods such as interviews with both kindergarten teachers and researchers in ECTE, observations in kindergarten with children aged 1-6 years, and experiences with own students in ECTE. The participants get full anonymity and the results are treated confidentially according to ethical standards. Our research shows that gardening and farming activities can give children responsibility and understandings on how mankind can cooperate with nature. These activities are linked to values, and we find that during work in and together with nature children develop knowledge, and they achieve hope and develop agency connected to 21st century skills. This study may contribute to children's agency in education

for sustainability. We have developed a model for activities based on children's participation, leading to children's competences for the future. This knowledge helps teachers to make connections between practical work and understanding of sustainable development.

eco-citizens, 21st century skills, Values, Farming and Gardening, Eco-philosophy

“The more they know the more they grow”: Preparing educators to embrace outdoor play

Debra Harwood (1), Simranjeet Kaur (2), Jennifer Gilbert(2), (1) Brock University, Canada, (2) YMCA, Canada

This study explores educators' outdoor play beliefs/practices and outdoor play pedagogy training as a predictor of quality outdoor play within Canada. Outdoor play is in jeopardy! Alarming, young children spend 50% less time engaging in outdoor play when compared to the 1970s, despite the holistic-developmental and learning benefits (e.g., Tremblay et al., 2015). Outdoor play is inherently subject to educators' misinterpretations about the affordances of outdoor play and their role (Leggett & Newman, 2017; Gibson, 1979). In Canada, the YMCA, as the largest childcare provider, serving 87,000 children each year, has a critical role. Unquestionably, from an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and utilizing affordance theory (Gibson, 1979), ensuring equitable access and increased opportunities for children's outdoor play is complex. For example, educators have one central role in sculpting outdoor play, offering materials, and shaping environments. Yet, research and theoretical gaps persist (Waters, 2019). From a qualitative paradigm, and utilizing an interpretative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) we aim to explore the influences within an ecosystem model of outdoor play (Lawson Foundation, 2019) using pre-and-post surveys and educator blog posts. This study aligns with the ethical practices of Brock University. Participants' rights to anonymity and confidentiality are assured. The impact of educators' outdoor play beliefs, practices, and professional learning on outdoor play provision will be highlighted. Implications for addressing the current gap and barriers within educator training and curriculum, specifically what aspects of an ecosystem model are particularly significant for supporting and influencing quality outdoor play are the expected results.

outdoor play, outdoor play pedagogies, professional learning, ecosystems, qualitative research

A Froebelian lens of the cultures of play observed in one-year-olds in group care in Hong Kong, USA, England and New Zealand

Sacha Powell (1), Mary McMullen (2), Maria Cooper (3), Tik-Sze Carrey Siu (4), Jean Rockel (3), (1) The Froebel Trust, United Kingdom (2) Indiana University, United States, (3) University of Auckland, New Zealand, (4) Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Froebel's principle of "the central importance of play" articulates play as something for which "children have ownership" that adults support by "freedom with guidance" (Froebel Trust, n.d.). What does this look like across different cultures/countries? Froebel's play principle became a lens to reanalyse data from the researchers' study of one-year-olds in Hong Kong, USA, England, and New Zealand (Cooper et al., 2022). To maintain the integrity of diverse interpretations, sociocultural (Veraksa & Sheridan, 2018) and ecological perspectives (Darling, 2016) were applied to cultural meanings, facilitating resistance to positivist tendencies to normalise and unify children's experiences. Froebel's global impact led to consideration of cultural hybridity (Burke, 2015; Gupta, 2015) regarding how each country translated and reshaped his ideas in unique ways. This ethnographic study, inspired by Tobin et al., 2009, used video-cued, multi-vocal elicitation (children, parents, teachers, and scholars) in a multi-layered interpretation scheme. The a priori theme of Froebel's play principle was used for analysis followed by engaging in discursive interpretation. All adult participants signed consent forms and children were included only when they communicated clear assent; pseudonyms were used for all. Nuances of how play was manifested in pedagogies for one-year-olds emerged related to each country's curriculum and culture. Findings centred on autonomy afforded in play, choice-making, and values related to individual vs group-orientation. Implications for research and practice involve promoting critical discussions of Froebelian principles; understanding diverse cultural norms/values in infant-toddler pedagogies; extending understandings of play with one-year olds; challenging assumptions of universalities; and supporting multi-vocal cross-cultural research.

Infant-Toddler, Early Care and Education, Play, Cross-Cultural Research, Froebel

F 8

PLAYFUL ROBOTS FOR ALL

Self-organised symposium

The adoption of robots in inclusive playful activities offers a number of new options with respect to traditional toys. Robots can act both as agents, autonomously reacting and proposing different types of interaction, as well as avatars to make it

possible to explore and exploit skills and capabilities possibly not directly accessible to the player. In this symposium, we will explore these potentialities of robots, putting in evidence their role and unique possible contribution to children development through play, we provide guidelines for different actors to select and produce robot-based playful activities, and we present some robot-based play experiences that have been developed by the authors in the last ten years. Some of the presentations are based on results of the EU COST action "LUDI:play for children with disabilities" that has involved more than 120 operators, psychologists, designers, engineers, and researchers from 37 countries.

Chair: Andrea Bonarini, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

Robot-based play activities for all: a framework and experiences

Andrea Bonarini, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

We present motivations and a design framework for robot-based play activities tested in different situations. Robots are effective to support the development of children with disabilities not only in therapeutic settings (Cabibihan Et al 2013, VanDenHeuvel Et Al 2016), but also through inclusive playful activities (BrivioBonariniRogacheva 2021; BonariniBesio 2022). A systematic account of this is being developed from crafted experiences. Basing on the research about play (Vygotsky 1987, Garvey 1990, Besio 2017), we can identify a relevant role for robots in play activities in general, in particular for persons with disabilities. This framework and experiences have been developed within the paradigm structured by the EU COST Action "LUDI: play for children with disabilities" (Besio Et Al 2017). Trials have been performed in care centers and public events in Italy, with both typically developed, and disabled children. From direct and recorded observations engagement, playfulness, and effects on single subjects have been assessed with the tools usually adopted by therapists. Participants were identified by numerical tags, only. Information sheet was provided and the consent form signed by their tutors. All participants could withdraw from the trial at any time. These robots are intrinsically safe. It was possible to identify different roles for robots in practice, symbolic, constructive and rule-based play, exploiting either their autonomy in generating reactions and proposals, or their possibility to be used as avatars to provide interaction options different from the ones the specific player may directly exploit. Individual differences were present, independent from disability. The developed framework enables to design play activities that exploit robot features to offer new, engaging development settings.

Play design, Robot design, Play and disability, Peer interaction, Human-Robot Interaction

Nature and robotics: a comparative overview of play in kindergarten

Petar Vasilev Lefterov, Luisa Zecca, University of Milano - Bicocca, Italy

The contribution concerns five year's old children's exploration and play modes in relation to social interaction, with the purpose to underline similarities and differences between two specific situations: one focuses on the study of animals (ethology) the other on robo-etology approach. The study fits into the area of robo-ethology (Datteri, Di Maio, Murgia, 2018) and explorations in nature of the relationship between children, living in inclusive experiences (Lefterov, Pezzotti, 2021) and tutoring (Zecca, Bozzi, 2021). The choice of focusing on these digital mediators (Mittiga, 2021) is driven by the fact that robots are versatile multifunctional artifacts, which perform a large number of cognitive and non-cognitive functions (Fasoli, 2018). This multifunctionality, and the fact that children can interact with them without harming the living, could hint that children relate to robots in a different way than they do with the living. The research is placed in the naturalist ecological paradigm and follows a qualitative method. It is a case study methodology which involves an in-depth data collection. The data will be gathered through observations and audio or video recordings, and coded through specific categories of analysis. The activities proposed are a part of the school curricula and children participate on a daily basis. As part of the Project C4S, the study follows a Responsible Research and Innovation approach, families will be informed about the research. The aim is to understand if children attribute animal-like thoughts, attitudes and emotions to robots. A quality inclusive science education for children will be promoted.

Roboethology, Tutoring, Science Education, Kindergarten, Inclusion

A3 (FORMERLY F 13)

LEARNING FROM PLAY: METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FROM COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES IN BRAZIL, ESWATINI, PALESTINE AND SOUTH AFRICA

Self-organised symposium

This symposium examines the affordances and spaces for playful research methodologies, for young children and their families/ carers, in low-income communities which deal with challenges of violence. Community case studies are underway in

Brazil, Eswatini, Palestine and South Africa, as part of the UKRI GCRF funded project 'Safe, Inclusive and Participative Pedagogy' (2020-24). Fieldwork is engaging children aged 0-5, their parents/ carers, early years services' providers and other community stakeholders. Methods include ethnographic observation, local mapping, semi-structured interviews and focus groups using 'playful' participatory methods with a minimum, in each community, of 30 children and family members, 20 service providers and 20 community stakeholders. The symposium explores the application of the 'playful' participatory methods, their challenges and advantages under COVID-19 restrictions, and how they led to unexpected and/or productive research findings. It will start with a reflective overview paper, and then provide examples from two of the community case studies.

Chair: Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Playful methods in times of COVID-19: learning from communities

Patricio Cuevas-Parra (1), Linda Biersteker (2), Malcolm Bush (3), Clement Diamini (4), Rabab Tamish (5), Irene Rizzini (3), Kay Tisdall (1), (1) University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, (2) University of Cape Town, South Africa, South Africa, (3) International Centre for Research and Policy on Childhood, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro Brazil, Brazil, (4) University of Eswatini, Swaziland, (5) University of Bethlehem, Palestine

This paper looks across four community case studies in Brazil, Eswatini, Palestine and South Africa, for lessons learned and wise practices in playful participatory methods. Atkinson (2006) suggests that playful research methods can create rich information in unexpected ways as well as support relationships between children and adults. The paper draws on the 4 year UKRI GCRF funded project 'Safe, Inclusive and Participative Pedagogy', which aims to identify and develop safe, inclusive participative pedagogy (Formosinho & Figueiredo 2014; Rizzini et al 2017) that is implementable in fragile contexts and sustainable for governments, communities and families. This paper concentrates on the project's community case studies, involving at least 30 children and their family members, 20 service providers and 20 community stakeholders in each community. Amongst methods used were 'playful' participatory methods with children and their parents/carers addressing common questions but modified to suit those involved and cultural contexts. This paper reflects on methods used across the 4 locations, considering how the methods were designed or experienced as 'playful'. It explores the complexity of play used and/or that arises in a research process. A substantial range of ethical issues are addressed, ranging from informed consent, to culturally appropriate methods, to child protection, with ongoing consideration. Initial findings are that cultural and contextual adaptations to play-based approaches are essential, to ensure positive participant experiences as well as productive research findings. In particular, child-led activities (with older children working with younger children), were particularly able to deliver on both aspects.

Play, Participatory methods, Violence, Safe, Children's rights

Barriers and opportunities of play in a violent, impoverished Brazilian community

Irene Rizzini, Malcolm Bush, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro Brazil, Brazil

The study focuses on children's inclusion and participation in play in a community that makes that simple right very challenging. It details the barriers to young children's right to play in a challenging Brazilian urban community and creative ways to provide play opportunities (Coelho, 2007; Pérez; Jardim, 2015; Porto; Rizzini, 2017). Within the child rights framework, children's inclusion and participation are transformative concepts. Participation refers to children's collective action to transform society to safeguard human rights (Grover 2018). We use the term inclusion in an expanded form considering exclusion for reason of income, gender, ethnicity, location and other personal and social categories. In addition to exclusion from necessary educational resources we define exclusion as the lack of those resources in a community (CIESPI Bulletin, 2022). The study relies on methods of listening to children, particularly a CIESPI developed method of using silhouettes of children on which young children draws the physical context to describe their community. It also relies on interviews with early childhood centre staff and community residents recalling their own childhoods to describe barriers to play under conditions that inhibit play. Ethical considerations include read and signed consent forms from all participants and following CIESPI's safeguarding policy. Preliminary findings showed the enormous constraints of physical space in a mountain side, densely inhabited community and the constraints due to fears of drug traffickers yet the persistence of play. Policy and practice implications include how violence and massive overcrowding seriously inhibit play opportunities and creative methods for enhancing play opportunities.

Children's participation and inclusion, Right to play, Research, Poverty, Violence

The rights of children in early learning: opportunities and challenges for research and advocacy in a South African case study community

South Africa has prioritised ECE to address inequality and has well-developed policy and legislation. This study compares perspectives of community, parents and children, on early learning practices, with policy intentions using the lens of safety, inclusion, and participation, in a low-income community near Cape Town. Policy, play-based pedagogy and curriculum have been informed by predominantly high-income country studies and interpretations of the UNCRC (Marfo & Biersteker, 2011; Woodhead, 2005). Yet young children and parents' lived experiences reflect vastly different economic circumstances, and socio-cultural priorities for learning. The presentation builds on socio-cultural analysis of play and pedagogy and the perspectives of child participation (Rogers, 2011). The case study explores practitioner, community organisation, and parents' perceptions of experiences of early learning practices through interviews and focus groups, and the use of pictures and persona doll stories to elicit the views of young children (Johnson et al, 2014). Thematic analysis is used to distil findings. All participants provided informed consent and names have been anonymised. For children parents provided consent and children assented to participation. Fieldworkers were trained to deal with sensitive topics. The findings show that while South African policy promotes safe, inclusive, and participatory ECE based on play, there are significant implementation gaps and inconsistencies between community stakeholder and child perceptions and policy. This research highlights the importance for policy implementation of understanding early childhood learning and the value of play-based approaches in relation to culture and context.

participation, inclusion, safety, parents, play-based approaches

F 14

THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN SCULPTING PLAY

Self-organised symposium

Drawing on three different research projects, in this symposium we take a critical look at the role of the environment in sculpting, structuring, facilitating and signalling play within early childhood education and play settings. The three papers draw on different data sources; academic literature, a stakeholder survey and examples from practice, to critically analyse the ways in which the environment affords play. Through the symposium there is consideration of the philosophical origins of play and a questioning of what these mean for and in practice. Particular attention is given to whether/how meanings of play may vary when focused on children from birth to three.

Chair: Verity Campbell-Barr, Plymouth Institute of Education, United Kingdom

The neuroscience of play: a scoping review

Janet Rose, Lucie Hamilton, Norland College, United Kingdom

This paper reports on a scoping review of the current literature around neuroscience and play to ascertain what already exists, what might be helpful to inform practice and what next steps may be needed in terms of future research. The emerging field of neuroeducation offers new perspectives on what learning opportunities are facilitated by a play-based environment (Neale et al, 2018). The literature on executive functioning/self-regulation identifies how play promotes brain development (Ruston et al, 2010). This paper attempts to synthesise this literature to ascertain key messages building on Liu et al (2017). Interpersonal neurobiology (Siegel, 2012), the work of Panksepp (2008) and Porges' (2009) polyvagal theory is used to frame the context for the role of play in supporting neurophysiological executive functioning/self-regulation with links made to Vygotskian concepts of self-regulation. An interpretive systematic scoping literature review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2003) was conducted and a thematic analysis undertaken to analyse the findings. The limitations of neuroimaging studies are acknowledged. A rigorous sampling and search strategy was employed to guard against publication and search bias, including contextual position of studies. Key findings include how the learning environment and different types of play, particularly 'rough and tumble play', promote brain development, as well the critical role of adults in play interactions. A deeper understanding of how play supports brain development can help ensure adults create an optimal learning environment such as creating activities which promote executive functioning. The research offers a rationale for countering current policy pressures for more formal learning environments. Suggestions for further research are made.

Neuroscience, play, neuroeducation, practice, policy

A Critical Examination of What Constitutes Quality Early Years Curriculum

Verity Campbell-Barr (1), Jan Georgeson (2), Katherine Evans (2), Sasha Tregenza-May (2), (1) Plymouth Institute of Education, United Kingdom, (2) University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

The aim of the research was to identify the features of a quality early years curriculum that best supports holistic child development. In England, there have been three versions of the EYFS and with each iteration there has been concern and criticism that the curriculum guidance is increasingly restricted to narrow and prescriptive methods of pedagogy that are too formal, compartmentalised and rigid (Fisher, 2013). The criticisms are founded on an early years philosophy and pedagogy that draws on the works of Rousseau, Froebel, Montessori, Pestalozzi and Dewey where the focus was on the child as a unique learner, with a child friendly approach concerned with the development of children. However, curriculum theory remains underdeveloped, with educators having to negotiate the different ideologies and philosophies (Wood & Hedges, 2016). A Delphi Survey of experts was undertaken. Consisting of three surveys, the first asked open ended questions; the second returned all responses to all participants for comment; and the third presented an analysis of the responses for additional clarification and ranking. Participants were made aware that the anonymous nature of the research prevented the possibility of withdrawing data, but that they could withdraw from later surveys or decline to answer specific questions. Understandings of a quality curriculum are based on an interplay between the environment, following the child, inclusion and responsive educators, but the relationship to child development is poorly articulated. There is a conflation of meanings of the curriculum that have resulted in a struggle between policy and philosophy.

Curriculum, Philosophy, Pedagogy, Quality, EYFS

Exploring the play environment in Pikler and Steiner Waldorf inspired playgroups in England

Gemma Ryder, University of East London, United Kingdom

This paper explores how babies and toddlers engage with their play environment in Pikler and Steiner Waldorf inspired playgroups in England. This research is part of a wider doctoral study exploring prosocial development across formal early childhood settings. Play is considered to provide young children with opportunities to connect with others and scaffold their own learning (Broadhead, 2004). In Pikler and Steiner Waldorf settings, this is promoted through the use of open-ended resources within a peaceful environment (Tardos, 2013, Nicol and Taplin, 2018). This study draws on theoretical concepts of prosocial behaviour, child-initiated play and adult-guided play (Bruce, 2010, Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkins and Spinrad, 2015, Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff, 2016). Working within a Deweyan pragmatist paradigm, a multiple-case study design was adopted (Biesta, 2014). Data was collected through written observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The analysis of findings was conducted through thematic analysis and bricolage. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was provided in writing from adult participants. Children provided assent through verbal and non-verbal communication, with the right to withdraw respected at all times. A system of coding was used to anonymise all study participants. The findings highlight how the underpinning philosophies of Pikler and Steiner promote a community of social learning and exploration, without the use of a curriculum framework. Parents participate in play when invited by their child, promoting autonomy and agency. The emphasis on how children and parents play and learn together provides unique insight into the playgroup environment, which is under-represented in early childhood research.

playgroups, child-initiated, birth to three, Pikler, Steiner Waldorf

F 15

“METHODOLOGICAL IMMATURITY” – PLAY AS RESEARCH/RESEARCH AS PLAY

Self-organised symposium

"If all being is becoming, then 'we' are all constitutionally immature - and this is not to be seen negatively, as something lacking, but rather in terms of potential" (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008:511). This symposium reconsiders and proposes new affordances between the worlds of researcher, practitioner, child and adult - to ask: where does play end and research begin? University of Edinburgh colleagues and collaborators Kay Tisdall, Lynn McNair and Laura Wright consider this question through separate inquiries - on child-led (Tisdall et al), practitioner-led (McNair et al) and play-based research (Wright), as they make links between knowledge creation, children's rights, social justice and early years practice. The conversation will then arc to wider societal moves for more child-centred statutory provision in Scotland (including the influence of a burgeoning Froebelian movement) and their potential implications for researchers. Chaired by Simon Bateson, Co-director, Froebelian Futures (Cowgate Under 5s, The Froebel Trust).

Chair: Simon Bateson, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Child-led research: play as research/ research as play?

Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Undertaken with children, practitioners and academics, we are exploring the processes of child-led research, in a Scottish nursery within a Froebelian pedagogy. For older children and young people, child-led research has been particularly effective for their participation to make impact on decision-making, as it positions children and young people as knowledge creators, with expertise and skills (Cahill 2007; Tisdall 2020). Child-led research can be understood as children leading all aspects of research from design to dissemination, with adult support rather than adult management (Kellett 2010; Cuevas-Parra 2018). This project provides an opportunity to learn from young children, below the age of 5, about child-led research's potential. With the affordances of a Froebelian nursery and its approach to children's play, the 'trees project' is unfolding with 15 children who have volunteered to participate. To date, the process is documented through children's mind maps, recordings from hand-held microphones, staff members' reflective notes and academic interviews with staff. Ethical considerations include: ongoing consent from children, as well as their parents; privacy and confidentiality in an early years setting, while respecting the children as knowledge creators (thus, we anticipate that this paper will gain further authors by August 2022). Initial findings include: the children's research dedication over several months; the serendipity of connections made by children as they research; the integration of play, creative activities and research into the process. Implications include how child-led research can add to Froebelian practice, along with the challenges of valuing both research play and outcomes.

young children, research, child-led research, knowledge, play

Enhancing the Flow of Knowledge - Practitioners as Researchers

Lynn McNair, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

My upcoming research will explore the effect of a multi-year training programme training Froebelian EY practitioners (EYP) in action research skills (Practitioner Inquiry "PI"), to examine its impact on their principle-led practice. This research stems from previous work which looked at small-scale storytelling research (Bruce, McNair & Whinnett, 2021). It will build on this by exploring a diverse range of research projects carried out by EYPs. Key ideas which will ground my assessment of the programme include slow pedagogy (Clark, 2022), children's rights (Tisdall, 2021) and active professionalism (Sachs, 2000). This presentation will reference early data from qualitative surveys and interviews with programme participants. My analytical paradigm is Froebelian and social constructivist. The research will develop in 2022-23 to assess: how EYP identities have evolved; how their learning has been implemented; the effect of this on pedagogy/individuals/community; and the strengths and potential of future programme development. This research has been ethically approved by the University of Edinburgh. Informed consent has/will be obtained at every stage. This research is in its early stages and many findings lie ahead. Our main baseline finding is that most participants do not (yet) view themselves as researchers/knowledge co-creators. This fledgling field of enquiry suggests that PI can build confidence in practitioners, and catalyse change both in individual settings and in wider ELC culture [see e.g. Gilchrist, 2018]. I anticipate possible implications for policy/training etc, EYPs must balance competing demands and values in their inquiries; external accountability creates tension in EYPs' inquiry practices.

early learning and childcare, practitioner inquiry, early years practitioner, interviews, transformation

Play-Based Research: Relational Process

Laura Wright, University of Edinburgh, Canada

The research explored children and young people's own conceptualisations, experiences, and embodiment of play and play-based research approaches. Play is often seen as a trivial experience that happens in the gaps or breaks in research rather than as aspect of research deserving attention in its own right. Although a few studies exist on play based research (e.g. Campo et al., 2018; Koller & San Juan, 2015) there is a dearth of literature on play-based research approaches. The research uses an interdisciplinary childhood studies, social ecological, and children's rights approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gal, 2017; James & Prout, 2015) to explore play-based research with young researchers and to examine its role in their relationships and dialogue on social issues. The research involved training young people in participatory methods, namely play-based research (e.g. giant jenga, community mapping, visual explorer). The young people then led research with other children and young people. Ethical considerations include: ongoing consent from children, recognising limited confidentiality, anonymity, and power imbalances. In addition to procedural ethics, the research uses a relational ethics approach. Findings highlight: (i) young people's conceptualisations, understandings, and experiences of playing; (ii) how play-based research affects the Emerging Researchers' experiences of and approaches to relationships; and (iii) play-based research's role in fostering reflective dialogue on social issues. The presentation concludes with a growing call for relational approach to children's participation in research and practice by demonstrating the significant role of play-based research in embodied relationships with children and methods.

play, child rights, participatory methods, relationships, dialogue

F 16**THE DECOMMODIFICATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: RESISTING NEOLIBERALISM**

Self-organised symposium

As Guy Roberts-Holmes and Peter Moss have comprehensively documented in their recent book, neoliberalism is the prevailing narrative in early childhood education. This SOS gives an account of the state-of-the-art research on one of its most salient aspects: the commodification of early childhood education as a "glocal" phenomenon: global as a phenomenon that affects liberal as well as traditionally social democratic welfare state, yet in very localized and hybrid ways, depending on local cultures, histories and political contexts. The focus of the research, however is in movements of resistance and examples of sustainable actions of de-commodification, both in the global North and the global South. The SOS is divided on three parts: Resisting children as human capital; Resisting the consumentality of parents; and Resisting the alienation of the workforce.

Chair: Michel Vandenbroeck, Belgium**The decommodification of early childhood education: resisting neoliberalism**

Michel Vandenbroeck, Belgium

This part looks at the impact of commodification on parents. Parents are increasingly viewed as consumers, and expected to make a rational choice. The language of choice and satisfaction measurements hides structural inequalities. We also look at how this language may be resisted and how alternative concepts of parent-professional relations may be shaped. The analyses presented are based upon previous work that relates pedagogy with the surrounding societal contexts. See for instance earlier publications on Paulo Freire: (Vandenbroeck, 2020). The analysis of dominant discourses and of alternative stories are analysed using the concepts provided by Antonio Gramsci: cultural hegemonies and relation this to the concept of untested feasibilities, as developed by Paulo Freire. We also look at what Gramsci has labeled as the task of critical intellectuals. References include (but are not limited to) Forgacs, D. (1988); Lears, T. J. J. (1985). We further make use of the concepts developed by Roberts Holmes and Moss (2021) in their seminal book on neoliberalism. The methodology (and the paradigm) are situated in the tradition of critical pedagogy. They are based on post-structural and sociological analysis of the social structures that shape pedagogical vocabulary. In addition a comprehensive literature study on the impact of commodification in different parts of the world has been conducted. Analyses are based on ethical considerations including basic human rights. Neoliberalism has profoundly affected parent-professional relations but alternative stories are possible and sustainable. Civil society plays an important role in resisting neoliberalism.

*Neoliberalism, Consumentality, Commodification, Social management, Parents***Resisting Children as Human Capital**

Joanne Lehrer (1), Brooke Richardson (2), (1) Université du Québec en Outaouais, Canada, (2) Brock University, Canada

The commodification of ECEC impacts children's daily experiences, narrowing conceptualizations of children and childhood to future human capital. This presentation explores alternative framings of ECEC as a site for pedagogy and resistance. The idea that children's value is commensurate with their future economic output to society has become increasingly pronounced over the past 30 years. This work builds on Robert-Holmes and Moss (2021), Lloyd and Penn (2012) and others. Based on the sociology of childhood, childhood is a culturally situated and specific social institution (Prout & James, 2015). Feminist ethics of care views ECEC as a reciprocal, responsive, and relational process (Langford et al, 2020). Contesting what ECEC is for within a critical reconceptualist paradigm, this theoretical project explores concrete examples of resistance from a range of contexts. Using Tronto's (2013) feminist ethics of care framework, specifically her thinking about a caring democracy, we problematize the increasing commodification of childcare. Examples of programs that take up these ethical concerns, and centre the integrity of all involved in the care process, are highlighted. Within a commodified market approach, the child is viewed as passive object, learning subject, in need of saving, risk to society, and future human capital. ECEC has been conceptualized as custodial care for vulnerable children; a mechanism for cultural assimilation; an idyllic setting for children to learn and grow; an economic investment; and, a site for democratic pedagogy and resistance. This project contributes to discussions about what ECEC is for and what else it could be.

neoliberalism, commodification, marketisation, children, childcare

F 17

Learning Story narrative assessments (Carr, 2001), because of their socio-cultural theoretical framework, have broad relevance because they offer a narrative context within a formative, credit-based process that enables multiple voices to be listened to. Learning communities, therefore, are able to work together to ensure everyone can lead their own learning within social settings that invite curious exploration through the nurturing of lifelong learning identities. This means Learning Stories are able to tell the stories that are meaningful to diverse people in diverse settings. These narrative assessments drive relational connection and their ability to enhance learning identity, as they enable valued learning to be made visible, offers insight for all those involved. This symposium looks at how Learning Stories create deeper, caring relationships, and can be used not only with children but also with adult learners as diversity, empathy, collaboration and agency are nurtured.

Chair: Annie White, California State University Channel Islands, United States

How learning stories shape children’s learning identity: A narrative inquiry.

Lorraine Sands, Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand

This paper draws on contributions from children, families and teachers, in an early learning setting, to deepen understanding of the ways sharing thoughtfully written learning stories, contributes to children’s learning identities. The study investigated how this understanding enhanced pedagogical practice. The study continues research on children’s learning identities, developed through Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education, Centre of Innovation research at Greerton ECE (EECERJ, 2012, 20(4), 553–564). I draw on research for my Masters thesis on children’s learning identities (Dewey, 1916, Bruner, 1996). The study considers the importance of dynamic, dispositional perspectives as teachers focus on children’s lived experiences to track learning progress and involve the whole community to strengthen children’s learning identities (Carr & Lee, 2019). The study uses narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2016), to explore alternative paradigms (Moss, 2018) that include: innovative re-conceptualising of the connection with community, and posthuman concepts of relational living (Murriss, 2016). Teachers, families and children (parents gave informed consent), provided their permission for this research and could withdraw at any time. Emotion and learning are entwined and as learning communities re-access lived experience through learning stories tracking progress in dynamic, dispositionally framed ways, learning identities strengthen across times, places, and social contexts (Carr & Lee, 2019). As a result, communities design learning environments in response to the uniqueness of children’s learning identities. Learning stories, embedded in children’s lived experiences, enable communities to design meaningful learning environments that speak to the richness of children’s languages, cultures and identities (Gunn & Gasson, 2017).

learning stories, learning identity, narrative inquiry, formative, relationships

Teacher inquiry and Learning Stories: A site for pedagogical change

Wendy Lee, Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand

My objective is to show how documentation of formative assessment has the capacity to engage and strengthen teacher inquiry and enhance pedagogical practice in an early childhood setting. This paper builds on research-based exemplars (Kei Tua o te Pae : Carr, Lee and Jones 2005, 2007, 2009) and inquiry research (Sisk-Hilton and Meier 2017). It also builds on previous work presented at EECERA 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021. The research underpinning this paper used a teacher inquiry and action-research approach (McTaggart et al., 2017; Escamilla et al. 2021). Learning Stories (Carr and Lee, 2012, 2019, White, 2016) provides the platform to explore pedagogy and recognises that teaching is fundamentally inquiry in the domain of human attention and awareness (Mason 2002). Narrative theoretical approaches underpin this research. The New Zealand assessment practice of Learning Stories, provides the platform to explore pedagogy (Carr and Lee, 2012, Lee et al. 2013). New data from teachers’ interviews, documented assessments and reflections is introduced. Consent forms and information sheets were provided to all participants. Informed consent was negotiated with the children involved and participants could withdraw their data from the research at any time. Teachers’ reflections on the children’s learning and the teachers’ learning as a consequence of this illustrate how inquiry and documentation makes a powerful contribution to both strengthening teacher practice and enhancing pedagogical practice. Workable strategies for teachers, developed from assessment data, can construct opportunities for inquiry that recognise the learning journeys of both teachers’ and children. This creates powerful changes in pedagogy.

Learning Stories, Inquiry, Pedagogy, Community of Practice, Learner identity

Learning Stories used with Adults in and outside of Classroom Settings

Annie White, California State University Channel Islands, United States

This paper focuses on narrative stories written to adults in a naturalistic setting, outside of typical classroom environments, to understand the social interactions, development of community, belonging, and connection with people who long-distance hike the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). The sharing of Learning Stories, contributes to adult's learner identities and fosters sense of belonging and community. The study examines how this powerful approach transforms relationship to self and others. This study continues research on Learning Stories (Carr & Lee, 2001; 2012; 2019) focused beyond children in early childhood classrooms to students in university settings, papers presented at AERA and EECERA, 2021. The study includes the Funds of Identity (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014), cultural factors from a sociocultural perspective where social demographic conditions, social organizations, artifacts, practices, and daily activities influence learner identities. This framework is used to understand how Learning Stories supports social interactions, relatedness, and social cohesion that transpire among fellow hikers. This ethnographic study uses naturalistic inquiry, approved through Internal Review Board (IRB), including data collection of written field notes, informal interviews, and conversations with PCT long-distance hikers, and researcher journal. Consent forms provided to participants. Informed consent discussed and participants could withdraw at any time. Emerging findings show Learning Stories strengthens learners' developing sense of self, identity as a learner (Carr & Lee), and valued, caring community member (Escamilla et.al, 2021). Learning Stories create deeper, caring relationships, and can be used not only with children, but also with adult learners, in and outside of typical classroom settings.

learning stories, learner identity, naturalistic inquiry, formative, relationships

F 18

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES: ESTONIAN, JAPAN, POLAND AND RUSSIA

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Helen Lyndon, CREC, United Kingdom

Early education for Wrocław's children after 1945: Establishing a new system during the first years of the Polish People's Republic

Marta Kondracka-Szala (1), Andrea M. Noel (2), (1) University of Wrocław, Poland, (2) State University of New York at New Paltz, United States

This research aims to show how preschool education developed for children in Wrocław after 1945, at the onset of the new Polish People's Republic. Previous research focused on schooling during this period, especially for older children, teenagers and adults (Techmańska, 2011; Smołalski, 1970) but not on young children specifically in Wrocław. The theoretical framework is Ecological System Theory (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Government policies in the outer circles of influence interact with closer variables to significantly impact children. The main paradigm of this study is social constructionism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Secondary sources were reviewed to create a literature review and content from archives was qualitatively analyzed. The work with documents did not concern first-person or sensitive material, which minimized our concerns over privacy. However, we found McKee and Porter's (2012) advice helpful and incorporated it into data collection, analysis, and writing. The findings of this study illustrate initiatives at the ministerial, provincial and municipal levels to rebuild preschool education in Lower Silesia and incorporate it into a system in the People's Republic of Poland. These include launching a network of different types of kindergartens, continuing education programs for teachers, and improvements in teacher qualifications. This study focuses on changes to preschools immediately after a time of intense migration and governmental changes and sheds light on successful and unsuccessful practices and policies. This has direct implications presently (such as the situation in Ukraine) and in the future when preschool systems will be rebuild after times of war and upheaval.

early childhood education, World War II, children education in Wrocław, kindergarten, Polish People's Republic

Reggio Inspiration in Japan: from the 1980s through the 2010s

Sachiko Asai (1), Ryoko Kodama (2), (1) The University of Tokyo, Japan, (2) Ochanomizu University, Japan, Motoko Ohta, Wako University, Japan

This study examines the historical characteristics of Reggio inspiration in Japan using a case study to investigate what happens when pedagogical ideas from one context are introduced into another context. The understanding of the Reggio pedagogy in Japan has mainly come by way of the United States, so that the aspects of art and recognition are highlighted, while those related to politics are lacking (Sato 2019). However, no study to date has been based on specific data. The diversity of and changes in the Reggio approach in Japan are also unclear. We use the concept of 'Reggio inspiration' (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence 1999), which is the counterpart to the 'Reggio approach', to reveal the diversity of Reggio-related educational practices in Japan. The study focuses on the historical layers of learning from Reggio in three phases: (1) 1980s–1990s: the period of

introduction; (2) 2000s: the period of theoretical dissemination; (3) 2010s: the period of practical inquiry. We have collected and analyzed as much Japanese literature as possible that mentions early childhood education in Reggio Emilia. The target materials are all open-access documents. Our findings are as follows: (1) Reggio-related educational practices in Japan are characterised by diversity, partly because the introducers have emphasised that Japanese educators need to learn from Reggio in their own context; (2) The introduction of the concept 'documentation' has occurred in ways that are sometimes divorced from the Reggio pedagogy. This study contributes to the consideration of how we can enrich the international exchange of pedagogical ideas.

international exchange, Japan, history, Reggio inspiration, politics

Teachers' teaching approaches: Estonian and Russian preschool classrooms

Piia Varik, Maire Tuul, Tiia Õun, Tallinn University, Estonia

Providing quality early education is essential for to ensure children to participate in lifelong learning, self-development and social integration. Current study highlight how Estonian preschool teachers evaluate their teaching approaches and how to they differ between teachers of Estonia and Russian groups. For several years the concept of teachers teaching approaches has become one of the most important topics in the educational field in teaching (Tuul 2017; Kimer et al. 2016; Lerkkanen et al. 2012; Rasku-Puttonen et al. 2011; Trossmann and Kikas 2011). Currently, the concept of teachers teaching approaches is mainly based on widely used framework by Stipek and Byler (2005). A review of the teaching approach literature reveals a significant theoretical shift away from didactic, teacher-directed approach to a child-centered approach in which the child creates meaning in their own learning (Tzuo et al. 2011). Present study was conducted with using quantitative method, online-survey with 1031 preschool teachers. Interpretation of results on the given research were based on clustering. The questions of this study were formed based on the theoretical foundations and results of previous researches. The main ethical concern was anonymity. For that, codes were created for each participant. What clearly emerged from the participants answers, is that there are differences between Estonian and Russian groups. This study gives an overview what teaching approaches to teacher favor and helps to acknowledge which are the differences between teachers. On that basis more informed decisions can be made when planning for the future (e.g. strategies and curricula).

Teaching approaches, Child-centered, Teacher-directed, Child-dominated, Estonia

F 19

INTERCULTURALISM AND INCLUSION IN ECEC

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Katrine Giaever, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

'Miss, what color is your skin?' supporting intercultural competences in early childhood education: key ingredients of professional development'

Eva Dierickx, Kato Luyck, AP hogeschool/Ghent University, Belgium

This educational design study aims to develop a professional development trajectory to support teachers in improving their intercultural and anti-racist competences in early childhood education in Flanders, Belgium. Research and policy emphasize the importance of intercultural ECE, as the preschool period appears to be crucial to support positive intercultural attitudes (Aboud et al., 2012; Birtel et al., 2019). However, multiple studies show that teachers feel insufficiently prepared in this matter (e.g. Agirdag et al., 2016; Slot et al., 2019; Vervaet et al., 2018). The study builds on the diversity pedagogical and content knowledge framework (Dursun, Claes & Agirdag, in press), goals of antibias education (Denman-Sparks and Edwards, 2019), and guidelines for effective and sustainable PD's (Merchie et al.; Slot et al, 2017). The PD was developed following the educational design framework of McKenney & Reeves (2012). Data was gathered from 10 classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with EC-teachers and 4 focus groups with teacher-experts in intercultural education. Informed consent was given by all (parents of the) participants. Anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed. According to the thematic analyses, preliminary findings suggest key-ingredients for a PD to support intercultural competences in ECE include (1) intercultural pedagogical and content knowledge (2) reflection (3) inclusive learning materials (e.g. children's books) (4) concrete cases and questions (5) practicing intercultural skills (6) engaging school leaders and colleagues (7) development of a community of learners (8) feedback. Findings can be used to inform strategies to promote intercultural competences in PD-courses and teacher education.

intercultural, antibias, professional development, intercultural competence, design research

Multicultural preschool staff as bridge builders in children's play

Katrine Giaever, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

I discuss how practitioners with diverse backgrounds facilitate for equality in play in multicultural preschool classes. The values incorporated in the Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) guidelines reflect monocultural discourses (Zachrisen, 2016; Sadownik, 2018; Giaever, 2020). Yet, researchers have found the experiences and knowledge of multicultural practitioners to be important to include children with diverse backgrounds in preschools (Adair, Tobin & Arzubiaga, 2013; Vandenbroeck, 2017). The empirical material is analysed in the light of Hannah Arendt's "The Human Condition" (1998) and Mikhail Bakhtin's "Speech Genres and Other Late Essays" (1986). The analyses draw from a critical ethnography project, focusing on stories narrated by ECEC students with multicultural backgrounds. I have examined opportunities provided to multicultural staff for them to use their background experience to influence the discourses that affect multicultural children's participation in play. Ethical questions concern whether practitioners and students with multicultural backgrounds can speak on behalf of all minority children, and whether research like this construct minority children in positions they do not identify with. Using critical ethnography, these questions were enlightened from various perspectives to avoid a monologic and static approach. When multicultural staff are given the opportunities, they can include new perspectives on inclusive play in preschools. However, discourses that reflect values of the majority can be an obstacle. Thus, knowledge about multicultural perspectives among majority staff is also needed in order to achieve inclusive environments. Policy makers need to focus on the competence that multicultural staff can bring in to preschools.

multilingual, play, diversity, inclusion, multicultural staff

Going at a different pace: educators supporting inclusion for children with disabilities

Katherine Gulliver, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

This paper focuses on the safe spaces created between practitioners and children which were often found in the literal spaces outside of the classroom where practitioners encouraged children to play and engage in slow knowledge (Elkind, 2006). Drawing on Elkind's (2006) unhurried approach, this study recognizes children's need to go at their own play and learning paces in secure, supportive environments. I designed a participatory research study inspired by Clark (2010) to explore the reality of experiencing mainstream education for children with a developmental disability, which would enable their voice to be heard. Four children aged 5-6 years with Williams Syndrome, a developmental disability took part who attended mainstream primary schools. The Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2010) was adapted for children to guide the researcher during a visit lasting one week in each school. Methods included videos, a child-led tour, photographs and interviews with staff. Informed consent was obtained by gatekeepers including children's parents, head teacher and school staff. Children were continually monitored for assent using a reflective, ethically conscious total communication approach. Findings show close relationships with practitioners were essential for supporting child centred inclusion for children with disabilities. Outside the classroom the space was more secure, supportive and enabling for practitioners to recognize, respect and respond to children's own paces. Whilst children are included inside the classroom, practitioners provide a safe space that celebrates children's own priorities and paces outside of the classroom. This study highlights the need for settings to facilitate space based on Elkind's (2006) unhurried approach.

Disabilities, slow knowledge, unhurried approach, spaces and paces, responsive practitioners

F 20

PEDAGOGICAL PLAY PRACTICE – INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Margareth Eilifsen, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Pedagogical play practices and children's play participation in primary schools.

Hanne Hede Jørgensen, VIA University College, Denmark

In collaboration with Danish pedagogues I explore and develop ways of acting pedagogically in the favour of play and with sensitivity towards play participation for each child. The study refers to work that explore the role of pedagogues regarding children's play participation and suggest professionals as part of children's play challenges (Lago & Elvstrand, 2019; Øksnes & Sundsdal, 2020). Starting from a philosophical play perspective (Fink, 1968; Gadamer, 2004; Bakhtin, 2001; Skovbjerg, 2013), I extend a theory on play as a specific order and show how the play order is interrelated with the contextual school logic in which play takes place. Furthermore, I draw on van Manen's (2015) definition of pedagogics as based on child senses and flair of pedagogical moments. Methodological the study is eclectic, involving codesign (Simonsen & Robertson, 2013) and sensory

ethnography (Pink, 2015). Pedagogues and I cocreate different play experiments, through which we explore ways for pedagogues to enhance children's play participation. Due to ethical considerations experiments have been adjusted and developed according to needs and requests from pedagogues and children. Of main findings there seems to be coherence between play difficulties of children and pedagogues. Furthermore, it seems that pedagogues who wants to enhance children's play can participate in play from three positions: those are inside the play order (playing), on the edge (nourishing), and outside (preparing and making room for). Working pedagogically with play implicates working actively with the professionalism of pedagogues which might affect and disturb the primary school logics

Play participation, Play experiments, Play difficulties, Pedagogics, Primary School

The design of an explorative play-based Early Childhood Teacher Education

Margareth Eilifsen (1), Magni Elen Hope Lossius (1), Helle Marie Skovbjerg (2), (1) Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway, (2) Design School Kolding, Denmark

Early childhood teacher education (ECTE) in Norway is the education of professionals, where play is one of the main topics. The aim of this paper is to explore playful learning and research in the program of ECTE across disciplines. The term 'exploration' may help to overcome a long-standing dichotomy between play and learning. We see preservice kindergarten teachers as competent to contribute equivalent together with researchers, educators, and in-service teachers exploring play. Jørgensen et al. (2022) found in their literature review that knowledge about playful learning in higher education is in short supply. Our research project is inspired by Educational Design Research (EDR) (Plomp & Nieveen, 2013). EDR is about designing and developing an intervention, it is theory-generated, repeated in cycles, and practice-oriented. EDR is characterized by a fixed methodological design, ensuring that the theory in EDR provides concrete input to future designs. Through workshops and EDR research method we will structure and stimulate a broader, more thorough collaboration with the field of practice. To ensure partnership and co-creation of new knowledge between different stakeholders, we acknowledge different experiences and theoretical backgrounds equally and invite voluntary to become ambassadors and participate in workshops. The outcomes of the project will have an impact at local, national, and international levels as educators and researchers will be invited for workshops to explore playful-learning. In addition, a more transdisciplinary, learner-centred education. Developing an international ECTE where play and exploration are the main teaching method, and where research and practice challenge a work-based professional education.

ECTE (Early Childhood Teacher Education), Education Design Research (EDR), Exploration, Play, Co-creation

Professional approaches on play in preschool education - Awareness of International perspectives

Kia Kimhag (1), Anna Eriksson (1), Kerstin Bäckman (1), Francisco Javier Ortega Muñoz (2), Manuel Perez Cañizares (2), Pilar Muñoz Palacio (2), University of Gävle, Sweden, (2) University La Salle, Spain

This ongoing ERASMUS+project involves preschool teachers from England, Norway, Spain and Sweden. The study aims to highlight teacher's professional awareness related to pedagogies in teaching, ethos and values from international perspectives. Focus on play as a part of education in the preschool. Play is a key resource for establishing the curriculum and approaches to teaching in early childhood education (e.g. Fler, 2010; Gunnarsdottir, 2014). The theoretical frame derives from sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1981) emphasizing play as crucial for children's learning in social settings. Theory about professional development with openness, shared experiences and reflections in communities of practice (Wenger, 2013)., Action research paradigm (Kemmis, 2010) including job shadowing, preschool manuals, reflection questionnaires, photos and focus group interviews (Salo & Rönnerman, 2013), collaborative reflections (Schön, 1983; Pollard, 2019) and case study (e. g. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) are being used as the main methodology approaches. Each partner country's ethical guidance (GDPR) has followed with informed consent from participants, partner agreement by EYE with identities anonymized, no photos or filming children only environments. Professional approaches on creating learning environments for play includes children's perspective, teacher's awareness of different pedagogical strategies in play inspired by different settings environment and available materials indoor and outdoor. Reflections show similarities and differences regarding the importance of children's possibilities to be more active without relying on teacher's activities. The results show the importance of teacher's role when creating learning environment for play. The findings suggest implications in developing learning environment through different key ideas and changes.

children's perspective, early years educators, international perspectives, play, professional approaches

Chair: Alma Fleet, Macquarie University, Australia

The effect of a shorter working week on the quality of professional work in preschool. The experience of preschool teachers.

Anna Norddahl (1), (1) Hlid Preschool, Iceland, Svava B. Mörk (2), (2) University of Akureyri, Iceland

The research took place in Iceland. The aim was to gather Preschool teachers' experience of shorter working week and how it impacted quality in ECEC. Research has shown that better quality in ECEC can have a positive impact on education and development of young children (Sheridan et al., 2012), especially teacher education and child-teacher ratio. The study draws upon current theories of quality in early childhood (Barnett and Frede, 2010), and teacher professionalism (Jonsdottir and Coleman, 2014). Qualitative interviews were conducted using semi structured interviews with eight preschool teachers. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling. The study was not reported to the IDPA. According to laws (Lög um persónuvernd og vinnslu persónuupplýsinga nr. 90/2018) it is enough if participants give informed consent. Which they did. Findings show that fewer working hours per week does have an impact on the quality of ECEC. The biggest factor was child-teacher ratio. Higher child-teacher ratio had negative impact on the quality in ECEC. In schools where child-teacher ratio stayed the same quality in ECEC got better. In 2021 the preschool teachers' union agreed with the municipalities to shorten the preschool teachers' working week by 13 minutes a day. Preschool teachers were given the opportunity to shorten the working week to 36 hours a week, by relinquishing control over contracted coffee hours. One stipulation was that the change in working hours must not lead to changes in the wage costs of the municipalities. Which inevitably meant that many preschools were understaffed for good part of each week.

Quality in ECE, Work hours, Child-teacher ratio, Professionalism, Preschool teacher's experience

A sociocultural analysis of the factors that support and constrain the enactment of play-based pedagogies in the first year of compulsory school in England

Philip Nicholson, University of Suffolk, United Kingdom

This research explores how socio-cultural-political factors shape the extension of play-based pedagogies into Year One, the first year of compulsory school in England. The value of extending play-based pedagogies into compulsory school is internationally recognised (Parker & Thomsen, 2019). In England, it is an approach that has received support from school leaders (Roberts-Holmes, 2012) as well as both Reception (Early Excellence, 2017) and Year One teachers (Fisher, 2021). Yet, previous studies have identified that the enactment of play-based pedagogies in Year One is associated with challenges (Fisher, 2011; Nicholson & Hendry, 2020). As a way of understanding the socio-cultural-political factors that shape the enactment of play-based pedagogies in Year One, second generation activity theory (Engeström, 2015) was employed as a theoretical framework. The research was situated within an interpretivist research paradigm and employed a qualitative case study methodology. Over one academic year, six teachers from one Local Authority in England shared their experiences and perceptions of extending play-based pedagogies into Year One. Teachers each participated in three online semi-structured interviews. Ethical principles relating to informed consent, confidentiality and use of data were adhered to throughout. Preliminary findings suggest that the enactment of play-based pedagogy in Year One is shaped by a number of socio-cultural-political factors, with some – teacher values and community support – having more influence than others. It is proposed that greater understanding of the socio-cultural-political factors that shape the enactment of play-based pedagogies can support and encourage educators to implement them in compulsory school contexts.

play-based pedagogy, Year One, socio-cultural-political influences, activity theory, case study

Strengthening the possibilities for professional agency during ECEC teacher education

Tarja Liinamaa, Terhi Ek, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Our research aims to determine the possibilities for strengthening student teachers' professional agency during ECEC teacher education. Our research questions are as follows: How does professional agency manifest during the practice periods in ECEC learning environments? What features of the learning environment strengthen professional agency? There are a few studies on student teachers' professional agency (Ukkonen-Mikkola 2018), but research on students' agency exists more (Jääskelä et al. 2020). We see professional agency as a socially and culturally developing process, which emphasizes the crucial role of social relations in learning (Vähäsantanen et al. 2017; Wenger 1998). The practice period at workplaces in the ECEC teacher's education is an important learning environment that enables a wide range of learning and development of professional expertise for all participants (Liinamaa 2014; Ukkonen-Mikkola & Turtiainen 2016). As our theoretical and methodological

framework, we apply the professional agency research method of Vähäsantanen et al. (2017, 2019). The data were collected in the Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education with an online survey in 2020–2021. Data are analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. The results are reported anonymously and principles of ethical research have been followed. We present our preliminary findings regarding the research methods (Vähäsantanen et al. 2017) and make further recommendations on methodological issues. The importance of professional agency and of strong professional identity has been recognized as a relevance competence objective in teacher education for educating professionally engaged ECEC teachers.

early childhood education and care, student teachers' professional agency, practice periods, continuous professional learning, learning environments

F 22

SOUNDSCAPES, EARTHQUAKES AND REPRODUCIBILITY TESTING

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Nina Engesnes, Oslo Metropolitan University, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

From reproducing for fun to reproducibility tests

Estelle Blanquet (1), Eric Picholle (2), (1) University of Bordeaux, France, (2) CNRS - University Cote d'Azur, France

Kindergarten children love redoing, reproducing a phenomenon while playing. But testing the reproducibility is at the root of the understanding the nature of scientific inquiry (Nature, 2016). Are they also able to grasp the methodological skills involved? Their importance for the reliability of an experiment is rarely explicit in the curricula (NGSS, 2013; French curriculum, 2020). Yet, while the concept of the reproducibility of a phenomenon is generally taken for granted for children leaving elementary school (Lederman & al., 2018) the age at which children develop the ability to grasp it remains uncertain (Varelas, 1997). Our study is anchored in an epistemological framework (Bachelard, 1934) and in the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987). In order to qualify Kindergarten children's understanding of reproducibility, we developed a semi-structured interview, including an experiment. The responses of 149 children aged 5-6 were transcribed and their justifications categorized using qualitative content analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Ethical approval was granted by the University. The CNRS ethical code of conduct (2018) was followed, a model consent form (MEN, 2021) signed by parents and the children's consent was requested before the interview. Almost 30% of the young participants were able to argue and provide justifications based on methodological aspects of reproducibility, although their understanding of the interest of testing reproducibility appeared to be quite low (less than 7% of the responses). These findings suggest the possibility to use spontaneous reproducibility games to develop more sophisticated skills in link with an early initiation to methodological aspects of scientific inquiry.

reproducibility, science education, early years, nature of scientific inquiry, scientific method

Professional practice in kindergarten's soundscape

Nina Engesnes, Tove Lafton, Oslo Metropolitan University, Department of Early Childhood education, Norway

This study aims to investigate how ECEC teachers relate and put into words their professional practice when kindergarten is considered as a soundscape (Schafer, 1977/1994). Related studies emphasize sound-making and listening-practices to rethink literacy in early childhood (Gallagher, et.al., 2018) or to explore healthy sound environments for children (Lum & Campbelle, 2007; Deans, Brown & Dikes, 2005). Studies mentioning soundscapes as part of professional practice in kindergartens are hard to find. The study is inspired by soundscapeterminology (Schafer, 1977/1994) and theory of practice architectures with a particular focus on the cultural-discursive dimension (Kemmis, et al., 2014). Located within a social constructivist paradigm (Alvesson & sköldberg, 2018), this micro ethnographic study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2004), is informed by a/r/tography (Irwin & LeBlanc, 2019). Statements from focus group discussions with seven ECEC-teachers highlight various aspects of practices in "The site of the social" (Schatzki, 2002), selected and encoded through the four steps of collective qualitative analysis (Eggbo, 2020). A consent form was given to all the participants. Data from the focus group discussions were anonymised. The names of the research participants were anonymised in the analysis. In order to identify enabling and limiting prerequisites for the implementation of practice and to see how different aspects of practices related to sayings, doings and relatings (Kemmis et al., 2014) are based on the sound interacting and affecting each other. The study can contribute to see the sonic environment as an intended conscious dimension of the kindergartens teacher's attention, professional practice and professionalism.

sonic environment, professional practice, soundscape, professionalism, practice architectures

Children understanding of earthquakes and tsunamis in high-risk areas

Valeria M. Cabello, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

We explored children's (7 years old) understanding of earthquakes and tsunamis using drawings and written explanations. Population growth and spread increased human exposure to natural hazards and potential disasters affecting life, especially in marginalized areas. Educational programs can decrease vulnerability and promote resilience (Finnis et al., 2004; Muttarak et al., 2013; Wachtendorf et al., 2008). However, children's voices are scarcely considered for disaster-risk reduction (Freeman et al., 2015; Vásquez et al., 2018), particularly in science education. Child-centered disaster risk reduction promotes agency in building individual and community resilience (Aitsi-Selmi et al., 2015; Wachtendorf et al., 2008). Children can play an active role in disaster prevention, recovery, and rebuilding. Recognizing their strengths is crucial (Freeman et al., 2015). We adhered to participatory-pragmatic paradigm, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a mixed-methods approach. A consent form and information sheet were provided to participants, and pseudonyms replaced their names. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. We avoided conducting interviews with child psychologists. Information was securely stored. The results show children attributed earthquakes to the Tectonic Plates Theory while holding ancient scientific ideas about tsunamis. They advanced their understanding of tsunamis promoted by context-based education. Diverse learning trajectories were identified, connecting with results from older children as this research is part of a larger project. Child-centered disaster risk reduction is discussed regarding fatalist ideas about earthquakes and tsunamis to encourage empowerment and safety actions. The argument for policy curriculum design in early science education for mitigating disasters is discussed.

explanations, tsunamis, science education, child-centered approach, disaster risk reduction

F 23

WORK DEMANDS AND GOVERNANCE

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Susan Grieshaber, La Trobe University, Australia

Case based teaching for new work demands

Marit Bøe, Professor Elsa Kristiansen, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

ECEC leaders have received new demands due to increased political governance and increased administrative tasks. It is therefore a growing pressure for knowledge about how to cope with leadership tasks. The aim of this study is to investigate if case-based teaching can support ECEC leaders to cope with new work demands. ECEC leaders` deal with work-related stressors and struggle with effective coping strategies (Elomaa et al., 2020; OECD, 2019). They are both firefighters and oracles (Kristiansen et al., 2021), however, they lack a squadron to help them manage their job requirements. The case is understood as a realistic narrative where leadership demands are considered. The students generated cases themselves based on authentic situations (Jahreie, 2010). Practitioner research within an interpretive framework examines practice from inside the educational leadership program to understand and improve practice within a local context. Data consists of questionnaire from three groups of participants (N=96) after two lectures with each groups. The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approved the investigation, and informed consent to use the course evaluations in the research was obtained from all participants. The research will be conducted in accordance with consideration for data protection (personal integrity and privacy). Sharing leadership challenges provided a learning community where the participants could compare their leadership experience, receive social support and see other solutions to their challenges. Applying theoretical concepts without support from the educators were challenging. Improving case-based group discussions are essential as leaders are expected to build learning communities and collective knowledge in their centres.

Norway, Case based teaching, Early childhood leaders, Coping, leadership education program

Governance in children's everyday lives in ECE settings

Susan Grieshaber (1) Maiju Paananen (2), (1) La Trobe University, Australia, (2) Tampere University, Finland

Governance has intensified monitoring in the daily life of preschools. Empirical examinations of governance moulding everyday practices often take the teacher's perspective, showing how governance narrows and instrumentalises teachers' work

(Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016). These instruments change teachers' priorities and practices. Empirical studies concerning governance in children's everyday lives are rarer (Watson et al., 2015). Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of assemblage provides a tool for understanding governance, a social phenomenon that evades clear-cut explanations. By assemblage we mean a bundle of heterogeneous socio-material components such as material and physical entities and discourses which steer individuals and groups in particular. An ethnography in Finland (children 3-5 years; 3 educators) and Australia (12 children 1-2 years; 4 educators) focused on lived experience and explored how different entities of governance come together and apart again. Relational ethics (Ellis 2007) identified issues beforehand, and ongoing critical reflection and consultation with participants addressed emergent matters. Findings show how regulations concerning child-staff ratios (Finland) and a Sun Smart policy (Australia) have differing consequences depending on other sociomaterial entities that become intertwined when they are being enacted. First, pedagogical desire was overridden by managerial desire; second, policy can disrupt and interrupt children's play. Implications include: 1. density (number of conflicting elements converging in a governing entanglement) can intensify the possibility of governing instruments interrupting meaningful adult-child interaction, preventing pedagogical aims being met; 2. efficiency requirements that make governing assemblages more dense might have a detrimental influence on possibilities for teachers to use their professional expertise.

Governance, Policy, Assemblage, Ontology, Situational

Work demands and resources related to work climate and turnover intentions in the early childhood education sector

Cecilia Heilala, Marina Lundkvist, Mirjam Kalland, University of Helsinki, Finland

The aim is to explore how ECEC staff experience work demands and resources and how these relate to turnover intentions. The work climate affects the quality of the early childhood education activities, such as play and learning (FINEEC, 2018). Working in ECEC is challenging by nature, as it involves close interaction with children, parents, and members of the staff (Cumming, 2017). Therefore, ECEC staff are susceptible to emotional exhaustion (Løvsgren, 2016) and turnover intentions (Seery & Corrigan, 2009). In Finland, the turnover rate is high, and recruiting competent staff is a concern (Eskelinen & Hjelt, 2017). The research is based on the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to the model work engagement is influenced by both job demands and job resources. The study is situated within a qualitative paradigm and uses a mixed-methods approach. Data was collected by survey (n=385) and this study was based on open-ended questions. Content analysis was adopted. The sample was identified through trade union registers and the survey was anonymous. The study follows the ethical standards by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012). The findings show that workload affects turnover intentions. Motivation is not enough to prevent turnover, since high demands also affect motivated employees. Work guidance and support from leaders and special educators are linked to turnover. High turnover undermines trust and impacts staff and children negatively. This research contributes to knowledge on risk factors related to turnover intentions and can contribute to the development of high-quality working conditions.

turnover intentions, work climate, demands, resources, early childhood

F 24

PLAY AND MUSIC

Individual Paper Symposium

Chair: Kate Wall, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

To be independent, to have friends, and to make choices - "I am able to play, and I am allowed to join, but I don't want to"!

Susanne Klaar, University of Borås, Sweden

The aim is to illustrate a didactical reflection tool that facilitates teachers' critical discussions about teaching for children's person-formation in preschool. Person-formation, as an aim described to education, takes form as identification and as subjectification (Håkansson et al. 2018). Previous Early Childhood Education research shows the importance of teaching approaches that strive toward children's identification; autonomy, solidarity and socialization (Correja et al. 2017; see also Klaar and Öhman 2014). However, approaches aiming at subjectification is less emphasized. A reflection tool that highlights teaching for identification has previously been developed and used (see Klaar et al. 2020). Adding subjectification as a second concept connects theoretically to Biesta's (2019) argument for subjectification and uniqueness in education (see also Van Poeck and Östman 2019). Previously conducted qualitative interviews with teachers and children (Klaar et al. 2020) are re-analyzed by using subjectification as an additional analyzing concept. This provides extended opportunities to analyze teachers' and children's utterances about play in a more multi-dimensional way. The teachers and the parents agreed to

participation and recording of the interviews, by giving written consent. The children were also asked orally before the interview started. The initial result shows children's confidence, strength and ability to make unique playmate choices and to refrain to take part. However, the teachers mainly talk about children's ability and possibility to play. This reflection tool will give teachers the opportunity to discuss the interplay between expectations about being autonomous and social, and the possibility for the child to be unique and develop subjectivity.

subjectification and identification, person-formation, child interviews, teacher interviews, tool for reflection

Teaching music in Swedish preschools

Ester Catucci, Mälardalen university, Sweden

The aim is to bring knowledge on Swedish preschool teachers views on teaching music in preschool. Previous research shows that many preschool teachers are insecure in teaching music (Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014, p.1808-1809; Kulset & Halle, 2019). This study uses Jank and Meyers (1997, p.41) concepts theoretical didactical knowledge and practical competence in in the analysis. The study is quantitative and the methodology we used combined closed questions with a five-step ordinal scale and open ended questions in a standardized questionnaire. The survey method generated 51 responses from preschool teachers working in six communities. The Swedish Research Council's Research Practice (2017) were followed. We informed those involved before the research began, all participants gave consent, all material were treated confidentially and it is not possible to identify which individuals participating. Only the participating researchers have access to data collected. The result shows that 99% of the informants teach other subjects than music every day or at least once a week. Music on the other hand is taught every day or at least once a week by 35,5 % of the informants and never by 13,7 %. The teacher's commitment in teaching music mostly builds on their own interest. 47% claim that they are uncertain or very uncertain in teaching music, only 27 % feel confident. One of the concerns that can be raised is how equivalence can be ensured when teaching a subject is based on teachers interest instead of didactic knowledge and practical competence.

music teaching, preschool, didactic knowledge, practical competence, equivalence education

WeFEEL: Facilitating the development of emotional intelligence through collaborative and empathetic play

Daniela Foerch, Andrea Adelman, Florida International University, United States

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of a play-based emotional intelligence approach on child development, social emotional development, and school/family interactions. Our research focuses on using a play-based approach to nurture several components within Emotional Intelligence including: 1) emotional awareness, 2) understanding the triggers of emotions, 3) emotional identification within self and others, 4) co-regulation and self-regulation, 5) emotion-based conflict resolution, and 6) empathy. The WeFEEL approach is related to the work of Mayer/Salovey's (1997) and Bracket (2014). The theoretical framework is based on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) and Bracket's work (2014). The conceptual framework focuses on using a play-based approach with a coaching model to nurture components within emotional intelligence. This collaborative action, mixed-method, quasi-experimental design uses a coaching and focus-group model in combination with pre and post assessment data, which is analyzed through grounded theory and ANOVA. Participants include 800 students age 3-5, 70 teachers, and 50 families. We collected focus groups and videos data from participants. The Institutional Review Board (committee in charge of upholding research integrity/ethics) completed a rigorous evaluation of our research plan to ensure all ethical considerations were met. Results indicate the WeFEEL play-based approach had a positive impact on both classroom/home interactions, helped ease the burden of the global pandemic through increasing EI. Our research on nurturing emotional intelligence through play not only fosters children's optimal development and positive classroom interactions, but assists with the stressors surrounding the pandemic. Additionally, our research revealed that, by fostering EI through play in young children, they also nurtured their EI indirectly.

play-based approach, emotional intelligence, thinking games, emotional games, positive classroom climate

Poster Symposium Set I

14:50 - 15:45, Wednesday 24th August 2022

I 1

Eliciting Young Children's Views on Their Participation in Decision-making in the Classroom

Cansu Aytac, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

This research aims to explore young children's perspectives on their experiences and their involvement in decision-making in their educational settings. Research shows that children efficiently express their views and take part in the decision-making process of issues that affect their lives (Beers, 2018; Breathnach et al., 2017). However, particularly from children's perspective, there is a need to increase decision-making opportunities in educational settings (Cairns et al., 2018). The study draws upon the understanding of the sociology of childhood, in which children are seen as competent (James & Prout, 2015; Qvortrup, 2009) and is based on Lundy's (2007) model for participation. This study adopts a qualitative interpretative paradigm research design (Gray, 2014) in order to understand how children experience everyday lives. By using purposive sampling, a Scottish nursery classroom will be chosen for the data collection. Data collection includes methods such as observations, taking photographs, drawings and semi-structured interviews with children by acknowledging the Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2017). Thematic analysis will be used for the data analysis. Children's assent will be sought both before and during the research in addition to their parents' consents. The research process will be explained in child-friendly language. Pseudonyms, which will be chosen by children, will be also used for ethical issues. The use of multiple data collection tools provides an insight into children's perspectives and creates a space for children to elicit their voices. This research suggests implications for how children's voices might be used in practices in early years environments.

ECE, children's voices, participation, decision-making, Mosaic approach

I 2

It's not what I expected! A study about digital technology within a Swedish preschool setting

Tove del Gaiso, School of Education, Culture and Communication, Sweden

This eight-month long study aims to show the rhizomatic entanglements within a development project about digital technology in two Swedish preschools. Previous research has shown that preschool practitioners' confidence and experience in using digital technologies have an impact on what kind of opportunities children will be afforded (Stephen & Plowman, 2008). Children's play moves between space and time and includes both digital and non-digital aspects (Marsh et al., 2016). The study uses a sociomaterial perspective (Fenwick et al., 2011) to explore human and non-human materiality in activities involving digital technology. This study used a qualitative approach with discussions with preschool teachers and video observations of children between two to five year and preschool teachers. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts of rhizome and cartography is used to analyse the data. An information sheet and consent form were provided to all participants. The children in the study were given consent by their guardians and all participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of participants. Due to the study's design, involving few participants, extra precautions have been taken regarding presentation of the results to ensure anonymity of the participants. Preliminary findings show that rhizomatic entanglements between children, digital technology, preschool teachers and other materiality creates unexpected ways of children playing with digital technology. Findings suggests that a sociomaterial perspective can be useful for researchers and preschool teachers in exploring how human and non-human materiality become intertwined when digital technology is used.

Digital technology, Preschool teachers, Digital play, Sociomaterial perspective, Cartography

I 3

Documentation in Japan: Focusing on the significance of dialogue

Ryoko kodama, Yoko Takahashi, Hiroko Sato, Ochanomizu University Kindergarten, Japan

This study examines the significance of visualized and shared documentation to teachers in early childhood education in Japan based on interviews, focusing on the significance of dialogue. In Japan, records traditionally written by teachers used to serve as a basis for reflection. With the introduction of Reggio Emilia's documentation in Japan in 2001, records became known as a way to visualize children's learning (cf. Tanabe & Aoyagi, 2014, The Works of Tanabe Keiko. Shakaihyoron). This study will

focus on the shift from the monologue style of recording by the teacher to the documentation created through dialogue among teachers, parents, and children (cf. Rinaldi, 2006, In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia, Routledge). Ochanomizu University Kindergarten is a national experimental school. Since 2019, the kindergarten has been creating documentation through dialogue among teachers, parents, and children. Teachers will be interviewed about the documentation. We will then analyse the teachers' findings through this dialogue. After undergoing the university's research ethics review, we explained the nature of the study to the teachers and the possibility of refusing to participate. All teachers were anonymized. The documentation created through dialogue promotes mutual understanding among teachers. In particular, writing is an important part of the documentation by Japanese teachers. Writing and dialogue on documentation are also significant for parents. This study will demonstrate the significance of documentation in Japan. It will help discuss the cultural diversity of documentation practices, just as writing in documentation is important in Japanese contexts.

Documentation, Dialogue, Writing, Teachers, Understanding

14

Towards Communities of Compassion: Exploring What Affords a Compassion Enabling Environment

Harriet Broadfoot, Durham University, United Kingdom

The purpose of this study is to deepen understanding of compassion within Early Childhood Education (ECE) and how compassion enabling environments are/can be co-curated in ways that offer opportunities to experience, explore and extend it. This is in context of both human and non-human actors of the ECE 'environment' which itself is integral to learning and development (Early Education, 2021). Building on previous research (Broadfoot and Pascal, 2020, 2021) and the resulting conceptual framework, the study aims to explore what opportunities (and barriers) ECE spaces afford for experiencing compassion and illuminate what constitutes a compassion enabling environment. A multi-sited ethnographic methodology (Marcus, 1995) will be employed, involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with children and staff, followed by a thematic analysis. EECERA and ESRC ethical guidelines will be followed and practice informed by an ethic of respect, with emerging ethical issues reflexively addressed in-situ. With increasing concern for well-being and social and ecological issues (Ritchie, 2013; Moss and Urban, 2020), fostering compassion in ECE is of high relevance to matters of care and sustainability in children's education as citizens of the world. Therefore, understanding education as an aid to life of the child and the wider world (Montessori, 1988), this study intends to inform practice and curriculum, with recommendations in respect of the study's aims drawn from the data and consulted upon with participants, and hopes to contribute to (re)thinking how ECE is supporting children here-and-now, and the future for the betterment of our interconnected world.

compassion, early childhood education, enabling environments, wellbeing, sustainability

15

Playful opportunities in early emergent science - how to create joyful and creativity settings in preschool with a focus on science experiments

Rikke Jensen, Annika Foxby, Professionshøjskolen Absalon, Denmark

The focus was to investigate how educators' use of productive questions can stimulate preschool children to be creative, joyful and engaged in science activities through play-based learning. Previous research has shown the importance of science in early childhood, in supporting development of central competences necessary later on in school life (Desouza, 2017). Creativity, joy and engagement are essential components in children's play and learning (Pramling, 2006). The synergies between these dimensions contribute to children's experience and understanding of their surrounding world in a lifelong process (Pramling, 2006). Productive questions are essential for activating children's critical thinking and problem solving (Elstgeest, 2009). In this view, educators have an important role in mediating children's learning through play-based science experiments. The research is based on appreciative enquiry (Mejlvig, 2012) and involves experimental approaches in developing playful science practices, supplemented with observations and interviews in 3 pre-schools during a two-year period. The data was analysed and triangulated through situational analysis (Clarke, 2005). To ensure continued informed consent, parents and educators were asked to give consent to participate in the project. Participants were granted the opportunity to view chosen images for publication before giving consent. The findings demonstrate the importance of educators' role in using productive questions, by showing how educators' guidance in playful opportunities using experimental tools and materials became essential for children's engagement in science experiments and their learning abilities. These findings suggest that productive questions supported by experimental materials and tools create playful opportunities for children in children's experiences with science phenomena.

play-based learning, productive questions, playful approaches, emergent science, creative learning opportunities

An Exploration of Two Year Olds Experiences of The Emotional Environment in Early Years' Settings Offering Funded Places

Louise Hannan, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, United Kingdom

This study aims to give an interpretation of the emotional environments offered in different early years settings for two-year-olds, that access funded provision. Including how the two-year-olds children themselves experience that emotional environment. It will also discuss what aspects support positive emotional development and what inhibits the process. With an overall aspiration to develop early years' practice, using the child's experience. Previous studies have included Owens (2020) and Murray and Murray (2019), both looking at the parental views of two-year-old spaces but not the child's view. This study examines the child's experience. Using Social Psychology as a theoretical frame, including Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Intersubjectivity and Emotional Labour. These theories provide a backdrop on the relational and emotional aspects of day-care. A complex methodological design selected, which combines Ethnography and Praxeology. This provides a foundation of immersion in two-year-old's worlds and advocates for transformation from the child's world to inform praxis. Methods planned include a variety of observations, such as BEEL adult child interactions and EEL child tracking. All primary research gave due diligence to the following ethical considerations - Informed consent, Confidentiality, right to withdraw, Protection from harm, Openness and Honesty and Debriefing. The study met University of Wolverhampton's ethical guidelines and standards in full and approval was given for it to commence at each stage. These findings are emerging as the study is not complete. Implications for practice could be using the child's voice as a reflection tool to improve practice.

Two year olds, Emotional environment, Daycare, Research, Praxeological

Play by ear with Logometro: An innovative approach to language assessment for young children.

Angeliki Mouzaki, University of Crete, Greece

The aim of the presentation is to describe Logometro, a Greek innovative norm-referenced digital language assessment tool for 4-7 years old children, and its psychometric characteristics. Logometro, is a very child-friendly assessment administered through an Android application for mobile devices (tablets) differing from most screening batteries or clinical assessments that are lengthy and time-consuming requiring highly trained examiners. It evaluates an array of a child's oral language skills across language domains (phonological awareness, listening comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, narrative speech, morphological awareness, letter recognition, pragmatics), as well as emergent literacy skills. Touch-screens enable direct recording of children's oral responses and capturing of manual responses (child choices and writing samples). The psychometric validation of the assessment was based on a diverse sample of 926 children. 800 participants were typically developing children and 126 children with Special Educational Needs. Validity (construct, criterion, convergent, discriminant and predictive) and internal consistency were assessed. A signed consent form was required from children's parents while participating children were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants' names were removed from all documents to protect their anonymity. Results indicated that Logometro has good psychometric properties validating it as a cost-effective assessment tool with high predictive validity that can be used to inform professionals and researchers about children language skills. Logometro could be used to assess language skills easily and efficiently in play-like format providing valuable and detailed information regarding children's language strengths and weaknesses for intervention purposes.

Language, Assessment, Validity, Reliability, Early Literacy

Putting theory into play – variation theory embedded in teaching activities for toddlers

Camilla Björklund (1), Hanna Palmér (2), (1) University of Gothenburg, Sweden, (2) Linnaeus University, Sweden

The aim was to develop research-based teaching activities for toddlers and evaluate the mathematical learning potential. Early educational interventions have large impact on later achievements in school (Duncan et al., 2007), but no consensus is found in how to facilitate early high-quality goal-oriented learning (Palmér & Björklund, 2016). Based on observations of common preschool activities (games, play, artefacts) we designed activities based on Variation theory (Marton, 2015). Principles from Variation theory such as contrasting and generalizing aspects of the object of learning, were embedded in the artefacts and the interaction between toddlers and teachers. In line with design-based research, these were evaluated and revised in an iterative process. Eight activities were developed in collaboration between three teachers and two researchers and tried out during three semesters by the teachers and 27 toddlers (1-3-year-olds). The activities were video-recorded. The children

participated on a voluntary basis, free to leave the activity on their initiative. Ethical clearance was given by Ethical review board. Participating children's legal guardians had given their written consent for the children to participate and the activities to be video-documented for research purposes. Thorough analysis of the learning outcomes as well as the children's engagement in the activities, reveal that achieved intersubjectivity and taking starting point in the child's perspective, to which features of the game/play/artefact were adapted, is key to making best use of the activities for teaching purposes. Heightened attention to what learning differently designed activities afford is crucial for developing teaching relevant for toddlers.

learning activities, numbers, teaching, toddlers, variation theory

I 9

Multicultural Preschool Education in Japan: Along with a History of Civil Movement for Ethnic Minority

Yuki Nagae, University of Tokyo, Japan

This study examines the historical transition of multicultural preschool education in Japan by looking at one case preschool in an area that has been home to people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. As well as other contemporary nation-states, Japanese society has encompassed diverse ethnic groups and education has faced further diversification in recent decades (Tsuneyoshi and Nukaga 2021). However, it has rarely been considered preschool education for cultural diversity (Nagae 2018). While identifying the historical events, we attempted to listen to the members' voices and see their views by applying Interpretivism. We analyse data from the archived materials at the preschool, and from interviews with four teachers who are in managerial positions after their continuous work; three are from a minority background. All data obtained has been securely preserved, as well as consent from the interview participants and the head of the preschool during fieldwork. We followed the research integrity instructions of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. We found that it has been a core practice of making the invisible minority visible and recognizing cultural diversity while the way of practice has been transformed from "ethnic education" to "multicultural-coexistence education". By doing so, the preschool internally constructed inclusive education along with the civil movement for ethnic minorities in the area; we could see that minorities still have been facing difficulties of social exclusion and assimilation affected by the external social structure. By learning from history and one case we can explore more for creating inclusive educational settings.

Multicultural education, Japan, Historical perspective, Qualitative, Cultural diversity

I 10

Day care teachers' social support perceived by the parents who have a sense of ease in family support

Sakiko Sagawa, Kyoto University of Education, Japan

The purpose of this study is to find characteristics of day care teachers' social support which provides parents with a sense of ease, according to the difference of parents' concerns. Family support is considered a part of social support, which includes "various forms of assistance available from significant others." Research demonstrates that social support affects how parents seek help (Mizuno, 2017). This type of help is expected to contribute to the resolution of problems concerning children. It has been demonstrated that "anticipated benefits" promote help-seeking behaviour. For parents, the anticipated benefits are not necessarily physical benefits, but the sense of ease that they experience when their worries have been reduced. On the other hand, social support is considered to be different depending on parents' concerns. Therefore, we created a questionnaire. It was administered to 1,197 parents in 32 day-care settings in Japan. We informed the purpose of this study to both the participant parents and the teachers and gained consent. Ethical approval was obtained. The APA ethics code was followed. Free descriptions of the parents' responses which have an average of the sense of ease were analysed. Qualitative analyses suggest that parents have various worries and day care teachers' social support is provided depending on these worries, combining instrumental support (e.g. providing other perspectives on the child) and emotional support (e.g. rejoicing together with parents when the child with disabilities makes efforts). These findings should be structured for professional development in family support.

parental support, social support, a sense of ease, help-seeking, qualitative analyses

I 11

The construction of the scientific basis in Swedish Early Childhood Education

Caroline Karlsson, Kristianstad University, Sweden

The purpose is to contribute knowledge about the discourses in the construction of the preschool's scientific basis in a Swedish context. Of particular interest is the academicization of early childhood education in relation to children's play. This study is based on results from previous research that show that there is a gap between scientific basis and pedagogical practice

(Kroksmark & Åman, 2018 s.203). This gap is visible already in Early Childhood Education teacher education (Karlsson Lohmander, 2015 s.168). The concept of scientific basis is interpreted in different ways by both principals and educators, which risks children's right to an equivalent preschool not being reached (Rapp, Segolsson & Kroksmark 2017 s.10). The theoretical framework applies Norman Fairclough's conception about critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995). Focus is on text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. This study has a critical theoretical paradigm. The methodology approach is a critical discourse analysis and the methods is audio recording from participatory observations of the educator's planning conversation and a critical discourse analysis of the Early Childhood Education curriculum. In connection with their consent, the participants have received both oral and written information about the study's purpose and goals, as well as anonymization and confidentiality. The participants have been informed that they can withdraw their participation in the study at any time. All material collected will only be available to the researcher (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Preliminary findings show a knowledge-based discourse. These findings indicate a need to discuss the scientific basis for both knowledge and play.

Preschool, scientific basis, academicization, curriculum, discourses

I 12

Exploring preschool stakeholders' perceptions of critical thinking skills for preschool children in Saudi Arabia

Hibah Binabulrahman, Dublin City University, Institute of Education, School of Language Literacy Early Childhood Education, Ireland

This study aims to (1) explore preschool stakeholders' perceptions of critical thinking skills in the early childhood context in Saudi Arabia, (2) investigate attitudes of preschool stakeholders regarding the value of teaching critical thinking skills to preschool children in Saudi Arabia, and (3) identify strategies that can be used to help preschool children in Saudi Arabia acquire critical thinking skills. Although the literature underlines the importance of critical thinking for early years learners, there is inadequate knowledge about how critical thinking skills is taught and conceptualised by Saudi Arabian preschool teachers and other stakeholders. The conceptual framework for this study links key theories of critical thinking including Dewey's (1910), Bloom's (1956), Lipman's (1988), and Facione's (1990) approaches to the acquisition of critical thinking skills in early childhood education. This qualitative study follows an interpretivist approach using thematic analysis to analyse data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and preschool classroom observations. Strict ethical protocols were followed in this study with informed consent being obtained for adult participants and assent obtained from child participants. This study received ethical clearance from DCU Research Ethics Committee. The data collection for this study is still in progress as it is expected to be completed in May 2022. Through this study, Saudi Arabian preschool stakeholders are encouraged to reconsider the preschool curriculum, which may heighten awareness of teaching critical thinking skills to preschool children.

Critical Thinking Skills, Preschool Stakeholders, Preschool Curriculum, Teaching Strategies, Early Childhood Education

I 13

The hundred languages of children and adults: democratic education in the thought of Loris Malaguzzi and Paulo Freire

Maria Aparecida Antero Correia, Universidade Federal de Rondônia, Brazil

This paper is part of the PhD research completed in 2021 at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, which aimed to present an overview of the functioning, management, and financing of Early Childhood Education and Care, in the Emilia-Romagna, Italy. The research revisits studies on the Reggio Approach, an educational approach that values the child, democratic management, and participatory public policies (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2016; Planillo, 2020). As well as the proposal developed in the Northeast of Brazil (Freire, 1991), the experiences of Early Childhood Education in Northern Italy present transformative perspectives in the field of public policies and pedagogical practices (Rinaldi, 2018; Rosemberg & Campos, 1994). The research was developed within a qualitative perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994), with data collection from official documents (legislation and reports) of central, regional, and local governments in Italy. The approach of historical-dialectical materialism (Frigotto, 2010) was used in the document analysis to discuss the historical contexts and social contradictions. The main ethical concern was not to make misconceptions regarding the cultural translation. This concern was remedied with a year of immersion in Italy with dialogue with universities and social organizations. The findings reaffirm that no pedagogical proposal is detached from its socio-historical process and that both educational experiences stem from a progressive vision, based on participatory and democratic visions. The research results intended to serve as an inspiration to think about education in different contexts, valuing the community and dialogic perspectives in the search for quality education that transforms reality.

Paulo Freire, Loris Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia Approach, Quality Education, Meaningful Education

I 14

Exploring Slow Pedagogy through a Froebelian Lens

Donna Green, Falkirk Council, United Kingdom

The research aim is to explore slow pedagogy through a Froebelian lens, using literature and research questions to make practical connections in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), to uncover what this means for children through a Scottish context in ELC practice. This draws on Froebel's philosophy and recent work of Clark (2020, 2021). Froebel advocates "in play the child ascertains what he can do" (Froebel, 1908). Additionally, Bruce (1991, 2011) twelve features of play – under feature four stipulates: "children need time and space and people who encourage play..." (Bruce, 2012). Clark, cautions that "slow has become urgent" (2021). Theoretical perspective and conceptual framework focused on critical inquiry, where participants reflected on practice to inform the social reality underpinned by view that "children are competent agents..." (Gallagher, 2009). Conducted using qualitative methodology approach. Methods were narrative and participatory through exploring research questions in an online focus group with five H.E. students who were also experienced early years practitioners. Ethical approval obtained from University of Edinburgh. Use of both (BERA) (2018) & UKRIO (2009) & Covid-19 guidance was adhered to and enshrined throughout, made use of literature to be alert to any issues. Informed participants regards the right to withdraw. Participants revealed natural environments lent themselves to slow practice. Froebelian principles and slow pedagogy needs to be further explored to inform a shared vision, enabling teams to unravel concepts and meanings for each ELC community. Findings will contribute towards informing future policy, practice and research about 'time'.

Early Childhood, Space, Slow Pedagogy, Time, Froebelian Principles

I 15

Creating Learning Environments in Preschool Settings: Pedagogical approaches and key ideas.

Kia Kimhag (1), Emma Glaas (2), Paula Holm (2), Christina Wåhlander (2), Annelie Stewing (3), Lene Due (4), Lillian Bakken (4), (1) University of Gävle, Sweden, (2) Svangårdens preschool, Sweden, (3) Bönans preschool, Sweden, (4) Sandvedhaugens preschool, Norway,

This study is a part of the wider ETEIP project (Erasmus+KA2, 2019-2022) with preschool teachers from England, Norway, Spain and Sweden. The aim is to highlight preschool teachers' professional approaches, views on creating learning environments from international perspectives. Play is a key resource for establishing the curriculum and approaches to teaching in early childhood education (e.g. Fleer, 2010; Gunnarsdottir, 2014). The theoretical frame derives from sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1981) emphasizing play as crucial for children's learning in social settings. Theory about professional development with openness, shared experiences and reflections in communities of practice (Wenger, 2013). Action research paradigm (Kemmis, 2010) through job shadowing including focus group interviews (Salo & Rönnerman, 2013), collaborative reflections (Schön, 1983; Pollard, 2019) and case study (e. g. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) are being used as the main methodology approaches. Each partner country's ethical guidance (GDPR) has followed with informed consent from participants, partner agreement by EYE with identities anonymized, no photos or filming children only environments. Professional approaches on creating learning environments include children's perspective, realization of learning activities, play and the importance of teacher's different role. Awareness of key ideas to develop own settings inspired of the diversity of resources and materials indoor and outdoor. Teaching strategies suggest that children can learn more autonomously without relying on teachers to organize learning activities. The result has an impact on new opportunities for developing indoor and outdoor play and learning environment. The findings suggest implications in developing learning environment through key ideas and changes.

early years setting, international perspective, learning environment, play, professional approaches

I 16

What educators need for well-being: Perspectives from Australian early childhood educators during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amelia Church, University of Melbourne, Australia

The well-being of early childhood educators impacts young children's learning and development, affects educators' personal experiences, and contributes to burnout in the sector. Our study identifies what well-being means to educators and how it is supported or undermined by practices and policy in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Research has shown that the pandemic has negatively impacted the well-being of ECEC educators (Swigonski et al., 2021), many of whom already experienced stress and emotional exhaustion (Logan, Cumming & Wong, 2020). Framed by Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, our study builds on McMullen et al. (2020) holistic concept of educator well-being. A cross-sectional survey design was used with follow-up focus groups, providing quantitative and qualitative data. The approved study had minimal risks for the 214 participants given anonymity of the methods of online survey and the support provided in focus groups. Findings in our

project show that well-being is correlated with better child-educator relationships and lower staff turnover. Key findings from the qualitative data highlight (1) the importance of accessing existing resources to support emotional, psychological and physical health; (2) the centrality of relationships with children, families and colleagues; and (3) the need for acknowledgement of the value of early childhood education and the important role of educators. The findings in this project articulate what well-being means to early childhood educators and how these needs can be met. Policy should take into account the experiences of educators' perspectives to address educators' concerns that their voices are not being heard.

Early childhood educators, Well-being, Professional identity, Child-educator relationships, COVID-19

I 17

Listening to young children to support learning through play: practitioners' reflection

Jie Gao (1), Minyi Li (2), (1) UCL Institute of Education, United Kingdom, (2) Beijing Normal University, China

This study aims to demonstrate ECEC practitioners' reflection on 'listening to' young children (Clark, 2017) to support learning through play. Research has shown a considerable rhetoric-practice gap between ECEC practitioners' ideal and practices of play-based pedagogy in diverse cultural contexts (Bubikova-Moan, Hjetland, and Wollscheid 2019; McInnes et al. 2011). We argue that one way of addressing this rhetoric-practice gap is to enhance practitioners' skills to 'listen to' (Clark, 2017) children in daily practices. The theoretical framework of this study draws on the theories of children's agency (Varpanen, 2019) and the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987). Taking a social constructivist perspective, we collect first-hand data from 30 Chinese ECEC practitioners who attend a CPD workshop on listening to children's voices to enhance play-based pedagogical practices. Practitioners fill in pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, as well as keep reflective journals for four weeks after the workshop to record and reflect on their 'listening' practices to support children's learning through play. Formal consents are obtained from the practitioners, who are informed of their right to withdraw anytime without giving any reason. Participant IDs are used to match the questionnaires and reflective journals to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaire data and reflective journals are analysed through summative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005) and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2019), respectively. Preliminary findings will be presented at the conference. This study will contribute to tackling the rhetoric-practice gap in play-based pedagogy by proposing practical recommendations based on the ECEC practitioners' reflection and suggestions.

learning through play, children's voice, rhetoric-practice gap, play-based pedagogy, CPD

I 18

Measuring and predicting teachers' externally assessed role behaviour during free play – a multilevel structural equation model

Cornelia Rüdüsüli, Zurich University of Teacher Education, Switzerland

This paper examines the predictors of teachers' externally assessed role behaviour during free play. Teachers in early childhood education and care (ECEC) assume different roles during children's play (e.g., co-player or onlooker). Recent research shows, that personal and structural characteristics are significant predictors of self-reported role behaviour during free play (Ivrendi, 2020). However, to date, little is known about predictors of externally assessed role behaviour due to small sample sizes in previous studies. Furthermore, it is unclear whether teachers' role behaviour depends on the children's play processes (e.g. dramatic play or construction play) in a given situation. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development led to the approach of guided play, in which teachers take an active role. The study is based on 79 live observations in ECEC in Switzerland. For this purpose, an external observation instrument was developed to assess teachers' situational role behaviour during children's free play. In addition, structural and situational characteristics were recorded. Personal characteristics and additional structural characteristics were assessed with an online questionnaire. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Zurich. It is assumed that teachers' active role behaviour during free play is explained by a higher level of education and is observed more often in simple group constellations and complex play situations. The results are currently being analysed based on a multi-level structural equation model. The results will contribute to further clarifying didactic questions of play support in the everyday life of ECEC.

play support, predictors, external observation, children's play, teachers' roles in free play

I 19

Preliminary evidence for supporting early social emotional development through play

Natalie Kirby, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

This study will explore potential pathways of influence between parenting behaviours during play and infant social emotional development to provide empirical evidence for theorised links, advance understanding and inform the adaptation of a play-based intervention. Many theories explain how high-quality parenting promotes stimulating interactions and development (Madigan et al., 2016). Evidence shows that play-based interventions, for example book sharing programmes, can improve parent-child interaction quality and enhance early learning opportunities (Britto et al., 2017; Xie et al., 2018). Despite robust theoretical arguments, there is limited evidence that improvements in parent behaviours directly benefit early social and emotional development (Adrián et al., 2007). Broad constructs (e.g., parent sensitivity) must be broken down (Huang et al., 2022) and specific parent behaviours disentangled to identify and investigate their impact on child social emotional outcomes (Robinson et al., 2021). This is a quantitative study. Observational and questionnaire data are collected pre- and post-intervention. Quantitative analysis will explore relationships between parent book sharing skills and child social emotional outcomes. Participants are provided with information sheets and consent forms. All data will be anonymised where possible and stored in password protected folders on an encrypted drive. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time. Preliminary findings suggest that parents' book sharing skills and sensitive responding improves throughout the programme. Planned analyses will explore whether these improvements are related to child social emotional outcomes. Findings will advance understanding into the theorised influence of parent play behaviours on child social emotional outcomes and inform early intervention development.

Parent-infant interaction, Social emotional, Early learning, Relationship study, Play-based intervention

I 20

Time to play, arenas for play and friends to play with. Playful interactions with peers in special needs education and care.

Marit Pettersen, Queen Maud University College of early childhood education (QMUC), Norway

This study explores how ECEC and school facilitates play in special needs education, and aims to reveal effective strategies to ensure playful interactions with peers for children with special needs. Previous research indicates that children are relationally dependent subjects and that playful interactions with peers and experiencing belongingness and acceptance are fundamental preconditions for children's health and well-being (Nergaard, 2020). Some children with disabilities, however, seem to experience play deficits to varying degrees (Movahedazarhouligh, 2018). This project focuses on children with special needs' inclusion in playful interactions with peers in transition from ECEC to school. The study is based on social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978), theories about children's play (Öhman, 2012; Lillemyr, 2020) and transition theories (Hendry, 2015; Hogsnes, 2016). The study is conducted within a qualitative research paradigm, using interview and observation as research methods. Content analysis are planned within a phenomenological hermeneutical approach. Ethical considerations are ensured through informed consent by all adult informants. The children's consent is ensured during each observation. Preliminary findings suggest that children with special needs struggle to take part in playful relations with peers, and that time for play, arenas for play and teachers' involvement in play decreases from ECEC to school. Preliminary findings indicate that children with special needs' participation in play depends on whether play is highlighted in individual and common curriculum and whether teachers' participation as facilitators in playful activities is ensured.

Special needs education, playful interactions, peers, curriculum, facilitators

I 21

Transcending the border of fantasy and reality in play as the key for children as agency for living through uncertainty

Mari Mori (1), Tomohiro Uemura (2), Akiko Gunji (3), (1) Kobe Shinwa Women's University, Japan, (2) Tama Art University, Japan, (3) Gunma University, Japan

This study aims to identify and to expand the characteristics of project approach as a bridge between the world of fantasy and reality. The purpose of investigation was to explore how 4-year-olds raised and acted out the questions and conceptualized their surrounding world through engaging in the project, "Inoshishi" (Japanese-wild-boar). This empirical study at an integrated early childhood education/care centre in Japan was inspired by progettazione of Reggio Emilia. The study is grounded in Reggio Emilia's (2011) philosophy of progettazione, Rinaldi's (2021) pedagogy of listening, Moss's (2019) alternative narratives, Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist approach, Dewey's (1910) serious play, and Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) theory of rhizome. Cultural and ecological paradigms were employed. Written notes and video-taped of participatory observations were analysed qualitatively, seeking for themes and distinct characteristics have emerged. We, the researchers, followed the ethical codes of Japan Society of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education, and received written informed consent from the centre. We discovered engaging in project invites the children 1) to explore their surrounding world and to search for meanings through acting out. 2) to act out the real world made them transform to live in

imaginative world with enhancing their metaphor. Moreover, the teacher played critical roles to sustain the children's curiosity to know the world. This study suggests play in project approach allows the children to live in the world of fantasy and reality, which will lead them to become competent in the world of uncertainty.

fantasy and reality, project approach, rhizome, play, uncertainty

I 22

Exploring Pre-Service Teachers' perspectives on Play, Teaching and Teachers' role

Pernilla Kallberg, Mälardalen University, Sweden

The purpose of this study is to explore pre-service students' perception of play related to teaching and their understanding of teachers' role in play. There is a political and research interest in how the presumed dichotomy between play and teaching could be bridged and part of teachers' teaching repertoire in early years of education in a Swedish context (Botö, 2018; SOU 2021:33). Whether teachers use play in teaching or not, depend on their perceptions of what play and teaching mean (Pyle & Danniels, 2019). Teachers' theories of play and teaching are developed during their teacher training. However, there seems to be a gap between what is learned in teacher training and what happens in practice (Dogan Altun, 2018). The theoretical concept of personal interpretive framework will be used to understand the professional development of teachers (Kelchtermans, 2003, 2009). In this qualitative research, empirical data will comprise written exam reports from pre-service students in higher education that study early childhood education (age 1-5) and primary education (age 6-9) at Mälardalen University, Sweden. The analysis will be carried out based on a latent content analysis approach (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The teacher students will receive information about the study and a consent will be collected from all participants. Guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (2016) and EECERA (2014) will be considered during the whole research process, Play-integrated teaching that expands children's learning. Findings could be used to develop play-based teaching strategies in teacher development and education.

play, teaching in early years, teachers' role, teacher education, teacher professional development

I 23

A step-by step approach to maps. The ability for children to interact with different types of maps.

Jon Anders Græsli, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

The aim of the present study is to enhance our knowledge of how children perceive and use various forms of maps based on a model (Græsli et al., 2009) which shows how teachers can develop children's map reading skills progressively with the use of various types of maps. Previous researchers have nearly always focused on and investigated children's understanding of photographs of unfamiliar places (Plester et al., 2006), and Wiegand (2006) suggest that there is a need for research with more appropriate practical maps activities. The study is based on "a step-by-step approach to maps" (Sigmundsson 2022) which is a continuation of the "map levels" (Græsli et al, 2009). This study explores children's map understanding using different types of maps in a large-scale outdoor environment. One-hundred-and-fifty-six children - aged 5 to 12 were presented with five different maps with ten controls, which they had to locate in the terrain. The study followed the Norwegians Guidelines for Research Ethics (www.forskningsetikk.no). No personal information about the participants in the study was collected. Both numbers of correctly identified controls and efficiency in wayfinding (time spent on the task) indicate that children master perspective maps (concrete) better than symbolic maps (abstract) and that older children handle symbolic maps significantly better than younger ones. By using photos and perspective maps, children will be able to interpret the maps more expediently. Using photos and sketches/drawings in advance of and as a supplement to traditional maps can help achieve the competence goals described in the curriculum.

Map levels, Primary School, Representations, Wayfinding, Orienteering

I 24

What is good for our planet? - Exploring pre-schoolers' attitudes and behaviour towards the environment through the use of participatory research methods

Kathrin Paal, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

This project aims to explore what preschool children think, experience and learn about what is good or healthy for the planet. Involving children in environmentally friendly practices can encourage children to engage with and shape their environments (Davis, 2015). Early experiences with outdoor activities can have a positive influence on children's behaviour towards the environment (Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2019). I am utilising participatory research to illustrate one way to empower children

to make decisions on matters that affect them, such as environmental issues. Hereby I am drawing from Clark and Moss' (2011) mosaic approach. Within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm, I used a variety of methods, such as observing children and their teacher during gardening activities, asking the children to draw a picture and interviewing the children as well as asking the children to take photos and take me on a tour through their preschool's outside space. A consent form and information sheet were provided to all participants. I explained the research to the children in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner. Pseudonyms replace the names of participants. All participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings critically discuss the use of different methods to gain an insight into children's perceptions towards the environment. The findings provide valuable information into the use of participatory methods to gain a holistic view on what children think, experience and learn when engaging with their preschool's outdoor environment.

preschool, participatory research, preschool garden, environmental sustainability, early childhood education for sustainability

I 25

Children's opinions on preschool outdoor environment and their experience in outdoor learning

Lehte Tuuling, Narva College of University of Tartu, Estonia

The aim of this study was to find out children's opinions about their preschool's outdoor learning area and their experience in outdoor learning. The results of a study by Lucas & Dymont (2009) showed that children use natural objects located in the outdoor area in the most diverse way. There is dynamic relationship between the outdoor environment and play (Sandsetter et al. 2020). Although the importance of children's agency has been emphasized more broadly, less attention has been paid to how children's agency is expressed in the daily life of kindergarten, especially in the various activities in which children participate (Hilppö, Lipponen, Kumpulainen & Rainio, 2016). The collection of children's opinions is based on Gibson's (1979) theory. To collect empirical material, a qualitative approach was chosen, in which 63 children aged 5-6 first photographed the outdoor area of their preschool and then interviews were conducted. Parents were asked for consent and all participants in the study are anonymous and cannot be identified. In conclusion, it can be said that the children actively use different areas and instruments for various activities in the outdoor environment of the preschool. They attach importance to security agreements but want more opportunities for challenging activities. Children value the outdoor environment because they are allowed to be physically active. Children like to observe and explore natural objects and weather-related changes. Children tend to associate the outdoor environment with play rather than learning. The results will help teachers better select environments for outdoor activities.

children's agency, children's involvement, outdoor learning, learning environment, preschool

I 26

Professional identity in early childhood studies – the predictive value of influencing factors.

Kristin Severinsen Spieler, Anne Karin Vikstøl Olsen, Ingirid Geirsdatter Kjær, University of Agder, Norway

The aim of this study was to investigate the predictive value of learning climate, teacher help and support and academic self-efficacy on professional identity. Previous research has shown that professional identity is strongly linked to efficacy, professionalism, and occupational development and success (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) and is a process of professional socialization where students develop a conscious awareness of oneself as a pre-school teacher (Adams et al, 2006). The theoretical and conceptual framework of this study builds on factors proposed to influence professional identity (PI): learning climate (i.e., teacher help and support; THS), motivational climate (i.e. performance (PC) and mastery climate (MC)) and academic self-efficacy (ASE) (Lamote & Engels, 2010). The study was conducted using a cross-sectional research design where the participants completed a questionnaire designed to assess PI, THS, PC, MC and ASE. Students (N=221, 19-44 years) attending the pre-school teacher education from one University, were enrolled through informed consent and confidentiality was assured. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Service and the ethical board at the author's University. The main findings show that ASE, PC and MC each give unique contributions to PI ($p < 0.05$). In terms of practical implications, the findings indicate that teachers should adopt a mastery orientation and promote cooperative relationships among students. Furthermore, knowledge about Bandura's social-cognitive theory and self-efficacy can be useful to promote student professional identity.

professional identity, task climate, performance climate, academic self-efficacy, educators as facilitators

Poster Symposium Set II

14:50 - 15:40, Thursday 25th August 2022

II 1

Pre-service teachers' perspectives on the Influence of Super Heroes role plays on children's diet and healthy habits

Eleni Tympa (1), Vasiliki Karavida (2), Alexandra Nousia (2), (1) International Hellenic University, Greece, (2) University of Ioannina, Greece

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of the pretend play activities with familiar super heroes on children's every day hygiene practices and eating preferences in the early year's settings. Super heroes and other familiar media characters are the most powerful influence on children's food preferences, healthy habits and behavioural outcomes (Kraak & Story, 2015). While much research provides important information for the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, only systematic interventions based on playful activities can promote healthy behaviours in the early years (Hodde et al., 2020). This intervention study involved 87 pre-service teachers during their weekly practice at the preschool setting. All pre-service teachers answered a questionnaire on their beliefs and perspectives on the impact of the pretend play with familiar super heroes on the children's life style before and after the intervention with the super heroes they chose to work with the children. Consent was sought from preservice and head teachers and children's anonymity was guaranteed with the right to withdraw at any time. All participants stated that the more they used role play and other playful activities with super heroes in the classroom, the more they observed positive healthy outcomes in the children's every day routines, such as more fruit consumption, hand washing or objects avoiding in the mouth. Future research on familiar media characters can be used to inform the deliberations of policymakers, practitioners and advocates regarding how they should be used to promote healthy adherence to healthy habits for children.

super heroes, role play, pre-service teachers, healthy habits, eating preferences

II 2

Storytelling as part of a playing with digital objects in a preschool makerspace

Kristin Dýrfjörð, University of Akureyri, Iceland

This research aims to explore how play with coding devices in a makerspace in early childhood settings can be used to support children's creativity and storytelling. Research interest is growing into the relationship between coding devices and children's play and creativity (Marsh, 2017). The paper draws on Vygotskian theories of play and the connection between play and creativity (Fleer, 2018; Russ & Wallace, 2013). Participatory research methods were applied, Video and Go-pro cameras, iPads, photographs, field notes and research diaries were used. Nine, five-year-old children in a small-town preschool took part in makerspace workshops. Basics of programming through work with robots was introduced to them through play and creativity. The workshop started with children's storytelling, drawing and making characters. Afterwards, children were introduced to coding and encouraged to make stories involving both the characters and the robots. Informed consent was gathered from all concerned authorities, teachers, parents and children, and the research followed ethical procedures, from University of Sheffield and University of Iceland. During each workshop, informed consent was discussed with children, and they were given the opportunity to opt out. Findings indicate that children used the materials creatively, made stories connected to their neighbourhood, and made play stages for the coded devices that were strongly place-based. The characters children made were based on children's local cultural experiences. Children's use of digital devices in a creative way through play and at the same time connected to their cultural and social background is important for both children and society.

Digital play, Creativity and play, Robots, Storytelling through play, Connected play

II 3

Digital Documentation of Play in Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Rosie Flewitt, Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

This project with early childhood educators explored the potential of digital apps to document young children's play in ways that value every child's unique capacity and potential. Documenting children's learning has a rich heritage in ECE – pioneered by Froebel, McMillan and Isaacs and continuing to present day (e.g. Malaguzzi, 1993; Carr, 2001). It deepens understanding of children's play and learning, guides teaching, and supports reflective practice. However, documentation practices are changing with the advent of digital apps and a culture of accountability in ECE assessment (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2018).

Framed by multimodal theory (Kress, 2010), the study focussed on children's multimodal and often ephemeral meaning-making. It combined ethnographic fieldwork with multimodal analysis (Flewitt, 2011) to investigate educators' observation and documentation of 3-5-year-olds in inner-city, multicultural, English nurseries. Voluntary informed consent was negotiated with children and adults, with opportunities to renegotiate participation as the study progressed; pseudonyms were used throughout. We found that digital documentation of children's play offers potential to create multimedia narratives of their often subtle learning, and for children, parents and educators to co-construct these. However, the apps did not facilitate children's independent use or access to their documentation, and practitioners need guidance on using documentation apps (Cowan & Flewitt, 2020, 2021). We are currently engaged in a follow-up study, working with practitioner-researchers and app developers to explore the possibilities of digital documentation through ethnographic case studies with children aged 3-4 with a view to promoting child agency, voice and metacognition in documentation pedagogy and software design.

Early Childhood Education, Digital documentation, Play, Multimodality, Assessment

II 4

How Can Responsive Interaction with Young Children be Built?

Gamze Kaplan, The University of Manchester, United Kingdom

This study, is aimed to find out an answer to the question "How can responsive interaction with young children be built?" and is interpreted in line with the literature. According to attachment theory, if the parenting approach is warm, responsive and sensitive and the child responds to their responsiveness, the child would be developing a secure relationship with the other people and would be a higher ability for emotional regulation (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall, 2015). The research in the literature emphasises that the directiveness of parent and child development has a negative correlation. On the other hand, the level of responsive interaction between parent and child is positively correlated with child development (Tooper, Diken, Vuran and Mahoney 2019; Young-Kong and Carta, 2011). Although the continuous research about parent-child interaction for long years, ensuring responsive interaction is still ambiguous and discussions about the cultural parenting approaches (Mahoney and Wheeden, 1997) are ongoing. Therefore, there is a need for informative and exploratory resources. In this context, first, the conceptual meaning and theoretical framework of responsive interaction are defined and the key factors, importance and benefits of responsive interaction are explained. Next, it has been outlined the steps that could follow to improve it. Finally, the past and current situation of cultural factors has been discussed. It is thought that the study will contribute to the practices and ongoing discussions on culture and parenting approaches in the literature.

responsive interaction, parent-child interaction, responsiveness, attachment, relationship-focused approach

II 5

Japanese pre-schoolers' perceptions and development of peer relationship through their favourite plays and space

Takayo Sugimoto, Aichi University, Japan

The current study investigated how pre-schoolers perceive their peers and develop relationship through their favourite play and space within the Japanese ECEC settings. We conducted both a cross-sectional and a longitudinal study to explore their developmental characteristics, using the Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2011). Miyamoto et al. (2016) explores physical and psychological features of Japanese children's favourite places to play within their preschools within the framework of the Mosaic approach. Tsujitani et al. (2017) analyses Japanese children's favourite plays and activities. Yet we do not know how pre-schoolers perceive their peers while playing together. To capture young children's own voices and visualize their worlds, we used the Mosaic Approach framework to listen to pre-schoolers' perceptions of peers in their favourite plays and space. 342 pre-schoolers from six preschools in Japan participated our study. Our study consisted of a combination of the photo projection method and individual interviews (Sugimoto et al. 2020). Four-year olds participated our longitudinal study. Prior to our research, parental permissions were obtained through the preschools. We found that the pre-schoolers purposefully made a good use of physical features of their favourite play space. Both four- and five- year olds preferred relatively closed space with their close friends. Five-year olds tended to value open space to construct a new friendship through their favourite play. Our results suggest variations in physical features of play environment are important for children to actively develop intimate peer relationships as well as inclusiveness attitudes toward peers.

play, the Mosaic approach, peer relationship, children's inclusiveness, intimacy

II 6

Not always innocent: Pre-school children's reinforcement of gender stereotypes during play

Cathy Kilburn, University of Hull, United Kingdom

This paper aims to explore the techniques that pre-school children use to reinforce gender stereotypes and norms when playing with their peers. Lamb and Roopnarine (1979) identified that pre-school children police their peers' gender experiences through a range of techniques. Since then, there has been little research that focuses specifically on children's experience of gender policing. The theoretical framework for this study draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of social development (1979) and Martin and Halverson's (1981) gender schema theory to identify the role that pre-school children play in their peer's understanding of gender norms and stereotypes. This research is situated within a social constructivist paradigm and utilises a qualitative methodology. The methods used include video-recorded observations, video stimulated conversations with the children and a picture task. Ethical concerns identified included the use of video recording and digital voice recording. Children with parental consent took part in assent conversations where an information booklet was shared with them using appropriate language. Children's assent was negotiated daily, and pseudonyms have been used for all participants. Early childhood settings work hard to reduce the stereotypes and inequalities that children are exposed to; pre-school children use a range of subtle techniques such as body position, control of resources and ignoring other children's presence to reinforce gender stereotypes and norms when playing with their peers. These findings suggest that children reinforce gender stereotypes during play and practitioners need to be aware of the subtle techniques being used, to identify where they can challenge stereotypical beliefs.

Pre-school children, Gender stereotypes, Peer interaction, Inequality, Gender policing

II 7

Performance on early reading assessments in a post-pandemic year

Carlin Conner, Emily Solari, Alisha Demchak, University of Virginia, United States

We present the performance of ~500 3 and 4-year-olds on early reading measures collected during the 2021-2022 school year in Virginia. Early reading is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused not only daily life interruptions but interruptions in education for children around the globe. An early reading assessment in Virginia found 25.8% of children entered kindergarten performing below benchmark in 2021. High literacy rates are tied to improved life expectancy, higher rates of employment, higher levels of education, and better physical and mental health (Gilbert, Teravanin, Clark, & Shaw, 2018). Students' performance on measures of early literacy skills has been shown to predict their mastery of later reading skills (Missall et al., 2019). The Simple View of Reading (SVR; Gough & Tunmer, 1986) is an empirically developed framework that describes reading comprehension development - we present data covering the decoding side of the SVR. Data-collectors are trained researchers who travel state-wide to assess children 1:1 (about 20 minutes per child). Items were created by researchers who considered diversity and inclusion criteria. Research approved by IRB. Consideration of diversity and inclusion of different races, socioeconomic statuses, and language abilities. Standard administration was provided. Student assent processes provided the opportunity to withdraw if children did not wish to participate. Data collection, responses from 3 and 4-year-olds on letter-naming, letter-sound knowledge, syllable-segmenting, etc. will be completed prior to presentation. Implications to improve practice, incorporate reading instruction into play, and guidance for early reading instruction, are provided.

early reading, reading assessments, letter knowledge, decoding, letter sound knowledge

II 8

Becoming parents in a bi/plurilingual, English-dominant context in Canada: what language choices for children?

Marie-Hélène Marquis, Université de Moncton, Canada

This study aims to establish the relationship between ecosystemic factors that could structure the language choices planned and carried out by parents of children up to 4 years of age, thus contributing to their child's language use. According to Klein and colleagues (2014), the early years of a child's life are a critical period for language learning and use. At the crossroads of ECE in a bi/plurilingual, English-dominant context and sociolinguistics, particularly the family language policy (FLP) approach (De Houwer, 2011, 2018; Spolsky, 2012, 2019), this poster presents results of a mixed-method prospective study using sequential explanatory cross-sectional design (Creswel & Plano Clark, 2018). Sociolinguistic questionnaires were first administered online to two cohorts of participants, parents to be (n=27) and new parents (n=99). Three couples of future parents and four couples with children aged up to 4 years old were selected by purposive sampling from voluntary respondents of the protected online questionnaires. They then consented to participate in a semi-structured virtual interview. The study allowed to draw a sociolinguistic portrait of a networked sample of Southeast New-Brunswick population transitioning to parenthood (n=126), and thus to better understand how the experiences of a few could structure their language behaviours and choices made for their child(ren). The findings show that the majority of responding families want French-language

Daycare Services and schooling for their children, regardless of their mother tongue. These results suggest a need to increase the supply of Francophone Childcare services and access to French schooling in Canadian minority communities.

Family Language Policy (FLP), parental values, multilingual settings, parental choices, pregnancy

II 9

Local language policy in preschool: the solution?

Petra Classon, Annika Åkerblom, Department of Education, Communication and Learning, Gothenburg University, Sweden

The aim is to contribute to research on institutional governance, in this case how local language policy documents are constructed and what discourses are embedded in the texts. The Swedish national curriculum states that the preschool teacher should support the development of both the majority language and the children's mother tongue. This is considered a challenge for many preschool teachers and studies show that even though efforts are made to create a multilingual education, the monolingual norm is strong (Kultti 2012, Lunneblad 2017; Cekaite 2018; Åkerblom and Harju 2019). The theoretical framework of the study is based on Bernstein's (1999, 2000) pedagogical discourse as well as the concept of language policy (Spolsky, 2009). The study was conducted within a qualitative research paradigm. Using text analysis, the data, consisting of 120 pages, was analysed using Bernstein's (1999, 2000) analytical concepts of classification. The data used is open accessible policy documents. Ethical considerations have been made throughout the process, anonymizing the names of preschools or municipalities. Preliminary results indicate, that even though the local language policies aim to create common ground for the preschool personnel to address language development, especially for children with multilingual experiences, the discourses embedded in the language policy could uphold the notion of the differences between children with different language experiences. Rather than being a part of the solution to manage language diversity and supporting all children's language development, the local language policy documents brought forward a deficit perspective on the multilingual children.

language policy, preschool, multilingualism, discourse, norms

II 10

Constructing Play and Learning Spaces at Home

Nashelly Cruz Velasco (1), Roxana Pastor (2), (1) Bebéna Life Cycle, Mexico, (2) Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico

This study seeks to learn from an initiative that took place online during the covid19 pandemic, to accompany families in the creation of play spaces in their homes taking into account their interests, their child's singularity and whatever materials they had available. This approach grows out of the authors previous work with families (Nashiki & Pastor, 2011; Cruz, 2015; Pastor & Cruz, 2017; Pastor, 2018) and the construction of play environments (Curtis 2017; Hernández, Pastor & Nashiki, 2015). The intervention is based on the understanding of the role of play on children's learning (Giudici, 2020), the conception of the environment as the third teacher (Reggio Children, 2018) and the value of families' participation in the education of young children (Ferrer y Riera, 2015; Garreta y Macia, 2017). The workshops were facilitated by an educational psychologist who shared her knowledge of child development and play environments and invited families to observe their children's play and prepares play spaces according to his/her interests. Three master students observed the intervention and shared their running records with the facilitator with whom they had a dialogue after each session and jointly evaluated the process. The participants' active role in this research insures an ethical approach. To protect their confidentiality, names have been changed. Professionals and families can jointly work online to create play environments that respect and respond to each child's singularity and give parents the opportunity to learn from their child's play. The study shows an alternative strategy for working with parents.

Play spaces, Families as partners, Observation, Online, Home intervention

II 11

What are the Differences between Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation of Educational Interns and Educational Interns' Reflections in Japan?

Takumi Umemura (1), Toshihiro Nakajima (2), (1) Hokusho University, Japan, (2) Hokkaido University of Education, Japan

The purpose of this research was to examine the differences between kindergarten teachers' appreciation of the interns and the interns' reflections on their educational training. Previous research has studied the relationship between the evaluation of student interns of kindergartens and self-evaluations of students after the interns in Japan (Shinohara, 2011). But there is

less discussion from the perspective of the difference between teacher evaluation and student self-evaluation. Educational training in Japan is that students participate in childcare work in a kindergarten for a certain period. Students could learn practical childcare skills through participation in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1993; Mitsuhashi, 2021). The subjects were 76 kindergarten teachers who appreciated the interns and 45 students who experienced educational interns and reflected after their interns. Kindergarten teachers evaluated the student's attitudes and interaction abilities toward the interns by the descriptions. Educational Interns looked back their outcome on the interns by the descriptions. The appreciations of teachers and reflections of students were converted to text data and analysed by KHcoder. We explained the research aim, the scope of data use, and that individuals would not be identified to the subjects. Resultantly, students learned how to interact with children and specific childcare techniques on the educational training. Kindergarten teachers appreciated etiquette and relationship with colleagues of interns. On the other hand, teachers felt interaction planning and learning of childcare methods were issue points. These findings suggest how preparation is required in the college where train kindergarten teachers before educational intern.

early childhood, educational training, teacher education, self-evaluation, collaborate learning

II 12

What do the novice kindergarten teachers find difficulties at work?

Toshihiro Nakajima (1), Takumi Umemura (2), (1) Hokkaido University of Education, Japan, (2) Hokusho University, Japan

The purpose of this study was to identify the work difficulties felt by novice kindergarten teachers in Japan. Many novice teachers tend to quit their carrier after first-third year, with the number increasing to almost half in the first five years (Kaiser, 2011). There is limited research that investigates this process in kindergarten teachers (Oplatka & Eisenberg, 2006). In Japan, the early turnover of kindergarten teachers has become social problems, but there has been no academic research on the difficulties they face. The subjects were kindergarten teachers participating in a workshop for beginning kindergarten teachers. We asked for open-ended responses regarding difficulties experienced in the first year of work. Valid responses were received from 29 teachers. The answers were converted to text data and analysed by text-mining using NVivo (QSR International). The words/phrases and the context were showed as the word-cloud, word-rank, and word-tree. The survey was conducted by means of an unmarked online questionnaire, so that individuals could not be identified. The results revealed that there are two major factors that beginners find difficult: "concrete ways of interacting with children" and "workload". Regarding "concrete ways of interacting with children," the participants were conflicted about how they could intervene in disputes and fights between children in free playing time. Regarding "workload," the respondents felt that they had difficulty with the amount of work involved, especially in documentation. Some respondents described doing it at home because they were unable to complete it within their work hours in their kindergarten.

kindergarten, novice teacher, difficulty, workload, text mining

II 13

Associations Between Teacher Child Relationships and Teacher Child Interactions in Preschool Classrooms

Ithel Jones, Florida State University, United States

The study was conducted to determine whether there was a correlation between teacher child relationships and the frequencies of various types of teacher-child interactions during pre-schoolers' play activities. Research suggest that quality teacher-child interaction is associated with child outcomes (Hamre et al., 2013; Anderson & Phillips, 2017) such as academic achievement. Variation in the quality of teacher-child relationships is also known to be related to competencies in childhood such as self-regulation (Chen & Lindo, 2017) and school adjustment (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The study draws on the conceptual model of teacher-child relationships developed by Pianta and colleagues (2003). It was predicted that variation in the nature and frequencies of teacher-child interactions would be associated with the affective qualities of teacher-child relationships. The relationships of 61 preschool aged children with their teachers were measured using the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1999). Trained observers counted the occurrences of types of teacher child interactions during indoor free play time. The data were analysed using correlational analyses. Ethical issues considered included adhering to appropriate university procedures and guidelines for the ethical conduct of research. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. Teachers had more positive interactions with those children with whom they had a positive relationship. Children whose relationships with the teacher were more conflictual were less likely to initiate questions or praise, and more likely to receive behaviour management directives from the teacher. Findings confirm the importance and complexities of the social context of teacher child relationships and interactions.

Teacher-child relationships, Teacher-child interactions, Preschool, Classroom talk, Play

II 14

Collaboration Implementing Slow Pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) through Froebelian Principled Practice

Gemma Paterson, Donna Green, Falkirk Council, United Kingdom

Introduce Early Years (EY) Practitioner's to knowledge of slow pedagogy and Froebelian Principles and examine what this means to children within three ELC establishments. Previous research, Green, (2021): Exploring Slow Pedagogy through a Froebelian lens, stimulated further practice research being carried out based on Froebel's principles (The Froebel Trust, 2021) and ground-breaking work of Clark (2020, 2021). This research and development study takes the ontological position of viewing "children are competent agents..." (Gallagher, 2009) and adopts the theoretical perspective of critical inquiry. Research questions are examined in three ELC settings where Professor Alison Clark has delivered workshops. This qualitative study uses observation, multimodal strategies and participatory methods (Clark, 2017) to explore slow practices at mealtimes and outdoors. At planning stage, development of projects were personalised to each setting in line with current needs to ensure that impact on children's experiences were positive and would not deter away from quality of ELC. Research codes of practice from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) have been drawn on at each stage. Findings are revealing a shared understanding which supports slow knowledge being value driven, recognises the importance of time, place and space and what this means to children. Children have more autonomy through real life and play experiences with greater balance on the concept of "freedom with guidance" (Tovey, 2017). Findings of this study will contribute towards informing future policy, practice and research.

Early Learning and Childcare, Place, Slow Pedagogy, Time, Collaboration

II 15

An educational thought of comprehensive learning in childhood, from 1920's to 1980's in Japan

Kimie Onishi, Wako University, Japan, Motoko Ohta, Wako University, Japan

This research focuses to clarify the ideas of the comprehensive learning based on project activities in infant education in Japan. The authors pick up four typical examples which accepted the ideas and practices from the International New Education Movement and describe how they produced experimental practices. In 1920's some schools made contact to the international trends directly and expressed their own educational thoughts based on their own experimental practices. Their activities have not been examined efficiently. In order to form independent children, Japanese teachers paid attention to children's emotional and/or intellectual activities. We make use of those two viewpoints. Refer to Hiromichi Ueno [1990], What is the intellectual education? Educational thoughts of modern Japan, Tokyo. We search documents of project activities including *play* especially in the first-year children and analyse how those activities developed to intellectual learning and what its impact was. Materials using in this research are all published historical documents written by teachers, there will be no ethical problems. Meiji Japan imported and translated modern subject matters rapidly, so there lacked realism. On the contrary the progressive education criticized the cramming and too much emphasized play and work of children. Then the practices which we attend have rarity value, as they regarded play as important as well as intellectual inquiries. In Japanese traditional culture cooperation and harmonious have been regarded as important. Our interest is, how the modern ideas of independent individuals have ripened in such culture.

Project Method, Comprehensive learning, Play, Inquiry, Gesamtunterricht

II 16

Professional identity of childcare workers in Poland

Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

The key aims of this study examine 1) how childcare workers identify their own childhood; 2) how they understand of being professional and doing professionalism. The issue of professional identity has been the basis of the individual's belonging in the workplace (Feldman, 1979; Pratt, Rockmann, Kaufmann, 2006; Ashforth et al., 2016; Sokołowska et al., 2017). Research on the professional identity of caregivers has been conducted most often in the context of poststructuralist theory (Jones et al., 2005; MacNaughton, 2005; Robinson, Jones-Diaz, 2006; Osgood, 2010, Chalke, 2013). These studies are based on Igor Knez professional identity (2016) and caregivers application (Chalke 2013). The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin, Lincoln, 2018). The study was conducted among 20 childcare workers. Interview (based on Osgood, 2010;). The 29 questions for the interview with guardians consisted of three parts: (1) Professional identity of the caregivers in the nursery; (2) Being and acting professionally; (3) Professional identity in the context of communication and relations with others A consent form and information sheet was provided to all participants, they have had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical considerations were anonymity, informed consent of capable adult volunteers,

reciprocity, and the possibility to refrain from research. I did not collect any sensitive personal data. The findings demonstrate that conditions for the organization of the nursery do not support practising pedagogy methods (big children groups). The biggest challenge in the carer's work is communication with parents. These findings suggest implications for improving the relationship between parents and caregivers, for examples by intensifying meetings and integrating the activities of the nursery with parents

professional identity in ECEC, caregivers in nursery, parent-caregivers relationships, being professional, doing professionalism

II 17

Pedagogical utilization of Montessori-based playful activities in early years settings

Vasiliki Karavida, Athanasia Siaviki, University of Ioannina, Greece

The main aim of these activities is to introduce children to a differentiated and individualized approach to teaching, through the use of multisensory materials. Maria Montessori introduced her pedagogical method in the early 1900s and emphasized on the importance of establishing a solid fundamental educational system in the very first years of life. Montessori believed in playful learning as a crucial factor for enhancing children's autonomy, freedom of studying individually, development of self-sufficiency skills and critical thinking in the educational process (Dereli İman et al., 2017). Central to this form of method and learning is the dynamic triad of child, teacher, and environment. An authentic Montessori early childhood educational program is characterized by five curricular areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language, Culture, and certain unique elements based on Montessori principles of education and child development (Sumanasinghe & Sethunga, 2021). This is a narrative review study based on the evaluation of the Montessori material according to contemporary studies. As this is a reviewing study, our ethical concern was to be consistent with the original literature. The activities proposed and implemented globally allow the child's optimal development (intellectual, physical, emotional, and social) to unfold (Marshall, 2017). More specifically, these are playful activities that involve using different materials and utensils, while the teacher is carefully observing children's free choices and expressions and introduces new materials gradually (Lillard, 2011). This paper focuses mainly on presenting appropriate playful activities based on the Montessori method, suitable for children at early childhood educational settings through literature review.

Montessori, method, play, activities, early childhood

II 18

Thinking and managing risk during play in Japanese ECEC

Mariko Miyata (1), Kiyomi Akita (2), (1) Shiraume Gakuen University, Japan, (2) Gakushuin University, Japan

The aim of this study is to identify how risk management is used during play in Japanese ECEC centres. Some suggest that risky play has benefits, and ways of turning risks into benefits have been identified (Ball et al. 2014). Japanese ECEC centres' attitudes to and management of risks in play vary. Our previous analysis has shown that there are three types of thinking (Miyata et al., 2021). However, the characteristics of each group of principals and their day-to-day approaches to risk remain unclear. This study is based on the Risk-Benefit Assessment (Ball et al., 2014) and the Salient Value Similarity model (Earle & Cvetkovich, 1995). The study is based on responses from principals in 116 ECEC centres in Japan from a questionnaire survey conducted by snowball sampling and interviews with principals in nine centres. The survey was anonymous, and the participants agreed to the purpose. In addition, they inform the participants that they will not be disadvantaged by the interview. Respondents in the risk in play group were more likely to describe their children's behaviour positively, while those in the low risk and eliminate risk groups tended to see sharing among principals as a challenge and to view children's behaviours as unpredictable. Other results showed that principals were committed to creating opportunities for practitioners to discuss their concerns and share information on risky situations with others. Suggestions have been made about how centres' principals can turn risks during play into benefits.

risk management, risk in play, benefit, concern, leadership

II 19

Creating rooms for children's voices - staging the play environment of ECEC

Anette Sofie Bernsen, NLA University College and USN University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

This study investigates how children's participation and perspective can find its expression through the staging of play-environments. The study points to a sustainable pedagogical play practice that includes children's voices on several levels. The study is supported by Solveig Nordtømme's (2019) research on spaces and materiality related to children's play experiences.

Her study found that the form and content had consequences for how children explored play spaces. The theoretical framework is based on phenomenological thinking (Merleau-Ponty, 1994) and philosophical pragmatism (Dewey, 1934), where embodiment and experience are seen as processes where individuals are in interaction and collaboration with their environment. The study is a qualitative-design study with an interventional approach, inspired by Alison Clarks (2017) mosaic approach. 60 children and 45 adults were involved in the research. The study is grounded in socio-cultural perspectives. The empirical dataset consists of transcribed focus-group interviews, video, photographs, participant observation and researcher journals. The study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for research data. Written information and written consent were sought from the participants. The study found that children's voices were more prevalent when actively invited to explore, shape and give content to their play spaces. When teachers adjusted rules and structures to allow for more active participation by the children, the children's perspectives on and ownership to their own play became more noticeable in the daily pedagogical play practice. The results of the study will provide nuanced perspectives on the effects of children's voices on the sustainability and the quality of pedagogical practices.

participation, playroom, embodiment, children's voices, intervention

II 20

Toddlers' playful acts of agency: Re-framing young children's autonomy

Bryndis Gunnarsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this PhD study is to examine the ways toddlers use playful and humorous acts to explore, navigate, and co-construct the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in an ECEC setting. Other research reveals the importance of the peer group to toddlers and their interest in influencing the environment they find themselves in (e.g., Corsaro, 2017; Løkken, 2000; Cekaite & Mondada, 2021; Rutanen, 2007; Bateman, 2020; Pálmadóttir, 2017). This study sits within the paradigm of constructionism and ethnomethodology, examining how, through every-day actions, toddlers co-constructs their social world with their peers. The study is a single-case study conducted in an ECEC setting in Iceland. Through video recordings, social interactions of four case-study participants were observed, using conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) to examine the strategies they use to interact. When doing research with young children, there are several ethical considerations to keep in mind, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and power differences (Einarsdóttir, 2007). All gatekeepers gave their informed consent and throughout the data collection period, assent was enlisted from the participating children. The findings suggest that toddlers are competent in managing the organisation of their own social worlds through playful and humorous strategies that they co-produce with their peers. The possible implications are an increased understanding of the importance of the peer group to toddlers and the competent ways they act as social agents. Teachers with this understanding will be more able to provide the environment and routines that supports peer interactions, therefore enhancing quality provision.

Toddlers, Social interactions, Autonomy, Peer group, Agency

II 21

Exploring the perceptions of teachers and parents on the use of play-based pedagogy in preschools in Kenya.

Domnick Okullo, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

This research aims to understand the perceptions of teachers and parents on play-based learning and the challenges teachers encounter while implementing play-based learning in Kenya. According to Bubikova-Moan (2019) teachers have different views regarding the use of play-based learning in pre-schools. In addition, Pyle et.al, (2017) indicates that teachers face different challenges while implementing play-based learning. This study aids in understanding the Kenyan context, it is underpinned by two theories, constructivist theory of learning by Piaget and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. These theories shape how children's learning and development is conceptualised when researching play (Wood and Bennett, 1998). The study is conducted through an interpretive paradigm (Cohen et al, 2018). It is a qualitative case study design and employs the use of interviews, document reviews and observations to collect data (Bassey, 1999; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Swanborn, 2010). Thematic analysis as proposed by Clarke & Braun (2017) is used to analyse the data. Before data collection, all participants were briefed on the purpose of the research, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw. Additionally, consent was sought from the participants before carrying out interviews and observations. Preliminary findings show that while some teachers and parents appreciate the use of play-based learning for academic learning others strongly believe that play is only meant for relaxation and developmental learning. Therefore, these findings suggest the need for additional training of teachers and sensitisation of parents on play-based learning to overcome the notion of viewing play and academic learning as separate entities.

Play, Learning through play, Pre-school, Teachers, Perceptions.

II 22

Play during the COVID-19 pandemic: highlighting young children's voices

Kelsey Graber, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

This study explored children's own perspectives and experiences of what it was like to play during the pandemic. While anecdotal reports highlighted occurrences of pandemic-related play (e.g. coronavirus-tag; Cray, 2020), other academic reports on pandemic play focused on children's limited physical activity and sedentary behaviours (e.g. Kourti et al., 2021). Few studies included data from children themselves. This research recognises play as a fundamental right for all children under any circumstance (UNCRC, 1989) and is grounded in principles from the 'new' sociology of childhood, which emphasises children as competent, social actors who possess agency within their own childhoods (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). This qualitative study consisted of interviews with 15 children throughout the UK, ages 3-10 years, via video call. Interview transcripts were examined using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2021). Written consent from a primary caregiver and children's verbal assent was required. Pseudonyms are used for all participants. Consent to share still images or video clips in research settings was optional. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw or stop the study at any time. Throughout the interviews, children described and demonstrated ways that play was indeed still occurring – play itself was not in lockdown. Play was also a way for children to showcase their understanding of the pandemic. The results suggest that children can, and should, be included in our growing understanding of how childhood is affected by widespread adversity, and how we plan for future events with children, rather than on their behalf.

play, pandemic, children's rights, children's voices, qualitative research

II 23

A Qualitative Study Focusing on Cultural Values and Behaviours in German Early Childhood Education Practice: Japanese kindergarten teachers' perspectives on children's independence and autonomy

Kaori Omichi, Hiroshima University, Japan

This article examines a qualitative research study of Japanese kindergarten teachers' (n=4) perspectives on children's independence and autonomy, focusing on cultural values and behaviours in early childhood education practices in Germany. Cultural values and behaviours are believed to influence early childhood education practices. Cultural anthropological theories that focus on different cultural values and behaviours have been evaluated. The research method used was Tobin, Wu & Davidson's (1989) polyvocal visual ethnography. Specifically, (1) Japanese kindergarten teachers viewed videos of German kindergarten practices (i.e., cues that served as stimuli). (2) Interviews were conducted and analysed based on the narratives elicited by the stimuli (Tobin, J., Wu, D., & Davidson, D. (1989). *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press). Ethical considerations for all research collaborators, including teachers and children in German and Japanese kindergartens, and the human rights and ethics of the individuals involved in the research were protected, and the research was conducted after obtaining written or verbal consent from the research collaborators. The findings reveal that the kindergarten teachers in Germany regarded risk in play as an educational value. I also found that in Japan, the role of the kindergarten teacher was viewed as interrelated and fostering children's autonomy. The results of the focus on statement values and behaviours showed differences in the attitudes of German kindergarten teachers towards their children. This is one possible new perspective and suggestion that comes from focusing on different cultures.

Cultural Values, Behavioural Style, Independence, Autonomy, Kindergarten Teacher

II 24

Can we play with science? Preschool teachers' discussions about play-responsive teaching of a science content and supported by digital tools.

Kristina Lund, Kristianstad University, Sweden

The aim is to contribute with new knowledge from a continuous professional development (CPD) study about preschool teachers implementing play-responsive teaching in their practice with a focus on a science content and with support of digital tools. Play and teaching is often conceptualized as two dichotomies (Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Pramling et al., 2019) with play associated with children's self-guided time and learning with activities organized by preschool teachers (Pramling Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006). In play-responsive teaching preschool teachers and children are mutually engaged in a shared content and the preschool teacher is qualitatively responsive to the children's perspective (Pramling et al., 2019). Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) is used to thematically analyse teacher discussions about play-responsive teaching, science content and digital technology. The study is conducted as a CPD project consisting of focus group discussions with ten preschool teachers based on an intervention. Stimulated recall by video documentation from the preschool teachers' practice is used. All participants have been informed and agreed to voluntary

and anonymous participation with the right to cancel their participation at any time (Swedish Research Council, 2017). The preliminary results show that the teachers often talk about teaching and play as separated activities. The use of digital tools and knowledge about play-responsive teaching open up new ways of creating a shared play world with scientific content. Analysis of preschool teachers trying to utilize newly acquired knowledge about play-responsive teaching are expected to enlighten future development of play-responsive teaching of science.

play-responsive teaching, science, digital technology, preschool teachers, continuous professional development

II 25

Mapping children's agency in nature-based spaces at a university child-care centre.

Radhika Viruru, Erica Ritter, Flora Harmon, Texas A&M University, United States

Although the connections between children and nature have been widely studied, this remains an undertheorized space (Somerville & Williams, 2015). This study attempts to interpret how children use objects in a nature-based playscape. Weekly maps of how objects "travelled" within the space were created and narratives from teachers were gathered to build understandings of children's interactions with objects and space. Children's interactions with nature have long been studied (Carson, 1956). Recent studies have focused on the connections children build with nature (Munoz, 2009), children's rights (Davis, 2014) and post-human approaches (Ketchabaw, Kind & Kocher, 2016). This study draws from critical theoretical frameworks (Bhattacharya, 2019) to develop understandings of how young children incorporate nature into their worlds and how they distinguish between nature and non-nature when less limited by adult agendas (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). Located within interpretivist paradigms (Bhattacharya, 2019) that emphasizes how human beings interpret their worlds, this study employs qualitative methodologies that build deep understandings of participant perspectives. Qualitative mapping techniques and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. Mapping techniques incorporate children's perspectives into the study, commensurate with their right to freedom of expression in research (Mayne & Howitt, 2021). This study shows that children often use objects in nature-based spaces to create social spaces. For example, the children often brought chairs into active areas to enable conversations as they explored the space. This study suggests that children's understandings of nature are more complex than hitherto-fore believed and can help guide future nature based playscape research.

Nature-based play, Critical theory, Interpretivism, Social interactions, Qualitative mapping

II 26

Millipede the Movie Star: Exploring Slow Methodologies in Education for Sustainability Research

Debra Harwood, Simranjeet Kaur, Brock University, Canada

Exploring a child's close-up encounter with a millipede helps inform both education for sustainability (Efs) research and teaching? The research queries 1. What does it mean to 'stay with the trouble' of entanglements and environmental damage? 2. How might an ethical encounter with a millipede help us to find ways to support teaching/learning practices that avoid simply externalizing human exceptionalism? Embracing Braidotti's (2019) invitation to shed the constraints of dichotomized notions and explore the "multi-dimensional complexity" (p. 10) might help researchers to act against "normalizing forms of research practices" (Lenz Taguchi, 2017, p. 700). Utilizing a post humanist lens, we recognize children's worlds as messy and entangled; worlds often important for them are overlooked within teaching/learning approaches (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2019). Case study methodology (Yin, 2009) informed by visual methods (Clark, 2010) framed the research project. Methods included the use of GoPros (Harwood & Collier, 2019) and video-stimulated recall dialogues (Morgan, 2007). Video clips were purged from the analysis when verbal consent was not provided & children filming were instructed not to film peers when peers did not actively consent. Findings hint at the importance of being differently attuned as both an educator and researcher; to remain attentive to the human-more-than-human web of entanglements. New avenues for teaching and learning are possible, prospects that shift the focus to cultivating the capacity of children to respond, and whereby humans are part of a common world as opposed to alienated from that world. Recommendations for theory, methodologies, and practice will be highlighted.

education for sustainability, methodologies, posthumanism, children's worlds, qualitative research

“PED”agical Talks

12:10 - 13:30, Thursday 25th August 2022

Group A

Chair: Chris Pascal, EECERA Board of Trustees, United Kingdom

Promoting STEAM learning in the early years with a gender approach

Valeria M. Cabello, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

This talk is about STEAM early childhood education with an affirmative gender approach. STEAM education can reduce some inequities and disentangle complex cultural issues regarding the early development of gender stereotypes. Early childhood education can promote integrated learning. STEAM education combines Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics holistically and has gained force in developed countries (Akturk & Demircan, 2017). However, these areas are adult male-dominated in several geographies (García et al. 2019). Girls might be discouraged from expressing interest in STEAM, and early childhood educators need support to implement STEAM education (Sharapan, 2012), focusing on disciplines integration (DeJarnette, 2018). It is challenging for educators to consider gender equity in course design (MacDonald et al., 2020) or reduce stereotypes (Savinskaya, 2017). I have faced gender discrimination; thus, I seek extensible interventions to change how we educate children regarding STEAM. We designed a university-based program providing extracurricular academic enrichment to students 3 to 10 years old, with a gender-empowering approach through integrated STEAM. With a cross-sectional design and integration of data from students, researchers, and educators, we document this program's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Stakeholders might transfer the strengths to similar interventions, and the weaknesses can be avoided in future replication. Opportunities present alternatives to this kind of program to improve and grow. I will like to call for tackling the weaknesses for more efficient application and discuss promoting STEAM learning in the early years in contexts of high gender inequality for future R&D advances.

STEAM education, gender approach, early childhood, science learning, university-based program

Are you here now? Creating a dialogue for 'present moment parenting, practice and play'.

Judith Brown, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

My PhD research is an exploration of how 'present moment parenting' may be supported through the practice of mindfulness meditation. Being present with young children may help us 'hold space', develop connectivity and intersubjectivity. The driver for this talk is my meditation experience as a change agent in supporting emotional, mental, and physical health. Manello et al. (2016) strongly suggest a correlation between mindfulness meditation and its effects on structural and functional alterations within the neural networks that promote and maintain consciousness. I have experienced this conscious change in my awareness, self-regulation, and response to parenting through mindfulness meditation. My research aims to capture this embodied lived experience and explore how it may shape relationships with young children. Fostering everyday mindfulness in parenting is a strong advocator of effective parental interaction, which could sustain conscious awareness, enhancing the capacity of parents to 'mentalise' children's immediate experiences (Fonagy et al., 2001). This 'PED TALK' will invite you to experience the present moment and challenge the audience to reflect on personal moments when they have felt 'present' with their own children or children in their care. It will encourage dialogue around the benefits of being present. Key questions; 'How can parenting and practice wake up to experience 'being' rather than 'doing'?' and 'Does this help us to connect deeply with young children?' Finally, it will explore how adults can engage in present moment play and its role in creating intersubjectivity between carer and child.

Mindfulness, Presence, Intersubjectivity, Parenting, being not doing

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's friendships and well-being.

Caron Carter, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom,

This talk addresses one of the biggest challenges facing Early Childhood Education today; the impact of Covid-19 on children's friendships and wellbeing. The negative effects on children's wellbeing and mental health are already being widely reported (Phelps and Sperry 2020; Loades et al. 2021; Pascal, et al. 2020). Therefore, this talk will outline both the impact of Covid-19 on children's friendships and wellbeing and how this challenge might be addressed. It is important to highlight children's

friendship and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and restrictions. This is particularly pertinent in some contexts where children's views were perceived as overlooked or silenced (Lomax et al, 2021). The value of friendship was magnified when the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily ceased or limited children's friendships. In March 2020 schools closed and were only open to key worker or vulnerable children. (DFE, 2020). Lockdown and restrictions led to a lack of social interaction for children. This is contrary to Article 15 that states children should have the right to play with other children, form friendships and join organisations (UNCRC, 2013). This talk will argue for additional support for children's friendships and wellbeing, considering the implications for educational practice and future research, including time to reconnect with friends, the incorporation of a 'slow pedagogy' and an opportunity to rethink and reimagine how we do things (Loades et al. 2021, Clarke, 2020 & O'Toole and Simovska, 2021). I hope this will provide the audience with time to reflect on this vital area.

children's friendships, children's wellbeing, Covid-19 pandemic, Lockdown and restrictions, Supporting children's friendships during Covid-19

Enhancing ECEC teachers' and young children's 21st century competencies

Clodie Tal, Hemdat HaDaron College, Israel

The main issue addressed by my presentation is the preparation of ECEC teachers/practitioners for the challenges encountered in a world characterized by uncertainty, globalization, and crises. The questions are what are the essential competencies and practices needed by teachers and practitioners in ECEC and what are foundational competencies needed by children? My interest in 21st-century competencies in ECEC stemmed from my understanding that teacher preparation and existing practices do not support sufficiently children's problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. As a result, current practices do not support enough children's and teachers' resilience. Resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events and find meaning in the experience and grow from it. Resilience is based on a growth mindset—a belief that abilities can be altered. The presentation will focus on what are in my opinion the main issues that need to be included in teacher/practitioner ECEC preparation in the 21st century. I will emphasize the need to build resilience and a growth mindset in children, teachers/practitioners and to instil a continuous unhurried "improvement approach", a strive to always be looking for better ways to do things that are aligned with children's interests and backgrounds, such as wider opportunities of play, improved relationships, and mediation of phenomena encountered by children, improved ways to foster children's creativity, problem solving and collaboration competencies. To do that, teachers need to continuously practice action research based on cycles of observation, documentation, planning, action, and reflection.

mediation, relationships, action research, resilience and a growth mindset, 21st century skills

Group B

Chair: Tony Bertram, EECERA Board of Trustees, United Kingdom

A New Flow? From formal to playful English language learning in the early years in China

Yueling Chen, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

This PED talk will discuss issues affecting provision for very young language learners (aged 3 to 6) following significant recent policy changes in China. I worked in Private English Centres for Children (PECCs) for 3 years before re-embarking on my academic journey to research this field. In 2019, PECCs were one of the fastest rising industries in China. In 2022, the industry faces full-scale disappearance. This talk presents dilemmas for families and challenges for professionals and academics working in this area, as a result of the policy shift. First, I will discuss international trends for starting second language learning at an increasingly early age and reasons why parents invested in PECCs, fuelling the growth of this industry. Second, I will explain the government's policy-change, and the questions raised. While the government has expressed concerns about young children engaging in long hours of academic study, and over-exposure to screens as a significant element in this provision, parents still perceive a need for an early start to English language, partly as a result of earlier promotion of this provision, and partly because of a long-standing cultural view that young children should be pushed to ensure they get ahead. Third, I will review ways in which PECCs are reframing their approach from more formal language learning to play-based content learning, where English can be acquired incidentally while taking part in playful activities. My research project explores the views of different stakeholders, incorporating playful methods, drawing on the Mosaic approach, to engage the children.

very young language learners, playful learning, policy shift, English language learning, early year

Oral Storytelling as Pedagogy: The logic of storytelling

Catherine O'Reilly, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Oral storytelling fosters social and emotional well-being and it supports cognitive growth. This talk aims to demonstrate to listeners the value of oral storytelling as pedagogy. I will use the story spine to explain how events are connected; one thing leads to another and actions have consequences. Oral storytelling is recognised as a culturally universal way of sharing knowledge that spans generations and age groups (Landrum et al., 2019). Research has shown how purposefully shared stories can scaffold children's understanding of themselves and their world (Phillips, 2012). However, oral storytelling is largely under theorised. My conceptual framework of storytelling as pedagogy is loosely based on the work of Vivian Gussin Paley. In Paley's storytelling curriculum, children embrace storytelling and story acting to make sense of their world (Paley, 1991). For this talk, we focus on how the logic and function of storytelling reveals the progression of events and patterns in behaviours and actions (Landrum et al., 2019). I will demonstrate, using the story spine, how any adult can use a story frame to tell a story to their child without using a book. The story spine is a traditional way of telling a tale using a short sequence of events. In my research I am teaching preschool educators how to tell children stories using this technique. This pedagogy can foster strong connections between the teller and the listeners.

Storytelling, Children, Pedagogy, Well-being, Story spine

If you play, they will come: Creating community and a culture of play for neighbours of all ages

Erin Tebben, The Ohio State University, United States

Many children in the United States have limited amounts of time and space within which to play freely with others, especially outdoors. Further, communities are becoming increasingly fractured, with individual community members feeling disconnected from their neighbours. I found myself wondering how play, particularly outdoor play, could be used to build community and reengage neighbours with one another in my American, urban, mixed-income neighbourhood. When I first moved into my home, there was evidence that children lived nearby, but I never actually saw any. There were playsets behind fences and school buses stopping at corners, but the children themselves were invisible. They didn't play in the community green spaces or regularly visit the neighbourhood playground. They were neither seen nor heard. Once I had my son, it became even more clear to me how invisible children were in the community. This was not what I wanted for him, but more importantly, this was less than he and the other children and families living in our community deserved. As a part of this talk, I will share efforts I (and eventually others) undertook to create visible opportunities for (risky, messy, free) play in our community and, by extension, how doing so created a playful community of neighbours of all ages. In sharing examples of the types of experiences we crafted, I hope to inspire others to consider how they, too, may be able to use play as a strategy to build community and strengthen relationships in their own worlds.

outdoor play, intentional community, mixed ages, neighbourhood, playbourhood

A critical view on the strengths and challenges of nature preschools in Spain

Katia Hueso, Asociación GJNSaltamontes, Spain

Nature preschools in Spain have been operating since 2011 and today approximately 40 exist throughout the country. From 2022 this approach is taught at university level and both grey and scientific literature have grown (1, 2, 3). However, this educational approach has not been recognised by the authorities, leading to financial, socio-cultural and logistical challenges (4). Despite attempts to unite the nature preschool movement, it remains fragmented and suffers from diverging priorities by different stakeholders, plagiarism in other outdoor-based activities and the loss of its original pedagogical roots, as observed elsewhere (5, 6). In this contribution, a critical view on the strengths and the challenges of the young nature preschool movement in Spain will be presented, as well as its prospects (2). This work adopts a qualitative, (auto-)ethnographic perspective (7). It draws on the personal experience of the author (8), cofounder of the first nature preschool in Spain and of other similar organizations, as well as semi-structured interviews with four key stakeholders: nature preschool educators, coordinators and instructors. Interviewees have agreed to publish excerpts of their responses. Ethical guidelines have been applied. The author and interviewees share the experience of being pioneers in the field. The aim of this contribution is to provide evidence of both the strengths and challenges of nature preschools, so that others avoid pitfalls and gain inspiration from the lessons learnt. References (1) <https://latravesiaediciones.es/guia-edna/>(2) Hueso 2022, The-future-of-nature-education (In Spanish). In: Artero & Calçada-i-Balcells (Eds.) Dossier: renaturalizing-educational-space-and-time. Ed.-Graó, Barcelona (3) <https://www.silviva-fr.ch/outils/manuel-l-%C3%A9cole-%C3%A0-ciel-ouvert/> (4) <https://www.plataformaeditorial.com/libro/8969-educar-en-la-naturaleza> (5) doi.org/10.1007/s42322-017-0006-1 (6) <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/critical-issues-in-forest-schools/book263065>

(7)<https://www.routledge.com/Autoethnography-in-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care-Narrating-the-Heart/Henderson/p/book/9781138735231> (8) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W92mvGdCops>

nature preschools/kindergartens, quality in outdoor preschools/kindergartens, policy change, early years initiatives in nature, Spain

Group C

Chair: Margy Whalley, EECERA Board of Trustees, United Kingdom

The relevance of foraging and gardening projects in kindergarten for cultural sustainability

Veronica Bergan, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Norway

Why should we work with foraging and gardening projects in kindergarten? It is about growing and harvesting local treasures of nature depending on local food resources, traditions, climate and opportunities at the location. It is relevant for cultural sustainability – transmitting and expanding knowledge and skills to make use of natural food resources where we live. In my childhood I grew up in a rural fjord in northern Norway where everyone was self-sustained of food. Local natural resources and food traditions connected the people to nature, and my values and habits developed towards utilizing local food by observing the practice of my grandparents. I was invited to tag along while they were fishing, farming, growing crops and picking berries - and I wanted to learn what they were doing, and I was allowed to participate from my point of view. My research on introducing foraging and gardening practices in kindergarten reveals that the kindergarten staff and the children are eager to participate in real settings where local food is harvested, grown, and utilized for tasting or prepared for food. The children's interest for tasting new things, for planting and caring for crops, and curiosity for the interconnectedness of nature is dependent on the kindergarten teacher's engagement and ability to create playful curiosity to the process. This is relevant to cultural sustainability through the discovery and preservation of local food heritage and traditions.

culture, sustainability, foraging, gardening, kindergarten teacher

The Surprising World of Theatre for Under Threes

Charlotte Allan, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

High quality Theatre for Early Years is not quite like anything else. Though I refer to 'theatre', an event might be more like an installation, gig, live art, or movement piece than our familiar experience of children's theatre. The relationships within the space are my research interest; how performers, children, and their accompanying adults respond to, and with, one another. As an artist I was initially motivated by the challenge of creating work that engaged adults and very young children together, that spoke to their common humanity. As a researcher I am trying to unpick this experience further, hoping to share insights for supporting relationships with very young children beyond the theatre space. I often come across reflections on performances that begin with "I was surprised..." When parents report being surprised at how their child engaged with an event, I believe this tells us not only about their expectations but reveals an important power the arts have; letting us see each other differently. This talk will describe the aesthetic qualities of Theatre for Early Years and explain how they contribute to what can sometimes be a transformative experience. I would like my audience today to come away excited by the possibilities and curious to know more. Making art for babies and toddlers is a bold proposition of inclusion; this talk will invite listeners to consider how we view our youngest companions and what we know, believe, or intuit them to be capable of.

Arts, Spectatorship, Community, Relationships, Empathy

Becoming a Parent and Being a Parent Now

Aline-Wendy Dunlop, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Parental perspectives on their child's experiences of transition feature in the early childhood educational literature, but very little attention has been given in this particular literature to the significance of parental experience of the major life transition of becoming a parent and in being a parent presently. In a small-scale study using storying and sketch notes to facilitate discussions and analysis, we asked parents "What was it like for you to become a parent?" and "What is it like to be a parent now?" (Dunlop and Taylor, 2022). After studying transitions in early childhood and school education for many years, this gap in our understanding of parental experience seems to be shouting out for attention. As a trustee of Parent Network Scotland, I have been privileged to learn about their parental well-being programmes and to reflect on what it is like for adults embarking on parenting when networks of support are disrupted, as they have been throughout the pandemic, and to realise that such

supports do not exist for some parents in more regular times. One key message is about sensitivity to the wide range of experiences of becoming parents, for example: "Nothing is straightforward"; "When I found I was pregnant I thought my life was over"; and in being parents now: "We'll do it differently from our parents".; "We play together". A second key message rests on ethical issues involved. A third is the importance of choosing an approach that works in understanding deeply personal experiences.

parents, parenting, diversity, complexity, voice

Rucksacks in the limelight: A duet between play and acting

Mandy Geddis-Capel, University of Mount Union, United States

Why do children bring rucksacks to school if only parents or educators pack their bags? What's inside of those bags that allows children to bring their universe and ingenuity into the classroom? How can educators invite play through actor's training and a rethinking of play as we know it? This talk explores why children should prepare their own rucksacks, bring their own play and learning materials to school, and encourage educators to serve as actors on the stage rather than figuratively operating as the set crew or director. Allowing children to imagine what they bring to the learning environment or choosing their own materials for discovery is a new way of thinking about how we prepare the classroom, interact with children, and engage them in play. The baubles in those rucksacks can foster ideation, build authentic foundations of literacy, boost respectful classroom communities, and create visionary learning. As a professor of education and previous actor for school plays, there is a keen interest in working alongside early childhood educators and experienced actors to discover how actor's training can empower teachers to engage with play in dramatically new ways with young children. This practical research and discovery alongside children's choice of play can create a dynamic change to the process of learning and teacher pedagogy. Learn more about how authentic children's play and actor's training coincide and how elements of acting such as improvisation, characterization and movement techniques can effectively be woven with play.

Play, Actor's Training, Imagination, Ideation, Respectful Classroom Communities

INDEX

Aadland-Atkinson, Kristin	105	Besio, Serenella	96	Camilleri, Rosienne	76
Abramowicz, Anete	33	Bianquin, Nicole	97, 123	Campbell-Barr, Verity	116, 150
Achituv, Sigal	10, 67	Bichão, Helena	18	Canning, Natalie	35, 36
Adelman, Andrea	163	Biersteker, Linda	149, 150	Carr, Victoria	130
Agzagee, Rehab	131	Binfield-Skøje, Tina	120	Carruthers, Elizabeth	43
Ahrenkiel, Linda	145	Bingham, Gary	117	Carter, Caron	87, 184
Akita, Kiyomi	137, 180	Björklund, Camilla	98, 166	Catucci, Ester	163
Alan, Havva Ayca	42	Bjørnestad, Elisabeth	145	Cave, Sally	40
Alici, Sule	41, 42, 145	Björnsdóttir, Margrét S.	26	Chicken, Sarah	13, 45
Allan, Charlotte	38, 187	Blackburn, Carolyn	103	Christie, Adam	142
Alstveit, Reidun Johanne	55	Blanquet, Estelle	160	Christodoulakis, Nikolaos	52, 118
Altaş, Elif Naz	83	Blomgren, Henriette	70, 71	Church, Amelia	129, 169
Andrä, Markus	143	Bøe, Marit	161	Clark, Katherine	16
Anvik, Elisabeth	48	Boksjö, Olga	17	Clarke, Sharryn	141
Archard, Simon	69	Bonarini, Andrea	148	Classon, Petra	108, 177
Areljung, Sofie	18	Bonello, Charmaine	76	Clement, Jennifer	45
Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Eva	19, 42	Bouillet, Dejana	70	Cloos, Peter	107, 108
Arnott, Lorna	131	Boyle, Clionagh	140	Clough, Peter	133
Arvidson, Catarina	69	Boysen, Mikkel Snorre	24	Cole-Albaeck, Aline	40
Asai, Sachiko	155	Wilms		Conkbayir, Mine	34
Avgitidou, Sofia	37, 63, 64	Boyum, Sigrid	111	Constans, Stéphanie	10, 94, 95
Axelsson, Suzanne	106	Bredikyte, Milda	72	Cooper, Maria	147
Babaeff, Robyn	141	Breit, Simone	52	Costa, Natália	85
Bakke, Hjørdis H. K.	135	Brien, Jackie	57	Cuevas-Parra, Patricio	149
Ballaschk, Itala	134	Brodersen, Marianne	24	Dale, Trine	45
Baroni, Federica	89	Brody, David	10, 143	Dalli, Carmen	80
Barros, Sílvia	91, 92	Brooks, Eva	121	Davey, Lisa	16
Bateson, Simon	109, 151	Broström, Stig	50	Davidson, Julie	122
Baustad, Ann Grethe	145	Brown, Sally	131	Davies, Debra	11
Benford, Joanne	122	Bruckner, Johanna	52	Deák, Éva	81
Bengtsson, Ingmarie	64, 65	Buettner, Cynthia	29	Deguara, Josephine	76
Bergan, Veronica	187	Bulgarelli, Daniela	96, 97, 123	Delblanc, Åsa	80, 81
Bergs-Winkels, Dagmar	49, 134	Burns, Marion	5, 99, 111	Derby, Melissa	38
Berry, Lizette	150	Bush, Malcolm	149	Dewsbery, Felicity	15, 16
Berti, Francesca	91	Buss, Anna	36	Diamini, Clement	149
Bertram, Tony	40, 41, 185	Byrne, Elizabeth	130	Dierckx, Melissa	26
		Cagol, Michele	53	Dierickx, Eva	156
				Doan, Laura	20, 113

Dockett, Sue	78, 84	Friberg, Ingela	110	Hales, Stephanie	16
Driscoll, Wayne	126	Fridberg, Marie	54	Halipinar, Fatma Merve	132
Dror, Orit	10	Frisch, Sandra	129	Halttunen, Leena	68, 134
Dudley, Pete	146	Frøkjær, Thorleif	50	Hammershøj, Lars Geer	56, 57
Dunlop, Aline-Wendy	100, 187	Fujimori, Yuji	85	Hannevig, Lise	79
Dýrfjörð, Kristín	114, 174	Furu, Ann-Christin	73	Harwood, Debra	146, 147,
Ebbelind, Andreas	88	Furu, Christin	22		183
Edo, Mequè	28	Galloway, Ashley	122	Haukenes, Siri	48
Efstathiadou, Marianna	29	Gao, Jie	77, 170	Heikkilä, Mia	22, 113
Egilsson, Björn	84	García-Carrión, Rocío	27	Heilala, Cecilia	162
Ehrström, Monica	31	Geddis-Capel, Mandy	89, 90, 188	Heldal, Marit	100
Eide, Helene Marie Kjærgård	117	Gelir, Iskender	118	Hendra, Karolyn	20
Eikeland, Synnøve	55	Georgeson, Jan	116, 150	Henriksson, Jenny	17
Eilifsen, Margareth	157	Gerde, Hope	117	Hernandez, Yannick	94
Einarsdóttir, Jóhanna	84, 90, 91	Giaever, Katrine	156, 157	Herold, Laura	129
Ek, Terhi	159	Gilbertsdóttir, Emilía	47	Hirvi, Johanna	117
Eliasson, Sara	17	Lilja Rakelar		Hjelmér, Carina	79, 80
Elkarif, Halah	143	Gillen, Julia	131	Hoffmann, Martin	64
Elvethon, Ellen	12	Giraldo, Mabel	97, 124	Hogarth, Hannah	56
Emilsen, Kari	61	Godoy, Felipe	111	Hognestad, Karin	20
Emilson, Anette	23	Goncalves, Ricardo	62	Homme, Anne	21
Engdahl, Ingrid	42	Graber, Kelsey	182	Hreiðarsdóttir, Anna Elísa	79
Engesnes, Nina	48, 160	Grace, Rebekah	34	Hreinsdóttir, Anna Magnea	26
Engtrø, Randi	45	Gressiou, Georgia	138	Huepping, Birgit	11,12
Erden, Feyza Tantekin	83	Grieshaber, Susan	161	Hueso, Katia	103, 186
Eriksson, Anna	158	Gripton, Catherine	28	Hughes, Fran	101
Erőss, Gábor	81	Grøsvik, Kristin	67	Ince, Amanda	14
Esterhuizen,, Stef	102	Gulliver, Katherine	157	Ingebrigtsen, Tove	145
Evans, Katherine	116,	Gunnarsdottir, Bryndis	91, 181	Jackson, Claire	25
Fabrega, Judith	28	Günther-Hanssen, Anna	118, 119	Jackson, Dianne	34
Fajardo-Tovar, Dina	13	Gustafson, Katarina	107	Jæger, Henriette	37
Fasfous, Ahmad	146	Hacin-Beyazoglu, Kaja	63	Jensen, Anders Skriver	37
Fekonja, Urska	63	Hadzidaki, Zoi	48	Jensen, Anne Winther	24
Fleet, Alma	142, 159	Hagen, Liv Anna	48	Jensen, Bente	86
Flewitt, Rosie	131, 174	Hagen, Trond Loge	137	Jensen, Jens-Ole	30
Foerch, Daniela	163	Hald, Mikkel	24	Jernes, Margrethe	132
Folci, Ilaria	89	Hale, Hannah	123	Jónsdóttir, Friðborg	52
				Jørgensen, Hanne Hede	157

Jørgensen, Helle Hovgaard	60	Koskinen, Jeanette	95	Ludvigsen, Kari	21
Jørgensen-Vittersø,	36, 74	Kovács, Ivett Judit	81	Lundin, Mona	108
Kari Anne		Krashennikov-Khait,	139	Lundkvist, Marina	145, 162
Jovaišaitė-Blaževičienė,	66	Evgeniy		Lundqvist, Johanna	109
Indrė		Kristiansen, Anne Lene	79	Lyndon, Helen	40, 41, 85, 155
Kadury-Slezak, Michaella	101	Kristiansen, Professor Elsa	161	Lyngseth, Else Johansen	57, 110
Kalessopoulou, Despina	66	Kristina, Lisa Kristina Lunde	135, 182	Lynngård, Anne Myklebust	49, 146
Kalland, Mirjam	162	Kubandt, Melanie	61	M. Cabello, Valeria	161, 184
Kaminskienė, Lina	127	Kusk, Hanne	71	Maffia, Andrea	88
Karavida, Vasiliki	53	Kvilhaugsvik, Hanne	116	Magnusson, Maria	98
Karlsdóttir, Kristín	26	Lafton, Tove	48, 87, 160	Magnusson, Lena O	115
Karlsen, Lisa	115	Lagerlöf, Pernilla	98	Majcen, Sandra Antulić	70
Karsli-Calamak, Elif	83	Lakshina, Anna	72	Male, Trevor	14
Kaur, Simranjeet	147	Lang, Sarah	27, 29	Malpass, Hannah	109
Kelleher, Fiona	47	Larrañaga, Andrea Khalfaoui	32	Manni, Annika	50
Keränen, Jaana	38	Larrañaga, Andrea Khalfaoui	27, 51	Manning-Morton, Julia	46
Keränen, Virve	51	Larsson, Karin	141	Mansikka, Jan-Erik	142
Kern, Kevin	90	Latto, Liz	20	Manzura, Shulamit Hoshen	67
Kern, Natalie	90	Lebedeva, Nadezda	64	MarieSkovbjerg, Helle	60
Kernan, Margaret	39	Lee, Queena	140	Marjanovič-Umek, Ljubica	63
Kerrins, Liz	82	Lee, Wendy	154	Maron-Puntarelli, Cecilia	11
Kholodova, Olga	115	Lefterov, Petar Vasilev	148	Marquis, Marie-Hélène	95, 176
Kieferle, Christa	140	Lehrer, Joanne	114	Mart, Mehmet	100
Kimhag, Kia	158, 169	Le-van, Tatiana	72, 115	Matthew, Jacqueline	122
Kines, Ørjan	52	Lewis, Helen	8	Mayne, Fiona	59
Kinnunen, Susanna	51	Li, Minyi	77, 170	McGrath, Deirdre	33
Klaar, Susanne	162	Liinamaa, Tarja	159	McHale, Joanne	9
Klarsgaard,	136	Lilleng, Siv Ellen	61	McMullen, Mary	31, 147
Nadia Norling Tshili	75	Lindh, Charlotte	142	McNair, Lynn	5, 99, 152
Kleppe, Rasmus		Litsner, Karin	119	McNally, Shelley	129
Knauf, Helen	127	Ljunggren, Elin Birgitte	61	Melendez, Wilma Robles	125, 126
Knight, Cathryn	93	Löfgren, Håkan	50	Mevawalla, Zinnia	22, 67
Knight, Kristen	29	Lohmander, Maelis Karlsson	115	Mhaoláin, Aoife Ní	90
Kochanowski, Leslie	130	Loizou, Eleni	63, 89	Michaelides, Anthia	63
Kodama, Ryoko	155	Loizou, Evi	89	Milton, Josephine	76
Koen, Mariette	102	Lossius, Magni Elen Hope	158	Mistry, Malini	68
Koivula, Merja	65	Löthman, Charlotte	95	Mnyasenga, Hawa	121
Kondracka-Szala, Marta	112, 155				

Mogami, Hideki	85	Paananen, Maiju	82, 128, 161	Rohrmann, Tim	143
Molina, Paola	124	Page, Jools	132, 133	Roos, Carin	17
Monteira, Sabela Fernández	18	Palaiologou, Ioanna	14, 78, 94	Rose, Janet	150
Moore, Alison	19	Pálfi, Sándor	35	Rotli, Ingrid Torgersen	57
Moreira, Mariana	55	Pálmadóttir, Hrönn	120	Rouse, Elizabeth	105, 106
Mörk, Svava B.	57, 58, 159	Palmér, Hanna	88, 98, 166	Rouyer, Véronique	10, 94
Morris, Kathryn	11	Papademetri, Chrystalla	135	Rubi, Stéphanie	10, 94, 95
Mothibeli, Seipati-Baloyi	102	Papakosma, Maria	82	Ryder, Gemma	151
Mousena, Eleni	48, 51	Parnell, Jade	13	Sadownik, Alicja Renata	32, 62
Muminova, Zarina	145	Pascal, Chris	40, 82, 184	Sageidet, Barbara Maria	49
Nakken, Anne	28, 121,135	Pedersen, Lars Dahl	48	Samuelsson, Ingrid Pramling	98
Nappen, Kari Grutle	146	Pedersen, Lillian	56, 111	Sando, Ole Johan	74, 75
Ndijuye, Laurent Gabriel	83	Pedrelli, Paola	68	Sands, Lorraine	154
Neder, Kaira	85	Perry, Robert (Bob)	43	Sandseter, Ellen	39, 74, 137
Nelson, Elizabeth	50	Petersen, Morten Rask	144, 145	Beate Hansen	
Ng, Andrea	144	Phillipson, Sivanés	22, 62	Schieler, Andy	93
Nicholson, Philip	159	Pitkänen, Hannele	128	Schneider, Lisa	12
Nicolaysen, Mona	25	Poblete, Ximena	136	Schurer, Maja Højslet	78, 121
Nielsen, Johan Bundgaard	64	Polak, Carly	15	Seehuus, Christine	89, 135
Nikiforidou, Zoi	125	Ponce, Corinne	10, 94, 95	Seifert, Anja	139
Noel, Andrea	112, 155	Porres, Gisselle Tur	13	Sell, Ingunn	58
Norddahl, Anna	159	Powell, Sacha	78, 147	Shirakawa, Yoshiko	85
Nordin, Pia	80	Pramling, Niklas	98	Shiyan, Igor	104, 115, 139
Norling, Martina	31	Proulx, Nancy	114	Shiyan, Olga	104
Nornes-Nymark, Merete	21, 56	Puskás, Tünde	8	Siaviki, Athanasia	32, 180
O Reilly, Catherine	104	Quenzer-Alfred, Carolin	12	Sidiropoulou, Christina	64
Ødegaard, Elin Eriksen	32	Råde, Anders	113	Sigurdardottir, Ingibjorg	47, 120
Odegard, Nina	87	Ranta, Muireann	73	Siippainen, Anna	127, 128
Odgaard, Ane Bjerre	84	Rantala, Anna	113	Silistire, Gizem	93
O'Dwyer, Lynn	135	Redfors, Andreas	54	Silva, Liliana	88
Oen, Marion	32	Retsiou, Styliani	48	Skehill, Sharon	106, 107
Ohta, Motoko	155, 179	Richards, Gerarda	62	Skeie, Marie	25
Ólafsdóttir, Sara Margrét	26, 91	Richardson, Brooke	153	Skreland, Lisbeth	45
Olsen, Alexander	39	Rizzini, Irene	149	Smeby, Kristine Warhuus	57, 110
O'Shaughnessy, John	141	Roffey-Barentsen, Jodi	133	Sollars, Valerie	76, 116
O'Sullivan, June	42	Rogers, Margie	113	Sood, Krishan	68
Otero-Mayer, Andrea	45, 46				

Sørensen, Merete	70	Thuresson, Hanna	105	Whinnett, Jane	78
Sørensen, Veronika	79	Tisdall, Kay	149, 151	White, Annie	154
Sotiriou, Christina	48	Tish, Sigal	101, 133	White, Lois	16
Soukakou, Elena	109	Tjāru, Sofie	105	Whittington, Victoria	30
Spieler, Kristin Severinsen	173	Toivonen, Hanna	128	Wiesner, Christian	86
Stadler-Altman, Ulrike	126	Tollnes, Inger Johanne Riis	79	Wiggins, Sally	87
Staffans, Eva	69	Torregrossa, Alba	28	Wilson, Christina	15
Stanley, Faye	85	Towler, Marcella	19, 67	Wood, Lesley	102
Štefanec, Ana	144	Tregenza-May, Sasha	116, 150	Worthington, Maulfry	44
Stelle, Elizabeth	11	Tuite, Kathleen	47	Wright, Caroline	23
Stergiou, Eleni	32	Tuul, Maire	139, 156	Wright, Laura	152
Stewart, Janine	122	Tyler-Merrick, Gaye	22	Xu, Yuwei	9, 77, 143
Storli, June Berger	77	Tympa, Eleni	32, 53, 174	Yabunaka, Masayo	65
Storli, Lise	75	Tyrie, Jacky	12, 13, 45, 93	Yelland, Nicola	59
Storli, Rune	21, 22	Ugaste, Aino	139	Yozgatli, Sinan	132
Stray, Ingunn Elisabeth	120	Ugelstad,	55	Zhang, Lynne	94
Stubbs, Ann	23	Ingunn Berrefjord			
Styf, Maria	15, 69	Ulber, Daniela	133, 134		
Sugimoto, Takayo	119, 120, 175	Undheim, Marianne	24, 132		
Sujetaitė-Volungevičienė, Giedrė	72	Unstad, Torstein	24		
Sutherland, Helen	25	Vala, Heidi Østland	58		
Svensson, Helene Berntsen	12	Vandenbroeck, Michel	153		
Tabu, Mikiko	65	Varik, Piia	156		
Tal, Clodie	101, 133, 185	Velkou, Kyriaki	37, 64		
Tamish, Rabab	146, 149	Vikstøl Olsen, Anne Karin	173		
Tang, Fengling	125	Viruru, Radhika	107, 183		
Taylor, Elfriede	141	Visnjic-Jevtic, Adrijana	114, 144		
Taylor, Lynn	5, 111	Vorobyeva, Irina	139		
Tebben, Erin	27, 29, 186	Vretblom, Hanna	134		
Tebet, Gabriela	32, 33	Walker, Sue	92		
Tembo, Shaddai	109	Wall, Kate	113, 162		
Teszenyi, Eleonora	35	Wallerstedt, Cecilia	98		
Thiel, Oliver	27, 28	Warburton, Judy	123		
Þorbjörnsdóttir, Sigríður	47	Watanabe, Satoshi	121		
Thorsen, Thomas	64	Waters-Davies, Jane	44		
		Weldemariam, Kassahun	102		
		Wernholm, Marina	88		