

SIG Report

Special Interest Group

Outdoor Play and Learning

SIG Convenors

Ellen Beate H. Sandseter, Jane Waters, Natalie Canning and Georgia Gessiou

Number of SIG members

125

Activities undertaken by the SIG since establishment

The Outdoor Play and Learning SIG at EECERA has during the last 12 years been an important network for coordinating and disseminating international research on the international discourse children's outdoor play and learning, situated within the institutionalized ECEC context.

The members of the SIG have participated in discussions and scientific development during the SIG's annual meetings, web-based arenas and through numerous of self-organized symposia and presentations at the annual EECERA conference.

Report on SIG Activities this past year

1. Publications (a selection from the conveners)

Canning, N. (2020) Children's empowerment in play. Oxon: Routledge and TACTYC

Canning, N (2019) 'Just 5 more minutes!' Power dynamics in outdoor play' International Journal of Play Volume 8, issue 1, pp11-24

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

Gealy, A-M., Tinney, G., MacDonald, N., and Waters, J. & (2020 accepted for publication) A socio-constructivist approach to developing a professional learning intervention for early childhood education and care practitioners in Wales Professional Development in Education <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1742187>

Sandseter, E. B. H., & Kleppe, R. (2019). Outdoor Risky Play. In R. E. Tremblay, M. Boivin, R. Peters, & M. Brussoni (Eds.), Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development [online].

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/according-experts/outdoor-risky-play>: Published May 2019. Accessed March 18, 2020.

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

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

Waters, J. & MacDonald, N. (2020) The value of using children's learning experiences to target professional learning in early years pre-school staff: the experience of one local authority in Wales. Early Years: an international research journal. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2020.1742666>

Waters, J. & Sharpling, E. (2020) Changing the Lens: mapping the development of research dispositions in programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Wales Journal for Education 22 (1)

2. Symposia at last EECERA conference

At the EECERA online conference in 2021 we had one self-organized symposia from the Outdoor play and Learning SIG, including 4 presentations.

3. Proposed Initiatives

Special issue in the International Journal of Play:

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

This is something we may consider doing again in 2022/2023.

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

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development:

Several members of the SIG have contributed to the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development and its special section of Outdoor Play by writing small articles in the genre of According to experts.

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/according-to-experts>

International Ph.D. course:

Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér took forward the suggestion to start the work to organize an international Ph.D. course in outdoor play and learning in connection to sustainability. The Ph.D. course opened in 2019. For information contact: Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University [eva.arlemalm-hagser@mdh.se]

Supporting Ph.D. students:

The OPL SIG receives royalties from the SAGE International Handbook of Outdoor Play and Learning, developed by the SIG's members, to be used for SIG activities. We used some of the money to support two of the SIG's PhD-students with EECERA membership and the conference fee for the 2019 EECERA conference. We will continue to do this for 2022.

E-mail list and becoming a new member of the SIG:

A sign-in form for new members has been created to make it easier for the conveners to have control of the member list and e-mailing list. The link to the form is found on the SIG's page on the EECERA webpage

<https://www.eecera.org/sigs/outdoor-play-and-learning/> (scroll to the bottom), or directly through this link:

<http://eepurl.com/c8xYQn>. This is now the way to become a member of the SIG.

Members meeting at the 2019 EECERA conference:

At the meeting, 26 members and 3 conveners participated. We did not hold a SIG meeting in 2020 because the conference was cancelled due to COVID-19.

4. Number of members:

This year the Outdoor Play and Learning Special Interest Group's total number of paying members is 11 and 114 associated members.

How SIG activities fit with aims and ethos of EECERA

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

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

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

Networking, future plans and links to other institutions

Proposed edited textbook - Learning and playing outdoors: questions of pedagogy, purpose and intention

The OPL SIG group is in the process of developing an edited textbook as part of the EECERA research series.

Members have been asked to contribute chapters 6-8,000 words long focusing on one or more of the three main (overlapping) themes of the book 1) adult's role, 2) pedagogical decisions, 3) cultural contexts in outdoor play and learning. The book will focus upon an evidence base for pedagogical decisions taken when children are playing and learning outside. It will tackle questions related to pedagogy and the intention and purpose of children's playful activity. The book will reflect the social, physical and cultural contexts, acknowledging the continuum of children's outdoor experience from highly structured activity to free play outside. Chapters will contain theoretical consideration of practical situations, based on empirical evidence. The editorial team will evaluate chapters in November 2021 with a view to the book being published in 2023.

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Symposiums at the 2022 EECERA conference:

We will continue to support the application process for papers in 2022 and will organise a self organised symposium if there is enough interest from members.

- I have read the privacy policy and agree