

Report: EECERA Sustainability in Early Childhood Education SIG 2024-2025

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1. The aim of the EECERA Sustainability in Early Childhood Education SIG

The aim of this SIG group is to develop a space for networking and to encourage cross-national research and perspectives in the field of early childhood education for sustainability. The research agenda focuses on ways of understanding how young children are recognized as, and learn to be, active citizens for sustainability. A key aspect of consolidating this research field is to broaden the theoretical and methodological perspectives shared and incorporate multiple international socio-cultural lenses. Sustainability refers here to the interlinked social, economic, natural, and political dimensions defined by UNESCO (2010), and these must underpin all decision-making for equitable global futures. Aligned international policies with import for early childhood education and education for sustainability are *The UN Global Action Programme* (GAP) and the *2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* (UNESCO, 2017). These policies are integrated with the dimensions of sustainability and offer a global action plan for developing a sustainable world. The SDGs, in particular, are far reaching and highlight that global sustainability is not to be achieved by an environmental or human poverty focus alone. The GAP and SDGs are integral to a globally transformative agenda, and the SIG collaborative research and publication initiatives will strongly support this agenda. The aims of the SIG are to:

- create a space for collaborative research about sustainability in Early Childhood Education,
- 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 sustainability in Early Childhood Education.

2. Activities undertaken by the SIG in the past year, 2024-2025

- The SIG now has 102 members, 8 of EECERA (marked green), and 94 associated members.
- Ongoing communication with EECERA about membership, the EECERA conference, and publications.
- The SIG-group Facebook page is ongoing and active, with regular postings about events, research, and publications (144 members).

- May 2025, *TND PhD Forum: An opportunity for TND participants to hear about recently completed and ongoing doctoral studies in early childhood education for sustainability* was conducted.
- *Early childhood education for sustainability: A short history* edited by Julie Davis, Sue Elliott and Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér was published.
- *Educating the young child series, Envisioning sustainable futures with young children: International case studies in ECEfS* edited by Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Sue Elliott will be published late 2025.
- An EECERA book *Promoting Transformative Practices for Sustainability in Early Childhood Education and Care Cultivating Critical, Participatory and Emancipatory Approaches* edited by Fabio Dovigo and Sule Alici will be published September 2025.
- EECERA SIG Symposia, EECERA 2025 (eeceraconference.org)
Titles, all accepted:
 1. ECEfS: Leadership & Curriculum
 2. ECEfS: Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing
 3. ECEfS: New Research Approaches

3. Planned SIG activity for the coming year, 2026

- Continuing to progress publications noted above and develop other collaborative research projects and bids; and,
- The proposal ECEfS Handbook for Bloomsbury edited by Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Sue Elliott and Victoria Carr was accepted and the aim is to publish this book in late 2026.

4. The links and networks established with other institutions and organisations

Each member of the SIG has a network within their own country and area of work. The collaboration within the SIG between members means that the SIG is informally associated with a wide variety of local, regional, national, and international networks and organisations. For example, the Transnational Dialogues Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Research Network (TND) held a face-to-face meeting as TND 9 on August 29th - 30th, 2024, at the University of East London, Stratford Campus, London, UK and hosted by June O’Sullivan, London Early Years Foundation. Plus, a Mini TND 9 was organized for Friday, 25 October 2024, at Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia as part of a national ECEfS conference (<https://ecsustainabilityalliance.org.au/>).

TND 10 will be conducted October 2025 as an online meeting. In addition, mini TND 10 gathering face to face is planned for the WEEC to be held in Perth, WA in September, 2026 (<https://weec2026.org/>). Significant synergies across the SIG and TND need to continue to be explored.

5. How the SIG Sustainability in Early Childhood Education activities fit with the aims and ethos of EECERA

The activities in the SIG encourage and support cross-national collaborations with multi-disciplinary research and critically reflective approaches to early childhood education and early childhood education for sustainability. The collaboration between the researchers in the SIG

group also aligns with outdoor education/nature play and applications to policy and practice as related to global sustainability.

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